

BAKING SODA

The Many Uses & Wonders of Baking Soda

**Over 300 Home, Health
& Healing Remedies,
Recipes & Tips You Would
Never Have Thought Of**

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First Printed: 2006

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The Wonders of Baking Soda

Is there anything plain old Baking Soda isn't useful for?

Look closely at a Supermarket shelf near you. Scan the cleaning products contents lists, look at what some of then household items contain. Look at the cleaners, the deodorisers, even the body products. There is almost nothing that plain old inexpensive Baking Soda can't do!

You can use it as a cleaning agent, a deodoriser, a body-care product. You can use it in the back yard, on your vegetable patch, on your pets and in the garage. It is natural, 100% safe and inexpensive. Look up an area of the house in this book... to solve your immediate problem, and be amazed at what you can do with plain old Baking Soda!

What is Baking Soda?

Baking Soda (NaHCO_3) has a number of different descriptive names:

- Baking Soda
- Sodium Bicarbonate
- Bicarbonate of Soda
- Bi-carb Soda
- Soda Ash

It is non-toxic. Which means you can leave it around the house and should a child accidentally eat it they will spit it out because of the salty taste...and it won't harm them in the slightest! This means it is great for cleaning around kids, perfect as a pest controller and ideal in the kitchen near food.

It is useful in every room of the house. Whatever your problem, whatever room you are in, baking soda will undoubtedly be of assistance. From cooking to the laundry to the medicine cabinet, it is the original multi-tasker. It is cheap. You can use it as you feel. It means you can follow the recipes .. or increase their strength a little.

There are literally hundreds of uses of baking soda within this book, so pick up a box regularly at the supermarket and make it a staple part of your household.

Where Does Baking Soda Come From?

5000 years ago the ancient Egyptians used the salty deposit they found in dried stream beds for glassware and ornaments. They also burned seaweed and used the resulting ash (hence the name 'soda ash') for cleaning purposes. The Romans in the first century used soda ash for making bread, glassware, and as a medicine.

As Europe progressed people found more and more uses for soda ash. It was used as a leavening agent in foods, it was a principal ingredient in glass manufacturing and was vital in making paper and textiles. Its usage grew so much that burning marine plant material couldn't supply anywhere enough soda ash. Finally in the 1700s Nicolas LeBlanc, a French physician, invented a chemical process that delivered enough soda ash for all uses people were finding for it. Trouble was it used expensive raw materials and resulted in nasty side products like hydrochloric acid.

It wasn't until an industrial chemist named Ernest Solvay, invented a quite different chemical process, that viable, environmentally friendlier soda ash production became possible. Today there are two sources of Baking Soda. The first is the Solvay process, used predominantly in Europe. Indeed, the Solvay process in various plants around the world, supplies about 3/4 of the world's supply of soda ash.

The second source is mined as Trona, mainly in North America. Trona ore is the result of millions of years of mineral deposits falling to the bottom of ancient lake beds, drying out and then new lakes forming above the dried sediment. It is a pure natural ore. The ore is cleaned, heated and sent through a saturated carbon dioxide solution.

You might be surprised to know, in fact, that our bodies produce baking soda too. (And that is a clue as to why it is so handy!). Our bodies use sodium bicarbonate to regulate the pH (or acidity) levels in our saliva, where it helps to neutralise the plaque accumulating on our teeth. It neutralises the acids in our stomachs, help-

ing to prevent stomach ulcers and the like and it helps carry carbon dioxide out of our body tissue into the blood stream.

Today it is used for all of those things and more:

Soda ash makes up about 15% of the content of all the glassware you use. In cooking, baking soda releases carbon dioxide when heated, and this causes biscuits, breads or cakes to rise. It is a primary ingredient for the cleaning product industry, where its unique attractant qualities make it the ideal dirt collector. Baking soda neutralises both acids and bases, so it actually eliminates odours rather than just covering them up. It can be used to adjust the pH balance and reduce acidity in water.

In Africa, it is an important culinary ingredient – used as a tenderiser, to add flavour and as a preservative. It is a vital ingredient in many medicines because it neutralises acids, cleans and disinfects.

It is a completely natural product, found in the oceans, streams and soils of the world. It contains none of the harsh added chemicals of many commercial cleaners and detergents. It is non-toxic and, in its baking soda form, is a product you can use safely around the house with children, pets and plants.

Its usefulness comes from its four main attributes:

- * A soft, flexible molecular structure which gives it the mild abrasive properties that make it such an excellent cleaner.
- * The crystalline structure of the soda is soluble in water which buffers the particles and makes it ‘soft’.
- * A neutralizing agent. It maintains the pH balance.
- * And best of all, it is inexpensive! Use it in every room of the house.

Follow our tips and you will have a first aid cabinet, cleaner and kitchen helper, all in one little box!

Baking Soda In The Kitchen

Keep a box close by, because it is truly the ‘jack of all trades’ when it comes to helping out in the kitchen.

Cooking:

Make sure you know the difference between baking soda and baking powder: Baking Soda is 100% pure sodium bicarbonate. Baking Powder is a mixture of baking soda and various acidic ingredients. Use Baking Powder in any of the following recipes, and you may get a result you hadn’t bargained on!

To make your own baking powder, combine 2 parts cream of tartar, 1 part baking soda and 1 part cornstarch. Sift them into an airtight container and get ready to bake!

Everyone loves a fluffy omelette – so try this neat trick: add a pinch of baking soda for every three eggs and then whisk and cook as per normal. Everyone will talk about your fabulous skills!

You can do the same with mashed potatoes. A pinch of baking soda about half way through your mashing process will deliver the whitest, fluffiest mashed potatoes you have ever seen.

Be kind to meat:

If you are doing fresh chicken direct from the farm, add a teaspoon of baking soda to your large pot of boiling water. The feathers will come off easier and the flesh will be clean and white.

We all hate the slippery residue when you are preparing a chicken for stuffing. Rinse the bird in a sink of warm water containing just a pinch of baking soda. Problem, and smell, gone.

If you want to tenderise the bird rub a little baking soda on the inside of the chicken and leave overnight. Rinse thoroughly before cooking.

When cooking game, particularly wild boar, adding a teaspoon or so to the

water you are using to get rid of the strong earthy taste some people don't enjoy.

Do you love crispy, crunchy pork crackling? Rub baking soda into the skin before baking your roast of pork. The baking soda reacts with the fat, making it bubble and crisp up.

Meat a bit tough? Many Africans swear by this remedy. Rub your meat with baking soda about 2 hours before cooking and let it stand. No difference in taste but beautifully moist meat that drips off the bone.

Making homemade gravy for a meat dish is something every cook has the occasional problem with. If your separates add a small pinch of baking soda, lightly dusted across the pan and you will reconnect your lovely juices in seconds.

If you occasionally curdle the milk when cooking scalloped potatoes, try sprinkling a pinch of baking soda between the layers and then bake as you normally would. The dish won't need salt and you will get rid of the slightly sour taste of curdled milk.

The same applied to when you are boiling milk. Add the tiniest pinch to your pot and it won't curdle (just don't boil too hard, or let it burn!).

Be kind to your vegetables:

If you have concerns about the pesticide and preservative residues left on your fruit or vegetables; dampen your hands, sprinkle with baking soda and give the items a good rub. The chemicals are neutralised and will rinse off easily.

Vegetables will love a taste of baking soda! Add a 1/2 teaspoon to your cabbage as it boils – you will make it lovely and tender and it won't overcook. Add a teaspoon to your pot of cauliflower and watch the family's faces as you deliver crisp, white, odour-free cauliflower to the table.

Get rid of the gas in baked beans by adding a pinch of baking soda to the pot as they heat.

When soaking dried beans add a teaspoon of baking soda to the water. You

will find the beans become much more digestible and less gassy. They will cook much quicker too.

Acid rescue:

When making a rhubarb sauce you will find you need much less sugar by soaking rhubarb in cold water and a pinch of baking soda. Drain off the now black water, add fresh water and cook as per normal. You don't need the extra sugar because the baking soda has neutralised a lot of the acid and you need less to disguise the acidity.

The same thing applies to pineapple and any other acidic fruit, especially if it not quite ripe. Just a light dusting will do wonders for the pucker up factor.

If your breakfast routine includes a half a grapefruit, decrease the acidity and decrease the need for sugar with the tiniest sprinkling of baking soda over the sliced flesh.

If family or guests are susceptible to the acid in a tomato sauce, put a pinch of baking soda and stir quickly in. The baking soda neutralises the acidic qualities of the tomatoes without taking away the taste and heartburn sufferers will love you for it!

Is your salad dressing too vinegary? Have you put too much vinegar into a recipe? Counter the acidity with a touch of baking soda. Keep dusting and tasting until your palate decides then answer.

Iced tea is a lovely, refreshing drink in the heat of the summer. But the tannins and bitter taste can be overpowering in the cool drink. Add a teaspoon of baking soda for every 2 litres of tea just before serving in the iced pitcher and watch everyone smile instead of pucker!

Bake up a treat:

Baking a chocolate cake? Make it look more 'chocolatey' with a richer, darker texture by mixing 1 teaspoon of baking soda with the flour before mixing in the other ingredients.

And before you add the icing, stop it cracking and keep it moist by adding a

half a teaspoon of baking soda. It will spread like butter!

If you are making a summer berry cake or, indeed any recipe that uses slightly sour fruit like raspberries and blackberries, add a pinch of baking soda dusted over the bowl of berries and gently mixed through. Wait a few minutes and then taste to see how much sugar you need to add – it will be a lot less!

Baking Soda & Cleaning

Baking soda comes into it's own as a cleaner and is particularly handy in the kitchen.

Fridge work:

A classic old tip! Rid your fridge of all those nasty odours by keeping an open container of baking soda discreetly tucked away in the back. Give the container a gentle shake or stir from time to time and replace every 2 months. This also works for the freezer. (Keep the 'old' baking soda next to the stove as a fire emergency tool). Add a few drops of vanilla essence for a fresh smell.

Clean your fridge and freezer with dry soda sprinkled on a damp cloth. Rinse with clear water. The plastic surrounds of the fridge will come up a treat and the baking soda will reduce odours wonderfully.

If meat has gone off in your fridge, wash the area with warm water and plenty of baking soda, then place charcoal lumps close to the affected area. The smell should be gone in no time!

Has the fridge gone off during a power blackout? The smell of spoiled chicken or other foods can be horrendous and baking soda may be your only answer! Get a large plastic rubbish bag and tip in about half a cup of baking soda. Throw in all the spoiled foods, tipping in baking soda every so often. This will dramatically reduce the smell as you wait for rubbish collection day. Now for the fridge itself .. wash the walls and surfaces with warm water and plenty of baking soda and then leave two open boxes of soda in the fridge for as long as possible before you turn it back on. It really works!

Are your white appliances looking a little 'yellow' with age? Make up a solution of 1/4 cup of baking soda to 4 cups of warm water and apply to the appliance. Leave the top damp for 10 minutes before wiping dry. Apply a number of times to the sides of the appliance before wiping dry.

Do you dislike the stagnant water smell from your fridge's water collecting tray? Sprinkle it with baking soda every time you clean the tray.

Keep your crisper bins smelling fresh by sprinkling baking soda in the bottom of the tray and cover with paper towels. Replace every couple of months and you will have fresh smelling bins forever!

Be safe:

Small grease or spot fires in the kitchen can be an ongoing hazard and water is definitely not the answer. We recommend a fire blanket, but if you don't have one to hand keep an open box of baking soda in easy grabbing distance. When you have a flare up distribute the baking soda by the handful.

Wary of soap residue on baby's milk bottles? Rinse them thoroughly after use in warm water and baking soda. They will be as clean as can be and odour-free too!

Cockroaches in the kitchen, but you want to avoid chemical baits or sprays? Try this. Lay down a trail in the hidden corners where you have seen the roaches. They will eat the baking soda, dehydrate and die.

If ants are a problem in the kitchen, (or any room), try this simple remedy. After cleaning the floor, just sprinkle a thin line of baking soda along the ant trail, and along the moulding on the floor, very close to the wall. The ants should disappear for good. Also works when sprinkled on the front door threshold or saddle, preventing ants entering the house that way.

We all know how rubber gloves can get smelly after just a couple of uses. Keep them fresh with a good sprinkle of baking soda after use. Shake them up and empty the powder out. Before you use them again, sprinkle a little more baking soda in and luxuriate on how easy they are to slip on... and how fresh they smell.

Wash children's plastic drinking bottles and lunch boxes in baking soda every so often. You will get rid of that 'plasticity' smell and taste and get rid of that sticky feeling that well used plastic items sometimes get. Washing the lunch

boxes like this also gets rid of the smell of yesterday's lunch.

Clean Formica counter tops with baking soda on a damp sponge. For stubborn stains, try squeezing the juice of a fresh lemon onto the bench. Leave for half an hour and then sprinkle with baking soda. This almost bleaches the bench top, and works well with either dull-finish tops or shiny. Rub the mix in with a soft cloth then rinse well.

Take care of everyday stains with a paste of baking soda and water. This cleans, deodorises and disinfects your bench top. Pay special attention to little scratches and so on. A gentle rub will keep surface scoring clean and hide it from the casual glance.

Baking soda is safe and effective as a paste to remove children's cordial and juice stains from kitchen counter tops.

Remove rust stains from your kitchen bench tops with a squeeze of lemon juice and a sprinkle of baking soda. A quick scrub and it's no more rust.

If the ink from a price tag has leached onto the bench top you will find a squeeze of lemon juice and a sprinkle of baking soda directly on to the spot works wonders!

Leaving on holiday? Have sparkling fresh drains and sinks on your return by tipping a little dry baking soda down each opening. Simply rinse through on your return and enjoy odour-free sinks, baths and drain holes.

Dishwasher Tips:

Dishwasher magic. Just before turning on the dishwasher sprinkle a little baking soda over the dirty dishes. The rinse cycle will dislodge enough dirt so that you can then reduce the amount of expensive dishwashing powder you would normally use.

Freshen up the dishwasher occasionally by doing just a rinse cycle with a sprinkling of baking soda on the bottom of the washer. Gets rid of the stains and streaks from hard water too.

Another fresh holiday tip! Sprinkle a good dose of baking soda into your dishwasher before you leave. Leave the door slightly ajar and you won't come home to those horrible musty kitchen smells.

Has the dishwasher 'baked on' food scraps instead of cleaning them? Make up a solution of hot water and baking soda in the sink and let the item sit for half an hour or so. A quick rub with the kitchen scrubber should remove the dirt.

Do you use expensive dish washing powder? Do you get a powdery residue? Try using a mix of baking soda and your normal dishwashing powder. About half and half should do it. Costs much less and will decrease the harsh chemicals you use in the kitchen.

Does the best crystal need a new sparkle? Give it a quick rinse in a water and baking soda mix. Rinse thoroughly before using.

Clean out oily salad dressing bowls or servers by sprinkling them with baking soda before washing. The baking soda absorbs the oils and odours, leaving them fresh for next time.

Nasty scratch on your stoneware? Cover up with a thick paste of baking soda and water. Let it stand then wash it as usual. The scratches won't be as obvious.

Plastic bowls and the like are easily scratched when cleaning so don't use abrasive commercial cleaners. Use a simple mix of baking soda and water. You will be amazed at how clean they are and how 'fresh' the plastic ware now is.

Coffee care:

Thermos flasks with tea and coffee stains are notoriously hard to clean. Use about a teaspoon of baking soda and boiling water and let stand for a few minutes. For an extra strong clean, add a squeeze of lemon juice. If they are going away until next season, put a teaspoon of baking soda inside, replace the lid, shake and store. Keeps them fresh and musty odour free! Make sure you rinse thoroughly before using again.

If your coffeemaker constantly looks grubby, no matter how often you clean it, try running a litre of water through a 1/4 cup of baking soda. Cleans everything out and revitalises the plastic components as well as taking residue off the glassware.

Every filter coffee maker needs a regular 'extra-special' clean. Do the exercise above, then wet the filter basket and sprinkle baking soda over it. Let it stand for about 10 minutes before brushing all the crevices and surfaces with a toothbrush. Comes up beautifully!

If you find your cups have stubborn tea and coffee stains, make up a paste of baking soda and water and rub gently with your fingers. Reapply with a damp cloth and rub again.

Cleans tea stains from plastic glassware. Just run the sink half full of hot water, dissolve about half a cup of baking soda in it and let your plastic ware sit for 30 minutes.

Wash glass or stainless steel coffee pots (but not aluminium) in a soda solution (3 tablespoons of baking soda to 1 litre water).

Clean ceramic crockpots by mixing a teaspoon of baking soda with around a litre of water. Bring to the boil, turn off and let sit for 30 minutes then rinse thoroughly.

Freshen that blender! Pour in half a cup of baking soda and two cups of warm water and then run for 2 minutes. Dislodges all the stubborn food scraps.

Electric kettles gather rust and mineral deposit stains too easily. Give them a regular spring clean with this recipe. Fill with water, add two tablespoons of baking soda and the juice of half a lemon. Boil several times, allowing the jug to cool for a minute in between. Rinse thoroughly before its next use.

Clean stainless steel sinks – a paste made of dishwashing liquid and a generous amount of baking soda takes brown stains out!

Keep your tea towels smelling fresh by laying them out after use, dusting lightly with baking soda and shaking them out before hanging up to dry.

Keep your tea towel drawer nice and fresh by making up small sachets of baking soda and leaving them tucked in the back of the drawer. Also works in drawers where you store old recipe cuttings and the like to keep out the musty smell. If you prefer a perfume, mix a couple of drops of an essential oil, (rose, lemon or lavender for example) in the baking soda before tying off the sachet.

Soak your sponges and cloths in a weak mixture of baking soda and warm water for 10 minutes a day to deodorise and freshen them up. Simply squeeze out and store as you normally would and enjoy the ‘sweet’ difference next time you use them.

Keep that stove top fresh:

Stove-top burners may gradually get clogged with food spills. Clean them by boiling gently in a pot with a strong mixture of baking soda and water.

Bad attack of the splatters on your stove top? Wet the area first then sprinkle liberally with baking soda. Let sit and wipe with a damp sponge. Repeat if necessary. You’ll clean the area thoroughly without harsh scratching.

Light film of grease on your stove top from fried food recipes? Make up a solution of white vinegar and baking soda (use enough vinegar to make a soluble mixture) and wipe thoroughly with a cloth soaked in the solution.

Messy filters on your range hood? Immerse them in the laundry sink in hot water and sprinkle on a good dose of baking soda. The fatty residue will attach to the soda particles and float off.

Oven care:

Sprinkle the bottom of your oven to reduce the ‘burnt’ smells. Any spill-overs while cooking can be treated with a handful of baking soda as soon as the oven has cooled a little. When you get around to cleaning the oven properly, simply use a spatula to scrape the spill residue off the oven floor. You’ll be

pleasantly surprised at how easy the job is.

If you have a big spill in the oven, sprinkle the area as soon as you can with baking soda and let it sit for a while. Sponge off with warm, soapy water.

To give your oven a good ‘spring clean’, leave a cup of ammonia in the cold oven overnight. The next morning, remove the ammonia, dust baking soda over all the surfaces and then use damp paper towels to clean off the residue.

For really grimy glass oven doors, sprinkle a good dose of baking soda over the surface and cover with damp paper towels. Leave for at least 30 minutes, remove the paper towels and wipe clean with a sponge.

Pots and pans:

Burnt-on food in the bottom of a saucepan can be a killer to clean! Put 3 cms of water in the pan, bring to the boil, turn off the heat and add half a cup of baking soda and let sit overnight. Gently peel away the residue with a spatula the next morning.

Make sure you don’t scour the surface of your non-stick pans with harsh abrasive cleaners. Make up a paste of baking soda and water and use to gently scrub with a soft sponge. The baking soda will remove all the oil, so if you like a ‘seasoned’ pan, rub a little fresh olive oil or similar into it again before putting it away.

For more baked grime, try gently heating a couple of teaspoons of baking soda in about 2 cms of water. Add a good squeeze of lemon juice to the simmering water to add cleaning power.

If your roasting dish needs a super clean do this: dust the surface liberally with baking soda then make up a mixture of 3/4 cup of hot water to 1/4 cup of white vinegar and pour it on to the soda in the dish. The fizz should lift all the grease and lift the roasted-on food.

Baking soda paste will get your oven drip pans shining again. If they are really bad, dissolve about a 1/4 cup of baking soda in warm water in a large pot. Place drip pans in solution and boil for about 3 mins. Let cool and then scrub the drip pans. Good as new! If the pans are too big to put in a pot,

sprinkle with baking soda and pour about a centimeter of boiling water into the pan. Wait 1 minute, sprinkle more baking soda and pour more boiling water. Repeat as necessary and give them a final scrub with a kitchen brush.

If your copper pots have lost their gleaming shine, coat the surface with baking soda and then add vinegar. Let them sit for 20 minutes, then scrub with half a lemon before rinsing them.

Protect your deep fryer from scratching by cleaning with a thick mix of baking soda and warm water. The baking soda will gently clean and neutralise any oily odours.

If you use a ribbed toasted sandwich maker you will know how difficult they are to clean! Dampen the grill pads with water, sprinkle them with baking soda, and scrub with a soft toothbrush. Repeat if necessary, then wipe thoroughly with a wet sponge before drying.

We've all done it! Use baking soda to remove melted plastic bread wrapper from the toaster. Dampen a cloth and press into a container of baking soda to make up a mild abrasive that will clean the residue off and be kind to your toaster surface.

Micro magic:

Keep your microwave sparkling fresh by boiling a cup of water and 2 teaspoons of baking soda for 3 minutes. The steamy residue on the walls will wipe easily and take any dirt with it.

Just as you store baking soda in the refrigerator to control odour, you can store a box of baking soda in the microwave in between uses. Mix a few tablespoons of baking soda with water in a microwave safe cup. Boil in the microwave for a few minutes.

The insides of the microwave will be damp and easy to clean with a paper towel or dishcloth. This has the added benefit of removing odours that may be clinging to your microwave oven.

Bin those odours:

You can diminish or eliminate odours in the kitchen rubbish bin by adding baking soda to the bottom of the container before you replace the plastic liner. If you are doing a lot of seafood, add a good handful of baking soda to the plastic bin liner to reduce odour before next collection day.

Sprinkle baking soda in the bottom of plastic or paper bags to reduce odours. Try placing crumpled up newspaper sprinkled with baking soda in the bottom of rubbish bags to help absorb odours and drips.

Leaving an open box of baking soda under the kitchen sink helps protect an area that can be prone to smells.

To remove stale smells from food containers, rinse out with hot water and baking soda. If the smell persists, let the container soak overnight in the baking soda and water mixture.

Keep your kitchen mops sweet and clean by soaking in a strong solution of baking soda and warm water every so often. Leaves them fresh and gets rid of that must mop smell.

Steel scourers are the devil to clean once they have gone rusty. Put a generous amount of baking soda in a dish. After using steel wool, wring out and store in the dish of baking soda. Cuts down on rust, and is ready to scour away!

If you are hand washing non-dishwasher items, add a small handful of baking soda to the dishwater to protect your hands.

Make a box of baking soda do double duty by using it first to deodorise the refrigerator, under sink or wherever you need it, then use it to clean and polish with.

Check to see if it's still fresh enough to use by putting a drop or two of vinegar on to a spoonful of baking soda. If it bubbles actively it is okay to use.

If the kitchen floor is suffering from scuff marks from children's sport shoes try this idea. Sprinkle with baking soda and then wipe with a warm, damp cloth. Use it on non-wax floors too – but check in a hidden corner first to see if it suits your floor surface.

Use baking soda to clean your wooden chopping boards. Use a scrubbing brush and rinse under hot water. The baking soda cuts through greasy residue but doesn't dry out the wood.

If you want an effective non-chemical disinfectant use salt. It will also bring up the natural oils of the board. Use it on plastic chopping boards to sluice off any grease or sticky deposit.

Onion hands? Garlic fingers? Sprinkle a small amount of baking soda on your hands after chopping onions or garlic, then rinse with cool water. Takes the odour away immediately. Sprinkle it over your chopping boards to remove onion odour.

You can age copper to a brown penny look by putting a hot water and baking soda mixture into a spray bottle and applying for several days and wiping. Make sure the mixture is quite strong. Eventually it will age the copper 10 to 50 years.

Rub stainless steel and chrome with a moist cloth and dry baking soda to shine it up. Rinse and dry. On stainless steel, scrub in the direction of the grain.

Baking Soda In The Laundry

Wash your cares away:

Is your washing machine and dryer looking a little 'yellow' with age? Make up a solution of 1/4 cup of baking soda to 4 cups of warm water and apply to the appliance. Leave the top damp for 10 minutes before wiping dry. Apply a number of times to the sides of the appliance before wiping dry.

Always add 1/2 a cup of soda to your washing machine load. Not only will it help clean your clothes but because the baking soda neutralises the odour molecules rather than simply covering them up with perfumes, your clothes will come out genuinely fresh and odour-free.

This also makes it great for use on clothes you might use for hunting.

If your table napkins have over-indulged with a fun dinner party, sprinkle baking soda onto the wine or food stains and let sit until you can get to them. When guests have gone, stretch the linen over a bowl, re-sprinkle with baking soda, and pour hot water through into the bowl. This should work nicely.

Boost your whitening power in the laundry. If you normally use a chlorine bleach, adding baking soda means you can reduce your normal quantity of bleach by half, and your clothes will come out brighter into the bargain. Simply add 1/2 a cup of baking soda to top loaders or 1/4 cup to front loaders and enjoy bleach-odour free, whiter whites.

Instead of using fabric softener, try adding a 1/2 a cup of baking soda to the rinse cycle. It acts as a natural softener and is gentler for those with sensitivities to chemicals in their laundry.

For a harder working alternative, replace half of each measure of laundry detergent with baking soda. The soda works with the pH levels and makes the detergent work harder. Your clothes will come out fine, and you will halve your laundry detergent costs.

Stain Drain:

Draw blood stains out of fabrics by dampening with cold water and sprinkling with baking soda before washing. Rub the soda gently and let it sit for a while. If clothing has dried acids on it (vomiting or battery acid for example), sprinkle the affected area with baking soda and use baking soda in the wash. Contact with water will reactivate the acids which will continue to damage the clothing so you will need to neutralise the effects as best as you can with the baking soda.

If clothing items have had petrol or oil spilled on them, get rid of the odour by sprinkling them with baking soda and placing in a plastic shopping bag for a couple of days.

Make up a spot-control paste for problem areas like collar grime, make-up stains and so on with baking soda and water. Rub on with your fingers. For extra grimy areas, splash a little vinegar on to the paste prior to washing. Make sure you check for colour-fastness before doing this to anything other than whites! Remove sweat stains and odour from clothing by leaving a paste of baking soda and water on the area for an hour or two prior to washing.

If children's crayons have accidentally been washed with a load of clothing there may still be hope! Rewash the clothing in the hottest water allowable for the fabric adding a 1/4 box to a box of baking soda. The baking soda will emulsify the waxy substance and allow it to wash out. Don't put them into a drier until you are sure the crayon has gone.

Baking soda can be very effective at removing stains accumulated by age. Because it is a natural cleaner your older linens can be trusted to be whitened and brightened by its effects.

Oil and grease are a nuisance to get out of clothing. Luckily, baking soda acts as a natural grease emulsifier. Either soak the clothing for a time in a baking soda and warm water mix and wash as per normal, or add baking soda to the washing water for smaller stains.

If clothing is suffering from heavy tobacco smells that normal washing doesn't get rid of, try soaking in a weak baking soda solution first.

Use with baby's cloth nappies. Soak them in a baking soda/water solution while waiting for a machine wash.

Can do wonders for dry-clean only items. Rub the powder on to a grease spot with your fingers. Remove waxy stains (like crayon) by rubbing baking soda onto the area and rubbing off with a damp cloth. Rub all over suede with a soft brush, let it sit and brush off.

Use baking soda and water to wash the inside of your machine. Run your empty machine through the quickest cycle with baking soda instead of detergent. Cleans the collected grime, and freshens the inside of the machine.

What little boy hasn't left a nice surprise of boiled sweets or bubble gum in a pocket to be washed? Next time it happens to you use baking soda and a plastic tool to gently clean the sticky residue in your washing machine. Make up a paste and rub on the affected areas, wait 10 minutes and scrape off.

If anyone in the family has allergies to laundry products (some of them can be quite harsh), try baking soda instead in the wash. This is especially important with bedding for sufferers.

Pool chlorine can be harsh on swimsuits. Rinse it out with a gentle solution of baking soda and warm water in the laundry sink before machine washing.

Starch residue on your iron? Make up a baking soda paste and rub on the cool iron with a soft cloth. Using a cotton bud stick dipped in paste to clean the steam holes.

If you use a laundry basket in bedrooms, add some baking soda every day to keep the hamper from smelling between washes. (Especially effective in teenager's bedrooms!).

After a skiing trip, soak woollen hats or balaclavas in a gentle mix of baking soda and warm water before putting away for next year.

Baking Soda In The Rest Of The Home

Better bathrooms:

Combs and brushes full of hairspray residue will love a good bath in hot water and 1/4 of a cup of baking soda. Give them a quick scrub with a toothbrush as soon as the water is cool and they will be as good as new.

Clean your bathroom with dry soda on a moist sponge – sink, bath, tiles, shower stall etc. You will be amazed at the dirt and residue that simply lifts off.

Keep your drains clean and free-flowing by putting 4 tablespoons of baking soda in them each week. Flush the baking soda down with hot water.

Baking soda makes for a great toothpaste substitute. But if you don't like the taste or want to continue with the fluoride in toothpaste, try this; soak your toothbrush in a mix of baking soda and water overnight. You will have a sparkling fresh toothbrush every day and all the cleaning attributes of baking soda working for you.

Soak your shower curtains in water and baking soda to clean them. Gets rid of soap residue quickly and freshens the curtains beautifully.

Wash marble-topped furniture and bathroom bench tops with a solution of 3 tablespoons of baking soda in 1 litre of warm water. Let stand a while, then rinse.

Sprinkle your bath with baking soda once a week to keep it looking spotless. Soak a cloth in vinegar and wipe all over. Rinse the bath properly to ensure you don't leave a slippery surface for the next user!

How is your shower head? Bring it back to its lovely shiny self with this trick: pour in half a cup of vinegar and tie it quickly to the shower head with a rubber band. The fizzing action will get rid of the streaks and marks for a spark-

ly new shower head.

Do your shower recess a big favour. Keep an old talcum powder container full of baking soda in the bathroom and sprinkle in the shower recess every couple of days. Rinse thoroughly before use. Give it a quick scrub with a sponge sprinkled with baking soda once a week and your shower will stay fresh, clean smelling and soap-scum free.

Clean your shower doors with a spray of vinegar, followed by a scrub down with a damp cloth liberally sprinkled with baking soda. Rinse well and dry thoroughly.

Put a cup of baking soda in to the toilet cistern once a month. Let it stand overnight before flushing and you will be amazed at how fresh and clean your toilet stays.

Make up an effective toilet freshener by combining your favourite potpourri with half a cup of baking soda. Simply leave in a decorative dish on an open shelf or ledge. Alternatively, use perfumed bath salts for the same effect.

Get rid of the streaks from hard water around your taps and basin with a mix of toothpaste and baking soda. Use an old toothbrush to give them a gentle scrub and rinse with warm water.

Old porcelain baths can look terrible when stained and streaked from years of mineral water, soapy residue and scratching. Give them new life with a mix of baking soda and ammonia or baking soda and hydrogen peroxide. Make up a good thick paste and layer on generously. Leave overnight and scrub off with a soft sponge the next morning. Use rubber gloves to protect your hands. You will be amazed at the difference!

Bedrooms, Garage, Lounge

In an emergency baking soda will also put out fires in clothing, fuel, wood, upholstery and rugs. Knowing where there is an open box quickly available is something everybody in the family should know – but do not be silly, ring the fire services for anything more than a small flare up.

Wash your Venetian blinds in a bath tub full of warm water and a cup of baking soda. Simply let the blinds soak for half an hour before scrubbing with a soft laundry brush. Refill the bath with warm water to rinse them clean hang to dry.

If children have spilled ink or paint on a linoleum floor, apply a dry paste of baking soda to the stain before cleaning up with a damp cloth. Allow the paste to sit for 10 minutes or so.

Remove that bad smell from ashtrays with baking soda and water. Sprinkle a bit of dry baking soda in your ashtrays to prevent smouldering and reduce odour.

If you have tarnished silverware then try this easy polishing tip. Place aluminium foil in your sink, put your silverware on top and sprinkle generously with baking soda. Cover the items with hot water and check after 5 minutes. Continue to check every 2 minutes or so until the silver reaches a sheen you are happy with then rinse immediately. Buff with a soft cloth and your silverware will look and feel brand new.

Give pearls a new lease of life. Dust them with baking soda and rub off with a damp, soft cloth. To gently clean ornate jewellery, try using a bowl full of warm water and baking soda. Let the pieces sit for a while, then gently scrub with a soft toothbrush and rinse thoroughly.

Clean the weather stains off aluminium door screens and windows with a laundry brush and a mix of baking soda and warm water.

Wooden doors and walls can be cleaned with a mixture of:

- Quarter of a cup of baking soda
- Half a cup of white vinegar
- 4 litres of warm water

Apply then mixture with a soft cloth, gently scrubbing stains and let it sit for 5 minutes. Wipe off with a dry, clean cloth.

Rusty nuts and bolts can be fixed by soaking them in a mixture of baking soda and vinegar. Place the items in a bowl and cover them with baking soda then pour vinegar into the bowl. Once the neutralising bubbling has finished, scrub them with a toothbrush.

For nuts and bolts already in place, sprinkle baking soda where required and spray vinegar over the items.

If you are storing large coats or suits in a garment bag sprinkle a little baking soda in the bottom of the bag. It will absorb the musty odours that clothes generate when left for the next season.

If you have used mothballs, you will want to get rid of the smell! Place two open boxes in the wardrobe, or area you want deodorised, and leave for as long as possible.

If a child's sports bag is a bit 'on the nose', sprinkle the empty bag with baking soda. Once a month pour 1/2 a cup in, close up, shake well and leave overnight. Simply empty out into the garden the next day for a 'no sweat' fresh gym bag.

If your holiday bags and suitcases only (sadly) get used once a year sprinkle baking soda in them and put away as normal – gets rid of the musty smell they will otherwise accumulate throughout the year.

Give your ski boots a good dose of baking soda before putting them away for next year.

Kills fleas! Mix equal parts of table salt and baking soda together and sprinkle over the carpets. You need to drive the mix deep into the carpet, so either walk heavily over the area you have dusted or beat it in with a tennis racquet or similar. Do this until you can no longer see any trace of the powder. Let it set overnight. Vacuum carpets carefully, going over it more than once.

All adult fleas should be dead or too thirsty to breed. This is a much more environmentally friendly method, and less dangerous for children than the chemicals in commercial flea powders. But you will need to do it at least three times in the space of a week in order to really kill the fleas.

Before laying new carpet, douse the area thoroughly with baking soda. This will help later on in all sorts of ways – odour, fleas and mites, and more.

For fresh carpets all year long mix a combination of half a cup of baking soda, half a cup of cornstarch and 12 drops of your favourite essential oil together.

Put the mix into a flour sifter and sprinkle over your floors once a month, the vacuum as per normal. Deodorises, cleans and freshens!

Small amounts of baking soda used with Super Glue works as a filler for cracks, and makes for an excellent bond with balsa as well as many porcelain items.

Dust is attracted to the plastics in electrical equipment. Sprinkle some baking soda on a damp cloth and wipe the area carefully.

Use baking soda each time you change the sheets on a bed. Just give the mattress a quick sprinkle every time to eliminate any musty odours.

Plastic bed protectors can develop a must smell. Sprinkle with baking soda every second linen change to reduce odours.

When changing pillow slips, sprinkle a small amount of baking soda into the new pillowslip. Prevents odours and helps cleaning after use.

Don't spend a lot of time cleaning up after a child has wet the bed at night. Use a good shake over the sheets as soon as they come off to neutralise the urine acids and absorb some of the odour. Sprinkle baking soda on the mattress to do the same thing and leave the wash until the next morning. Vacuum the mattress the next morning to take up excess baking soda.

Baby accidents are an everyday occurrence. Make up a solution of half water half baking soda and carry with you in a squeeze drink bottle. If baby throws up on clothes, simply squirt with the solution. This will neutralise any acid and hold the stain until you can get clothes into the wash.

Dropped your book in the bath? Use baking soda to help dry it out and keep mildew at bay. Sprinkle it throughout the pages and leave it to dry a little. Once it is reasonably dry, shake out the powder and place under weights to dry properly and return to its normal shape. Once it is thoroughly dry you could dust again with baking soda to get rid of any mildew that may have built up and leave it in the sun.

Use baking soda as a wardrobe or cupboard freshener. Put some in a sachet and put in drawers or enclosed spaces that tend to get musty.

You might prefer a perfumed touch for those same cupboards or even rooms. Put some baking soda in a bowl, add 1-2 drops of perfumed essential oils (buy from any natural products shop), then stir, using the back of a spoon to distribute well. Spoon the mixture into sachets that you have made from the ends of old stockings. It will provide the perfume of a potpourri and the hard work of baking soda in one.

It has been said that sprinkling baking soda between the sheets before bedtime will keep you cool on a hot night. Try it, you might be pleasantly surprised!

Is plant mildew a problem? Combine 1 tablespoon of baking soda in 3.5 litres of hot water. Stir to dissolve and blend the baking soda. Put a few cups in a spray bottle and spray onto the mildew. You can wipe off any powder residue later on with a soft cloth.

Stuffed toys and teddy bears won't survive a harsh wash, so give them a spring clean with a good sprinkle of baking soda. Let them sit overnight before brushing or shaking off the excess and returning to the happy owner.

Are your children less than perfect? Surely they wouldn't leave damp towels and swimming outfits to get mouldy or mildewy in a forgotten bag? But if they do just dust baking soda through them and let sit while they wait for the wash.

Before you wash, re-sprinkle the mouldy spots with soda and drizzle a little vinegar on as well. Let the bubbling action subside before washing as normal.

Give your fireplace a rough and ready clean with a baking soda and water solution before winter each year. It makes for an attractive fireplace as well as reducing the chances of a soot fire in the chimney.

Are you storing blankets and bedcovers between seasons? Sprinkle a good dose of baking soda between layers as you fold them up. Remember to shake out thoroughly when you fetch them next winter!

If blankets have a musty smell when you pull them out of summer storage, sprinkle baking soda between each fold and let sit for 4 hours before shaking them vigorously outside.

When painting a room or varnishing furniture leave an open box of baking soda in the room overnight to absorb the harsh smell.

Get rid of the chemical smell from plastic picnic tablecloths by storing them with a sprinkle of baking soda between each layer.

Before using a plastic picnic tablecloth, give it a quick rub down with warm water and baking soda. If you have time, soak it in a solution of baking soda and warm water in the laundry sink. This will decrease that nasty 'just out of storage' smell!

Use baking soda in musty, little-used basement areas. Pour a box into an old shoe box, mix in an equal amount of borax, punch holes in it and store in a corner. Fights the dampness, gets rid of the musty smell.

Cleaning out a musty basement is no fun. Deal with smell by soaking a handkerchief in baking soda and water, squeezing well and tying around your nose and mouth. Acts as a dust mite filter and keeps the smell down.

Baking Soda In Your Cleaning Kit

Does the silverware need a polish before guests arrive? Try this quick solution: Use dry baking soda on a damp cloth. Rub, rinse and dry.

Cover your sterling silver jewellery with baking soda. Rub the jewellery with your bare finders or a soft cotton cloth.

If you have tarnished silverware and have more time then try this easy polishing tip. Place aluminium foil in your sink, put your silverware on top and sprinkle generously with baking soda. Cover the items with hot water and check after 5 minutes.

Continue to check every 2 minutes or so until the silver reaches a sheen you are happy with then rinse immediately. Buff with a soft cloth and your silverware will look and feel brand new. Don't use this tip if any part of the silverware is glued.

Another quick remedy is to sprinkle a raw potato with baking soda and rub the flat surfaces of larger pieces of silverware.

Works on gold jewellery too. Cover the pieces with baking soda and then pour vinegar over it. Rinse and dry. On stainless steel, scrub in the direction of the grain.

Clean plastic, porcelain and glass with dry baking soda on a damp cloth. Rinse and dry.

Moving furniture sometimes turns up a nasty rust stain on the linoleum floor. Make up a paste of baking soda and warm water, paint it over the offending spot (check for colour fastness in a hidden area first if possible) and wait 15 minutes. Wipe off, repeat if necessary, leaving the paste longer until the stain is gone.

Treat a heat ring on wooden furniture with a combination 50/50 toothpaste and baking soda. Rub gently in a circular motion with a soft cloth and, after

rinsing away, use your normal furniture polish.

If your wooden furniture is carrying the grime of age, try this tip. (Check a hidden spot first though to make sure you like the impact you will have!). In a big bowl mix 1/2 cup of vinegar, 1/4 cup of baking soda and 4 litres of warm water. If the wood is really dirty – with nicotine, grease or worse – then add a cup of ammonia.

Don't splash the solution on your woodwork, a gentle wipe is all that is needed, and let it sit for 15 minutes. Wipe off with a dry cloth.

Use dry baking soda with a small brush to rub canvas handbags clean. If they are really grimy, make up a paste, rub in and let sit before brushing off. Clean any residue with a damp cloth.

Clean the grime and grease off sunglasses and spectacles by dipping your wet fingers into a saucer of baking soda and rubbing both sides of the glasses thoroughly. Rinse and dry with a soft dust-free cloth.

If you are using a carpet shampooing machine but are wary of the harsh detergents try this tip. Give the carpet a good sprinkle of baking soda before washing.

Decrease the shampoo by about a third. On heavy traffic areas sprinkle more baking soda or even scrub it in before using the machine.

Sprinkle baking soda on your carpet before vacuuming to eliminate food and pet odours. For those tough odours simply leave the baking soda in overnight.

To clean drains, tip about half a cup of baking soda down the plug hole and add half a cup of vinegar. Let sit for 10 minutes and then add boiling water. This is especially effective in the shower to get rid of the soap and shampoo residues.

If you have brass door knobs, window handles and ornaments, sprinkle baking soda on a damp cloth and scrub. You may need to buff later with a dry, soft cloth.

If you use soft shower curtains and they are a little greasy with use try a gently machine wash with about half a cup of baking soda.

If you have inherited ivory whatnots you will know how yellow they become with age. You won't get them back to the original colour, but you can freshen them up with baking soda, a soft toothbrush and some warm water.

Save your beautiful old porcelain sink! You will need baking soda and bleach for this tip, but the end result is worth it! Simply sprinkle the baking soda all over the bottom of the sink (or anywhere you want to concentrate the bleach), squirt the bleach all over the baking soda, let sit and then wipe clean. The baking soda soaks up the bleach, keeping it from rolling away. To make it easy to place the bleach where you want it to go, transfer enough to a plastic spray bottle. Just make sure you keep it away from little ones. To achieve a uniform result in your sink, sprinkle the soda everywhere and spray everywhere – just spray more liquid onto the problem spots.

For a quick clean of the bathroom surrounds, use baking soda on a damp sponge to wash off water spots on the taps. Spray bleach water in the toilet, sprinkle with baking soda, scrub as usual .. sparkling clean.

Clean your windows of all that winter grime. Use a damp cloth dipped in baking soda to scrub windows. Wipe over with a cloth dipped in vinegar.

Oh, oh. Where has your two year old put permanent marker? If it is on the enamel or metal surface of a fridge, washing machine, dishwasher etc, then baking soda will help. Make up a solution of 1 part baking soda to 3 parts water and apply with a sponge. The gentle abrasive action will protect the appliance finish, while dealing with the ink. Obviously, the sooner you can get to it the better.

If little ones have been using crayon on the chalkboard you can use a solution of baking soda and hot water to return it to 'as new'. You will need to wipe the residue off with a dry, soft cloth later, but it is better than buying a new one!

Because crayon is a waxy substance the emulsifying quality of baking soda is

perfect for those works of art on the wall at child height. Just wet a sponge and sprinkle baking soda on the area or directly to the sponge and gently rub the crayon off. Wipe up the excess baking soda and your walls are back to normal.

Flower vases can get slippery and slimy, particularly the narrow necked ones you can't get a kitchen brush down. Fill the vase halfway with part water, part vinegar. Add baking soda and watch it fizzle the inside clean. Leave for a while and rinse. If you need to repeat, fill with baking soda and hot water and leave overnight. Empty in the morning and then repeat step 1.

Keep fresh flowers alive for longer. Put of a teaspoon of baking soda in with the water as you fill a vase.

If you've let a blanket, a sheet, sleeping bag or whatever it is get damp and mouldy you may be able to rescue it with a combination of vinegar and baking soda. Using the largest bucket you can find, make up a mixture of baking soda and warm water (be generous with the baking soda) and soak the item thoroughly, pushing it through the mixture by hand. Now stir in a litre of vinegar and let it all do its stuff. If it fits in the washing machine, fine. If not, you'll have to rinse well by hand.

Spilt milk in the car really is something to cry about – but baking soda will save the day! Sprinkle the area liberally as soon as you get home and wait for it to dry before vacuuming up. You may have to repeat on the now dry area to really get rid of the last vestiges of the smell, but it is worth a box or two of baking soda.

Recipe for a Homemade Soft Cleaner:

Pour about 1/4 cup of baking soda into a bowl and add enough all purpose liquid soap or detergent to make a texture like cake icing. A health shop might have a really good natural soap without nasty chemicals you can use. Store it in an airtight container so it doesn't get all crusty and use as required.

You may have to add a little liquid soap and remix from time to time, but it is a wonderfully non-toxic household scrubber.

Watch your colour-fast items. Before cleaning carpet or upholstery with baking soda, test a hidden area for colour-fastness. The ideal solution is about a tablespoon to a cup of water. Dab the mixture onto the stained area and let it dry before vacuuming off.

Don't let your children come into contact with harsh cleaners. Using about 4 tablespoons of baking soda per litre of warm water make up a solution that you can dunk plastic toys and so on into. Give them a good rub with your hands and rinse under running water. Works especially well for things the little ones chew.

Kids Stuff

Making play dough with baking soda: combine 1 1/4 cups water, 2 cups baking soda, 1 cup cornstarch and 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Add whatever food colouring you are comfortable with and microwave on high for 1 minute. Stir and microwave again for 1 minute. Knead when it is cool and store in an air-tight container in the fridge. It will last about a week and the kids will love it.

Cheap entertainment! Make a bubbling, spitting volcano in the sand pit. Stand a milk carton half full of baking soda with a good dose of food colouring in the sand pit. Let the kids clump damp sand around it to the volcano shape and then give them half a bottle of vinegar to pour in. If you want a little more foam, add some liquid detergent to the mix. Let the children have some cheap fun on a wet day – helps you clean into the bargain!

Get them to cut up fun stencil shapes, like santas or fairies and then spread all over the carpeted floor. Now for the fun part... watch their excited faces as you allow them to sprinkle baking soda into the stencils and make shapes all over the carpet. It is simple to vacuum up and helps clean and deodorise your carpet.

Why not make stencils of the alphabet and let them shake baking soda over words they want to spell out? Again, it is a great carpet cleaner, and they will love having fun as they learn.

Balloon fun! Get some decent balloons and a funnel that will fit the neck of the balloon. Place the funnel in the balloon and empty about 2 teaspoons of baking soda into the un-inflated balloon. Keep the funnel in place and pour in as much vinegar as you can. Quickly stretch the balloon and tie it shut and then watch as the chemical reaction inflates the balloon. The fizzing action of the vinegar and baking soda together produces carbon dioxide gas.

Mexican Jumping Balls! You'll need a big glass vase, enough water to fill it almost to the top, 1/4 cup of vinegar, 3 teaspoons of baking soda, uncooked pasta pieces. Simply combine all the ingredients in the vase and, as the mixture bubbles and froths, toss in the pasta. They'll sink at first and then rise as

the chemical reaction causes bubbles to attach to the pasta. They'll float to the top and sink again as the bubbles dissipate on the surface. Fascinating!

Snow plough time! Empty a box of baking soda onto some baking paper on the kitchen table and let kids drive their snow ploughs and toy trucks through it.

They'll love it and you get the bonus of cleaner toys (just rinse off and let them dry), and any spread-around soda will let you give the table and floors a quick clean that it probably needs anyway!

Before storing children's plastic outdoor toys, pools and inflatable plastics, sprinkle with baking soda to help eliminate the musty plastic odours created as they wait for next season.

Clean favourite dolls, stuffed animals and teddy bears that can't be washed by putting them in a plastic bag with 1/2 cup of baking soda and shaking vigorously. Let it sit for 15 minutes, then vacuum the residue off. The baking soda will attract much of the dirt and brushing or vacuuming will dislodge it.

Use baking soda if a child wets the bed at night. Sprinkle baking soda on the sheets immediately to neutralise acid and absorb odour until the wash next morning. Sprinkle baking soda on the mattress to soak up moisture and deodorise. Vacuum next day.

If children are forever knotting their shoelaces, try sprinkling a little baking soda on to the knot. This should produce a bit of slip to help unknot.

Baking Soda & Your Pets

Baking soda absorbs kitty litter odours. Cover the bottom of the litter box with a box of baking soda; then add a layer of kitty litter on top. The expensive kitty litters include an odour control agent which the baking soda replaces, so you buy the cheaper kitty litter and save! The box is easier to clean and there is very little smell.

To clean your cat tray, fill it to about half way with warm water and a cup of vinegar and let it soak for 10 minutes. Tip the water out and sprinkle with baking soda and scrub with a scrunched up paper towel. Rinse and dry with another paper towel.

Sprinkle the cat litter tray daily with a little baking soda to keep odours at bay.

Fleas are a pest, so make life really uncomfortable for them and a lot more comfortable for your pets. Dust your dog with baking soda (good luck with the cat) several hours before a bath. This will kill a lot of fleas and decrease the 'dog' smell. Make sure you rinse the powder off or the dog may suffer some slight skin irritation.

Sprinkle baking soda over your dog before his regular brushing and you will do a number of things; it helps to keep him clean, gets the coat beautifully shiny, reduces doggy odour and reduces fleas (they don't like the alkalinity).

If you have something like a rabbit or guinea pig in a cage, you can decrease the smell quite a bit by sprinkling some baking soda under the bedding every couple of days. The animal is unlikely to lick at the baking soda but make sure it has fresh water regularly just in case. (It won't cause them any harm). The result is an odour-free pet cage, a happy child and a happier mum!

Use baking soda in the bottom of the bird cage. After doing the regular clean out, sprinkle a good layer of baking soda on the bottom of the tray before re-layering with newspaper. Works for mice cages as well.

Sprinkle baking soda around the edges of your pet's food bowls. They will keep away insects and the like.

Sprinkle baking soda over your pet's bedding. Don't use much, but do it regularly and vacuum the residue every so often. Keeps the blankets nice and fresh.

A neat trick to rid of doggy odour! Dissolve a cup of baking soda in 2 litres of water, soak dog scarves or warmers, hang outside on the washing line to dry. The next time you set off for a walk, he can wear his dried scarf or jacket and you will have almost no smell to contend with.

Soak dog collars in a strong solution of baking soda and hot water for 30 minutes and then scrub with a sturdy brush. Gets rid of all the grease and grime easily and just needs a rinse and hanging out to dry before re-using.

If your cat has had an accident in the house somewhere, don't despair! Make up a strong solution of baking soda and just enough water to dissolve it. Mix some perfumed essential oil (lemon is good) in and spread or spray over the affected area. Vacuum up any dried residue and you won't know you have had a problem.

When house training your new puppy sprinkle baking soda over the wet spots. It gets rid of the odour and discourages him from using the same spot again.

Neutralise the acid from dogs using trees near your property with baking soda. It helps protect the trees and, because the dogs can't smell previous urine, they are discouraged from using the tree again.

Wash your pet's ears with a solution of baking soda and warm water to get rid of mites and any dirt build up.

Prevent fur balls in your cat. Soak a sponge in warm water and baking soda and rub gently over the cat's fur. If you slowly get him used to this he will look forward to it as a treat and the solution picks up loose hair which otherwise would end up as a fur ball.

Time to clean up the aquarium? If it is a little large for easy cleaning, place

it in the shower, sprinkle in half a cup of baking soda and run the shower into it until around a third full. (Don't fill it more than this because it will be too difficult to empty). Let it sit for 30 minutes and then scrub with an old kitchen scrubber.

Test your aquarium acidity levels with a testing kit from your local pet store and use baking soda to restore the proper levels. You will need very little – about 1/4 teaspoon per 40 litres. Make sure you use a proper testing kit and don't overdo it.

Baking Soda Outdoors

Welcome! Protect your welcome mat by sprinkling it with baking soda every so often. Cleans, deodorises and catches the dirt. When you give them a good shake the baking soda will have attracted a lot of the dirt molecules and away it goes. Or you can prop up against the wall and hose down strongly after a good dose of baking soda.

Barbecue burners can often get clogged and greasy. Give them a maintenance-clean once a year by letting them rest in a solution of baking soda and hot water. Leave overnight, thoroughly rinse and replace. At the same time, take the opportunity to sprinkle baking soda in the drip tray under your grill. Stops odours and reduces the chance of a grease fire.

Greasy barbecue grills? Rub a paste of baking soda and water on to them, let it sit until dry and scrape off before your next barbecue as it is warming up. For an extra good spring clean, soak the grill in a strong mixture of baking soda and water for an hour or so and rinse before replacing.

If you have an outdoor stoneware oven, you will know you can't use normal detergents and so on to clean it because they will flavour foods. So use baking soda instead to remove the grease and baked on grime.

The stoneware comes up beautifully and you won't get a soapy flavour in your pizzas etc. Simply sprinkle baking soda throughout the oven, toss in some water and then scrub with a sturdy cloth.

Nasty scratch on your plant pots? Cover up with a thick paste of baking soda and water. Let it set and then wash it as usual. The scratch won't be as obvious.

Outdoor furniture will last a lot longer with a little care and attention. And baking soda makes it so simple. Just add a 1/4 cup of baking soda to a litre of warm water and wipe furniture with a soft sponge and rinse the residue. Sprinkle it directly on to canvas chairs, hammocks and so on and simply shake off the excess.

Pouring concrete? Use a little baking soda to stop it setting too quickly. Just

dust over the top of the poured concrete.

Do you use an artificial grass for a children's play area? It will tend to get mossy, so from time to time just sprinkle the entire area with baking soda. You don't have to rinse it out or anything. Keeps it smelling okay and no more moss!

Scummy birdbath? Give it a simple clean very so often by tipping in half a cup of baking soda and scrubbing with an old kitchen scrubber. Wash out the residue with warm water and then refill as normal.

Ant nest near the house? Tip baking soda over the area early in the morning or just after rain. Wait half an hour then pour some vinegar over the same area.

Before packing away your camping gear after a trip sprinkle with baking soda. Take a box of baking soda with you anyway. You will find it is an excellent dish cleaner, it will help you scrub your pots and pans and will act as a deodorizer for smelling hiking boots. It is perfect as a personal washer, good for cleaning your teeth and freshening up your mouth and will help with minor insect bites.

Use it to make sure the campfire embers are completely smothered before turning in for the night. Just before you pack away the tent and roll up the sleeping bag, sprinkle baking soda over everything. Next year will be a very pleasant surprise as you roll out beautifully fresh camping gear instead of the usual musty mess!

Use baking soda on your smelly fishing tackle. Either sprinkle it over everything and rinse or make a solution of 2 tablespoons of soda to 1 litre of warm water and rinse your gear in the liquid. Gets rid of the old bait smells and keeps your equipment well maintained.

Sprinkle baking soda into golf bags and gym bags to deodorise and use it to clean golf irons (without scratching them!). Make up a paste for your clubs, apply and rub off with a soft sponge.

Wash the rubbish bins with baking soda once a month. After drying, sprinkle liberally with baking soda and dust after each collection day. Soaks up all the nasty odours.

Use it in your recycling bins. Shake in a bit every couple of days as you fill them up. Cuts down on the odours from old milk bottles etc and avoids the musty odour of wet paper products.

Clean your wooden decking with baking soda. A once a year scrub will keep them looking good all year round. Wet your deck and sprinkle baking soda liberally over the wet area. Give it a good scrub with an outdoor broom, working the soda into a decent foam. Let it sit for 20 minutes and simply rinse off with water. Cleans the decking and kills any mossy mould that has gathered during the winter months.

Treat oil stains on your deck with baking soda. Sprinkle a good amount directly on to the stained area and let it sit. Once the soda has picked up a good amount of the oil, brush it away and repeat. Treat an old stain with a bit of paint thinner and sprinkle immediately with baking soda to prevent the paint thinner soaking into the wood. Again, let it sit and then brush away.

Use baking soda in your septic tank. It works to maintain the pH balance and keeps the environment healthy for the good bacteria your septic tank needs. Simply flush a cup of baking soda once a week, or even better, put a cup in the cistern once a week and get the extra cleaning benefit for the toilet!

Keep a box of baking soda in your workshop. It is handy for a number of things. It is there for any acid spills, it can act as a smothering agent for a small fire, it will help deodorise the area if you are working with strong smelling substances like glues, paint thinner and the like.

Emergency safeguard! Keep a container of baking soda in your garage as well as in your car. Should you have a small fire, the baking soda acts as a smothering agent and won't spread the fire if it is fuel-based when you throw it on to put out a fire. Don't be silly though – anything more than a small fire is not worth the danger – call the fire services.

Car Care:

Corroded battery terminals in the car? Make up a thick paste of baking soda and water and spread on to the affected terminals. Make sure it is nice and thick and wait just 10 minutes. Hose it off and be amazed at the difference.

If your old car battery just won't do it any more, you may get one more start out of it (enough to get to the garage!) Pour a teaspoon of baking soda into each opening. Wait 10 minutes and try to start her up again. If it works your first stop is the garage to pick up a new battery! Use this tip only if the battery is really past the point of no return.

Neutralise battery acid quickly in case of spills with baking soda. The soda kills off the acidic enzymes and will stop any further damage from the acid on paintwork, clothes and even skin. Make sure you rinse with fresh water quickly though.

Scuff marks on the car? Not everyone's parking skills are as good as yours. If you have a scuff mark on your car bumper, a damp cloth, a little work and plenty of baking soda will take it off without scratching the bodywork.

Cleans up vinyl seats a treat. Just rub a solution of baking soda and water over the scuffed or worn areas, let it dry and rub the powder residue off with a soft cloth.

Car window cleaner. After washing your windows, sprinkle a slightly damp cloth with baking soda and wipe the windows inside and out. Repels grime on the inside and repels rain on the outside. Magic!

Insects on your windscreen? Try a little baking soda mixed with warm water. It will clean the dried residue in no time from windows, headlights, grills and paintwork without damaging any of them. In fact, simply adding a little to your normal car shampoo next time you do the car will do wonders for all those little marks we pick up from tar and sap spots, bird grime and so on.

Freshen up that car! Baking soda will do wonders for the inside of your car. Use it in the ashtrays to eliminate odours and help smother ashes. Sprinkle it

on your foot mats to absorb moisture and odours from constant wet shoes. Use it to wipe down leather seats. Use it to sprinkle on any nasty spills like milk or juice.

Keep a box in your car. If you splash petrol on your clothes, dust yourself immediately with baking soda to get rid of the smell and soak up some of the petrol. Baking soda in the car is a good idea anyway for any nasty spills that will start to smell (milk etc).

Keep your outdoor brooms clean and fresh. Soak once a season in a strong solution of baking soda and warm water. You don't need to do anything else – just let them soak and then pour off the water into the nearest flower bed to give flowers a dose of alkaline salts.

Moss problems? If you live in a damp area where the moss builds up in shady areas or on the roof, baking soda will really help. The alkalinity will shrivel the moss overnight. Simply sprinkle on and leave.

For problem areas, sprinkle generously, but in general you won't need much and a dusting every couple of weeks will have your shady areas looking fantastic. Also works on the roof – you don't want to do it too often though, so wait for a spell of fine weather and shake plenty over your mossy areas.

Clean the children's summer pool at the end of the season with baking soda and warm water. Gets rid of the grime and any mildew that may have accumulated. You can store it away knowing it will be fresh and ready for next year.

If you own a caravan, freshen up your water tank for this year's holiday by filling up the reservoir with water and two cups of baking soda and then driving to your destination.

The journey will give it a nice slosh around, you can then drain, rinse several times and refill. That musty, plastic taste is gone and you will enjoy fresh water for your holiday.

How to clean oil-based paint brushes? You will need to get most of the paint out with mineral turpentine but once you've done that, simply soak the brushes overnight in a strong mix of baking soda and warm water. The paint is gone and so has the turpentine.

Swimming pool? One of the most important things to do with a pool is monitor and maintain your pH levels. Baking soda is perfect, it provides alkalinity and balances pH. You can have a clean pool without nasty chemicals – no more 'red eye'. Always follow your pool specialist's advice.

Follow the measurements below to get best results:

Monitor your pool weekly for pH with a professional monitoring kit.

- If pH is less than 7.2 Add 1.5 kilos of baking soda per 19000 litres of water
- Between 7.2-7.5 Add 1 kilo of baking soda per 19000 litres of water
- Above 7.5 Do not add baking soda

If you also want to monitor alkalinity, then use the following directions. Note that if you maintain your alkalinity within the parts per million range of 80-100ppm, the pH will take care of itself.

- If alkalinity is 20ppm Add 2.7 kilos of baking soda per 19000 litres of water
- If alkalinity is 40ppm Add 2.0 kilos of baking soda per 19000 litres of water
- If alkalinity is 60ppm Add 1.4 kilos of baking soda per 19000 litres of water
- If alkalinity is 80ppm Add 650 grams of baking soda per 19000 litres of water
- If alkalinity is 110ppm Do not add baking soda

Use baking soda to clean out your Jacuzzi. Fill a mop bucket with a cup of baking soda for every 4 litres of water and mop the sides of your Jacuzzi to keep it clean and free of grime.

If pool toys have been left to 'swim' for most of the season, give them a good

soak in baking soda and warm water before storage. Cleans up any slippery residue and saves them going mouldy.

Plant and Garden Care

If your garden needs a little help, try some of these tips:

Before using your favourite organic spray, add a teaspoon of baking soda for every 4 litres. The soda acts as an excellent fungicide.

Baking soda will help you test your garden soil for acidity. Scoop up about a cup of soil and place in a bowl. Mix in two cups of water and then stir in 1/4 of a cup of baking soda.

The amount of bubbling will tell you how much acid you have. A little bit of fizz around the edges is not a lot, a veritable volcano is huge! Now you'll know what questions to ask at the local garden centre.

If you discover your soil is overly acidic you can reduce the acidity dramatically with baking soda and enjoy a much better garden. Here's what to do: wait until everything has done its thing, then simply dig in several boxes of baking soda.

You may have to experiment to find the right balance of baking soda to ground area, but when you get it right the results will astound you. Less weeds and grasses, more and better quality flowers, better vegetable crops and healthier plants.

Start by dusting the area for the first year. Check for acidity with the tip directly above one month later and then adjusting the amount you use next year. Be careful about overuse – you don't want to go the other way and have an overly alkaline soil.

Only works in an acid soil, if your problem is alkalinity you will need to consult your garden centre people.

Blackspot, brown patch, other fungal diseases? Make up a mix of 5 teaspoons per 4 litres of water. Add a litre of liquid soap to act as a surfactant and spray the affected plants. You can also use it on soil, but as above make sure you have an acid soil to begin with and don't overdo it. Should get rid of most

fungal problems. For better results, water the plants well a couple of days before spraying.

Spray a weak mixture of baking soda around your tomato plants. It keeps away pests and lowers the acid in your crop, keeping them sweet and tasty!

Lay down a pest barrier. Pour a continuous line of baking soda around the pest's favourite plants. They will avoid the alkalinity like the plague! For best results, come out after rain and sprinkle directly on to slugs and snails.

Prevent weeds in concrete cracks and brick pathways. Sprinkle the path or concrete area with a generous amount of baking soda and then use your broom to sweep the powder into all the cracks. The sodium will prevent the grasses and weeds from growing.

Baking Soda and Your Body

Baking Soda in the medicine cabinet:

Before ingesting baking soda medicinally, check with your doctor. It is not appropriate for those on a low-sodium diet. It may also affect some drug prescriptions – ask your pharmacist if it is safe to use. Do not use if you are pregnant unless your doctor agrees.

Baking soda can help relieve the symptoms of a minor bladder infection. By drinking enough baking soda solution over a couple of days you can adjust the pH levels in your body. Talk to your doctor, and if he is agreeable make up a solution of 1/2 teaspoon per 300 mls of water. Drink no more than 8 glasses in a 24 hour period.

Many people use baking soda as an antacid because of its alkaline properties. Use the same recipe as above; ie. 1/2 teaspoon per 300 mls and drink no more than one dose every 2 hours. Don't continue for more than a day.

To relieve a mildly upset stomach put a pinch of baking soda and a pinch of salt into a cup of mint tea. It is not the best tasting thing in the world but it will ease and relieve an upset stomach.

We can't guarantee to cure the hangover but you might alleviate the symptoms with this idea. Put a teaspoon of baking soda in half a glass of water and drink. You'll replace some of the mineral salts you will have lost with dehydration and the baking soda will soothe your upset stomach. Have another glass about 2 hours later.

Some people also swear it is a good pain reliever for intense arthritis pain. Try _ a teaspoon every 2 hours in 300 mls of water. Do this 4 times a day for 3 days. Don't use this remedy if you are on a sodium-free diet.

Stuffy nose? Make up your usual vapouriser recipe and add in a teaspoon of baking soda. For 'extra strength' requirements mix a little baking soda and warm water together and, using an eye dropper, put 1 drop in each nostril. The alkalinity will dry you up in no time.

Need a 'pick-me-up' after a lot of exercise? Baking soda will help replace the

mineral salts you have lost through sweat. (Will also help after vomiting or diarrhoea). Use an empty 2 litre drink bottle and fill it with 1 litre boiled water. Using a funnel tip in 1 teaspoon of table salt, 1 teaspoon of baking soda and 5 teaspoons of sugar.

Add in a powdered drink sachet and shake well. Enjoy! (If the powdered drink is already sweetened you won't need the extra sugar).

Sore gums can be soothed by dipping a wet finger in baking soda and applying the paste to the tender spot. Works beautifully for sugar ulcers. May help teething children too!

Take away the sharp sting of mouth ulcers by pressing on a thick paste of baking soda and water and leaving as long as possible.

For cold sores use the same solution. Dab the paste directly onto the cold sore using a cotton bud. (Don't scrub though). Do this at least twice a day. It will help kill off the bacteria and dry up the wound.

Make sure earwax doesn't gather by periodically rinsing ears with a solution of baking soda and warm water. Use an eyedropper or plastic syringe. Warm olive oil can also help, after which you should rinse out any excess oil with a solution of baking soda and warm water.

Athlete's Foot can be treated with a good dusting of baking soda. For a more rigorous treatment, make up a paste and apply for around 15 minutes in the morning, shower as per normal and dry thoroughly. Dust feet again and dust shoes with baking soda. Do daily for a week.

Bee stings and other minor insect bites are easily taken care of. Make up a little nugget of baking soda and water, press on to the sting and keep in place with a sticking plaster. Remove once the pain has gone to let the bite heal naturally. Wasp stings are better treated with diluted vinegar.

However, if someone is allergic to a sting or reacts severely get them to medical first aid quickly.

Do the same thing with jelly fish or sea nettle stings. Use this to take away the pain, but see a doctor as soon as possible.

Soothe the itch of a broken arm or leg in plaster with a light dusting of baking soda, blown in with a hair dryer.

The itchy pain of chickenpox, shingles, poison ivy or other plant-based itches can be relieved with a soak in a warm bath and 1/2 a cup of baking soda. You can continue to relieve a poison ivy rash by applying a paste of baking soda and water to the affected area and leaving for 15 minutes or so.

Likewise, any vaginal itching associated with the onset of a period can be relieved with a soak in a warm bath and a 1/2 cup of baking soda.

Soaking in a baking soda bath also helps with the sting from a minor bladder infection. Relieve a minor bladder infection with a teaspoon of baking soda in a glass of water every 2 hours for 2 days. It adjusts the body's pH balance. Make sure you see a doctor if symptoms persist.

Yeast infections a problem? Put the sufferer in a bath for half an hour with half a cup of baking soda. Cleans it up in no time. Perfect for children because their delicate skin doesn't come in to contact with harsh commercial products.

A sore throat is no fun. Break up an aspirin into a glass of warm water, add a teaspoon of baking soda and stir until it is dissolved. Gargle several times to relieve your symptoms. If the salty taste is too much, put a teaspoon of honey in the mix.

Treat minor burns quickly. Fill a bowl with icy water and mix in some baking soda. Dip tea towels or similar into the mix and apply to the affected area. Do as soon as possible and there is less likelihood of blistering.

If it is just a minor burn from the oven or the iron or similar and you don't have time for the above, try this tip. Run under cold water to stop the burning, then make up a paste of baking soda and cold water and simply rub over

the burn. Leave until it dries and then brush and rinse off. It takes away the pain and encourages healing.

The last thing a child wants near his grazed knee is a harsh rub. Clean dirt off a skinned knee by applying a paste of baking soda. Let it sit, and rinse thoroughly with a bath shower nozzle if available.

Should someone spill battery acid or similar, treat immediately by flushing with cool water and then sprinkling on baking soda to neutralise the acid.

Baby Care:

Baby's cradle cap can be difficult to get rid of. Make up a paste of baking soda and water and apply just before bath time, rinsing thoroughly and carefully, avoiding baby's eyes.

An alternative is to rub baby oil into baby's hair, sprinkle baking soda on top and massage in. Comb the hair gently, then shampoo and rinse at bath time.

Lower baby's temperature if he is feverish with a lukewarm bath of water and baking soda.

Summer sunburn? Soothe away the sting with a warm bath and half a box of baking soda.

To remove warts, moles, age spots and skin bumps, mix baking soda with caster oil to form a thickish paste (not so thick that it is crumbly, as it has to spread on the area). Spread the mixture on the wart etc, and cover with a sticking plaster strip. Do this twice a day until it drops off, usually in about two to three weeks. The new skin forms underneath the wart and 'pushes' it off. Warning: if it is a recent mole with blackish colouring see a doctor to make sure it is not a melanoma.

Give tired eyes a break. Rinse them in a very weak solution of baking soda and warm water – unless you are allergic to salty solutions. Gets rid of make-up residue and soothes your eyes.

Baking Soda and The Rest Of Your Body

Treat a little heat rash with a cool shower and a paste of baking soda and water. Let the paste sit as long as possible before rubbing off.

To remove strong odours from your hands, wet your hands and rub them hard with soda then rinse. Particularly good for things like raw fish, chicken guts, garlic, onions or shellfish.

Keep your nails smooth and lustrous by rubbing with a slightly damp mix of baking soda and water. Smooth any leftover mix on to the dry skin at your elbows.

For fresher breath try this rinse. Sprinkle 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda into warm water and swirl in your mouth. Rather than covering up any odours it alters the pH balance in your mouth and destroys the odour-producing bacteria.

For a quick clean after lunch, sprinkle baking soda on your wet toothbrush and brush your teeth and dentures with it. For a good denture clean once a week here is a sure-fire tip: cover the dentures with hydrogen peroxide, stir in a teaspoon of baking soda and leave overnight. Cleans them up a treat and kills off the odour-producing bacteria for a super-fresh feeling the next day.

Want to get rid of brown tea and coffee stains from your teeth? Try this recipe. Combine 2 tablespoons of baking soda, 1 tablespoon of hydrogen peroxide and 1/2 teaspoon of mint extract (for flavour). Apply this paste to your teeth for as long as you can keep it there. Do this every night for 14 days and you will see a notable difference. (Don't swallow the mixture).

Try baking soda as a teeth whitener. Sprinkle a little on your toothbrush before the paste goes on and brush as normal. The toothpaste hides the taste of the baking soda while it does its work. Brush a child's braces with baking

soda once a day for freshness and to keep them nice and shiny (there is nothing worse than dull braces!).

Sprinkle a good dose of baking soda in tennis shoes, socks, boots and slippers to eliminate odour. Do it after they are asleep and the children or husband won't even notice!

If you have a mouth ulcer or canker sore that is hard to reach with a paste of baking soda, try this quick solution: gargle with 1/2 teaspoon baking soda in 1/2 glass of water. Freshens and cleans the mouth, relieves the pain of your ulcer and promotes healing because of the alkalinity.

You can even use baking soda as an underarm deodorant. Browse the following recipes and choose the one that suits. Try both and find out which works best for you.

Make a cream deodorant by mixing 2 tablespoons baking soda, 2 tablespoons petroleum jelly and 2 tablespoons talcum or baby powder. Heat in a double boiler or over very low heat, stirring constantly until it becomes smooth and creamy. Store in a container with a tight lid. Baking soda actually absorbs odours instead of just covering them up.

Sprinkle a light covering of baking soda onto a damp washcloth. Pat on the body where needed. Don't rinse. For a more convenient way of applying the baking soda, add 3 teaspoons baking soda to 1 cup of water in a spray bottle. Use less baking soda if the sprayer gets clogged.

Mix a cup of baking soda and 2 tablespoons of cornstarch and put it in a plastic container with a short-handled makeup brush. Then after your shower you just brush on the powder. Since you are still a little moist, it doesn't have a problem sticking.

Mix equal parts baking soda and cornstarch, then add water until it can be poured into a mould. After it dries you have a ball of deodorant that you can moisten and apply. Be careful though, because baking soda IS caustic, and if you apply it to raw or tender skin (ie. after shaving your armpits) it will burn. Use a mix of talcum powder and baking soda to dust over your inner thighs to

act as a gentle deodorant and moisture absorber.

Sprinkle a little baking soda on a sanitary pad for extra deodorant protection. Helps with itchiness too. Vaginal itchiness can be relieved by douching with a mixture of baking soda and warm water.

Deep splinter removal can be very difficult – particularly on reluctant children. Try one of the following remedies for a pain-free solution:-

- Soak the affected finger in a solution of warm water and 1 tablespoon of baking soda twice a day for about 20 minutes each time. After a few days the splinter will lift out easily with a pair of tweezers. Or...

- Make a paste of baking soda and water, and place the paste of a sticking plaster. Apply the plaster to the affected area and leave for about 24 hours. When you remove the sticking plaster the splinter will be sticking out above the skin and can be lifted off easily with tweezers.

Baking soda in a warm bath is great for minor skin ailments like a bit of flaky skin and so on. Use about half a cup and soak away the problem for about half an hour.

Bath Salt Soak. Combine 2 cups of baking soda with 1 cup Epsom Salts and 1 cup sea salt. Stir to blend. Pour 1/4 cup or so into the bath while it is filling. For a relaxing, moisturising bath add 1 to 2 tablespoons of pure vegetable glycerine (available in health food stores) per bath.

Enjoy a wonderfully relaxing bath with baking soda. Simply add in half a cup of baking soda as you run the bath and enjoy the way it gently softens your skin. For something a little more exotic start your bath with some scented oils and relax for a while before refilling with hot water and dissolving half a cup of baking soda. The baking soda softens your skin and helps to get rid of the oil when you pull out the plug.

It is excellent for sore or blistered feet. Give yourself a pampering with a large bowl of hot water and 1/4 of a cup of baking soda. Soothes aching feet, helps bunions and corns and takes the sting out of a raw blister.

Face Care:

Use gently as an exfoliating facial scrub. Sprinkle a small amount of baking soda onto your palm, add a little water, and wash your face. Leaves the skin feeling as though you had used a moisturiser. Test the difference by only washing one side of your face, rinse, towel dry then check the difference in skin softness.

Use baking soda to get a close shave. You will find that using a bit of baking soda mixed with water and scrubbing your face immediately before shaving helps remove oil from whiskers, making it easier for the razor to 'grab' them. It also works well to leave the soda on the face and apply shaving cream on top (although if you take your time shaving it may start to sting a little before you finish).

Try adding a little baking soda to your facial cleanser instead of using facial scrubs. The little grains are round and tiny, which makes it very non-abrasive. You will love the difference it makes. Make your own facial scrub by mixing a teaspoon of baking soda with enough olive oil to form a paste. Massage gently into your skin and rinse well before drying with a lovely soft towel.

Would you like a natural face scrub? Mix a handful of uncooked porridge or oatmeal, some water and a handful of baking soda in a blender. Store in an airtight container so it doesn't dry out and scoop up a handful every time you want to give your face a pampering. Works to get rid of excess oil in your skin and heals any little pimples.

If you suffer from acne, here is a good tip: Make up a paste of baking soda and water. The paste should be thick enough to roll into a ball. Simply press the balls into the affected areas and let them sit for as long as possible. It draws out the pus, kills the bacteria and helps to heal the spot. Repeat until clear.

Another idea for raw pimples is to make up a paste of baking soda and peroxide. Apply before bedtime and leave all night. Dries them up in no time. Works as a good emergency pimple remover if you have at least an hour before going out.

If you have an oily skin, and you don't want all the chemicals of the commercial cleansers on your face, try baking soda instead. Dust a little on one palm, cup some warm water in the other and gently wash your face with your hands, avoiding the eyes. Repeat of necessary and do morning and night for a week and be amazed at the difference. Much better than commercial preparations at a fraction of the cost.

Hair Care:

It is great for your hair too! Next time you shampoo use a little bit of baking soda as well. You will get rid of the chemical residue from hairsprays, styling gels, waxes and so on, leaving your hair naturally fresh and sparkling clean. It removes the hardness from the water as you wash and ends up lightening your hair too if you use it often enough.

If you mix it and hair conditioner in your hand and only condition the ends of your hair it will give your hair more volume, body, and health.

No time to wash your hair before heading out? Sprinkle a little baking soda on top of your head and then brush it through. You can even do a quick blow dry for some style if you like. Gets rid of excess oil and gives your hair body and bounce. Works perfectly!

For daily wear contact lenses that have protein build-up, make a wet paste of baking soda and saline solution. Clean lenses in your hand with this paste, then follow your regular lens care routine. The mild abrasive will remove the deposits without harming the lenses, and they will feel like new. Clear this first with your optometrist and only do about once a month.

Treat nail fungus on your feet with baking soda. Soak your feet first of all in a solution of warm water and baking soda for 30 minutes. Dry them off then put a paste of baking soda and water on to the affected area. Repeat until the fungus has cleared up.

Look after those garden hands! Wash your chafed hands under warm water with a good sprinkle of baking soda, then clean your nails with dabs of soda on a nail brush. The dirt rinses off and leaves your hands beautifully soft.

Use baking soda to remove the rough skin on your elbows and heels. Rub a paste of baking soda and water in a circular motion over the rough area and by the end of the week you should be nice and smooth.

Sick of white tongue? Nothing seems to work? Try a spoon of baking soda, leaving it on your tongue as long as you can, night and day until it is gone. Won't take long and your mouth will also feel fresh and clean.

It is good for baby too. Relieve the itch of nappy rash and neutralise any acidity from urine by dissolving 2 teaspoons of baking soda in baby's bath water. Softens the skin and gets him sparkling clean!

Try sprinkling a little on baby's nappy before doing it up after a change. Do NOT sprinkle directly onto baby's soft skin unless you are rinsing off shortly in a bath. The baking soda will neutralise the acidity of the urine and reduce the odour.

Baby puts his mouth everywhere! Make it safe for him by cleaning everything he might chew with a gentle solution of baking soda and warm water. Rub down his cot, playpen, and change table. Soak all his toys in a baking soda solution. Scrub his pushchair and distraction toys. It is completely safe and avoids nasty chemicals.

Published by
Wellform Ltd
PO Box 134
Jersey
JE4 9QY

● First Published August 2006

