

The
ACCIDENTALLY *green*



Guide to Safe Cleaning

By Hilary Bernstein

© 2014 Hilary Bernstein, Accidentally Green, llc.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced or distributed without prior written permission. Please do not participate in or encourage piracy of copyrighted materials in violation of the author's rights. If you haven't paid for this eBook, you are depriving the author of her royalties; please pay for your copy at <http://www.accidentallygreen.com/cleaning-without-chemicals/>.

Cover logo by Moonsteam Design.

ISBN 9780989105330

First edition

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
<i>Cleaning Basics</i>	
Windows	7
Dusting	9
All-Purpose Cleaners	12
Floors	15
<i>Room-By-Room Cleaning</i>	
Entry Way, Living Room, Family Room, Dining Room, Playroom, Office and Bonus Rooms	19
Kitchen	20
Bathroom	30
Bedrooms	33
Laundry Room	34
About the Author	36

Do you wish you knew how to clean your home without using any chemical products? I'd love to help you.

As a clean freak, at one time I believed that my home couldn't possibly be clean without store-bought, chemically-based cleaners. Was I ever wrong!

The cleaners I eagerly used may have seemed effective, **but they were toxic**. Since I've changed to a healthier lifestyle, the hazardous cleaners were first replaced by homemade cleaners – and then something much simpler.

Disclosure: Affiliate links are included in this eBook. Purchasing products through this guide will result in commissions for Accidentally Green. (Thank you!)

Additionally, I am a Norwex Independent Sales Consultant. After searching for nontoxic cleaning solutions for years, I was thrilled to find products that cleaned my home safely – and simply. I became a consultant only because I love using the products in my own home and wanted to share them with others.

How do I safely clean my own house from top to bottom?

First, I gather my supplies. I use:

- [Norwex cleaning cloths.](#)

I also keep on hand:

- Baking soda,
- Castile soap,
- Hydrogen peroxide,
- Lemons,
- Salt,
- Washing soda, and
- White vinegar.

Then I get to work.

Cleaning Basics

Many elements in cleaning are the same. Most rooms have windows and floors that need cleaned and dusting that needs to be done. Here's how I tackle those basic tasks:

Windows

Ah, cleaning windows. I've spent hours throughout my life trying to get windows clean – washing off dog slobber, kids' fingerprints and trying to remove the foggy, streaky haze left by so many chemical varieties of glass cleaners.

Like most cleaning chores, it seems like washing windows is a task that never ends.

Commercial products

After trying many commercial products, I realized I just didn't like them. They didn't clean windows effectively and their scent and spray left me sneezing.

It's no wonder. I checked out [Windex glass cleaner](#) on the [Environmental Working Group's Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#) and discovered it received a D rating.

Specifically, Windex contains:

- Ammonium Hydroxide, a chemical that affects a person's respiratory system and causes acute aquatic toxicity;
- Hexoxyethanol, a chemical that affects organs; and
- Fragrance, a combination that's a trade secret, yet known to irritate allergies, respiratory tract, and skin.

Now it makes perfect sense why Windex makes me sneeze!

Homemade alternatives

For a safe solution, I tried a homemade version of window cleaner. After attempting a spray made of three tablespoons of white vinegar, two cups of water, and ten drops of lemon essential oil. It definitely was natural, but unfortunately I wasn't impressed with the results.

What I use in my own home

In 2013 I was **introduced to Norwex cleaning products – and my window cleaning has forever changed.** Using Norwex's **Enviro Cloth** and **Window Cloth** together, my windows are spotless and streak-free – and it hardly takes any effort or time on my part.

One down side is that many birds have died as a result of flying into my sparkling clean windows. But now when my children get fingerprints on my windows, I'm not annoyed by having to dig out my spray and paper towels to clean. I simply wet the Norwex microfiber with tap water and quickly swipe the dirty areas with my dampened window cloth. Everything returns to its crystal clear glory and I'm a more cheerful mama.

I've loved the results I've gotten with Norwex. I love how it's safe. I love how I don't have to deal with any store-bought or homemade sprays. (And I love it so much that I became an independent sales consultant – a role I never in a million years dreamed I would commit to.)

Dusting

The one chore I was allowed to do since I was 5 or 6 years old was dust. And I became a great duster.

Whenever it was cleaning day – or company was coming – I would grab the yellow canister of wood polish spray and an old cloth diaper and help my mom by dusting all the wood furniture in our home. Music always played during cleaning time, and I remember taking a dusting break to hop up on my family's orange couch to dance to the Bee Gees. (Can you tell I grew up in the late '70s?)

I kept my dusting job as long as I lived with my parents. My mom willingly took the harder jobs of cleaning the bathrooms and kitchen, but dusting – and later on vacuuming and washing windows – was my territory.

Once I finally had an apartment of my own, I instinctively bought the same yellow canister of polishing spray without giving it a second thought. *That is what you used for dusting.*

During my first pregnancy, though, all of my old cleaning routines went out the window. And I stopped using any sort of dusting or furniture polishing sprays.

It's a good thing I did. The ingredients are pretty nasty.

Why should you get rid of commercial dusting sprays?

The Environmental Working Group analyzed 46 different furniture polishes and 52 percent (24 products) received a rating of F – while 28 percent (13 products) received a D. Only 1 product received an A. And 3 products received a B.

Forgive me for stating the obvious, but furniture polishes and dusting sprays are hazardous to your health.

What's so bad?

Take, for example, almond-scented Old English Furniture Polish. It received an F because it contains the following ingredients of concern:

- **Cyclotetrasiloxane.** This ingredient affects human development, as well as endocrine and reproductive systems. It's also toxic to aquatic life – and that's a problem once you wash your dusting rags and the residue is rinsed away and enters the water supply.
- **Mineral Spirits.** The spirits may damage DNA, cause cancer, and affect your respiratory system.
- **Petroleum Gases, liquefied, sweetened.** The gases may damage your DNA and cause cancer.
- **C12-20 Isoparaffin .** This chemical may be a carcinogen.

A homemade alternative

To avoid inhaling a bunch of toxins while you dust your home, try your own homemade furniture polish.

Simply whisk together the juice from half a lemon, a little olive oil (about twice the amount of the lemon juice) and a splash of white vinegar. Rub this mixture on wooden furniture with a soft dusting cloth and enjoy the natural shine!

What I use in my home

When I'm strictly dusting my home, I use two **Norwex** products – the Norwex **dusting mitt** and the **EnviroWand**. The **dusting mitt** fits easily over my hand and greatly reduces my dusting time. Dust clings to the microfiber and I can quickly dust surfaces with just a swipe of my hand.

I also use my dusting mitt to quickly clean the wooden stairs in my home. And, when I wet the dusting mitt with water, I quickly clean window screens.

For hard-to-reach dusting areas, I love using Norwex's **EnviroWand**. I can easily dust ceiling fan blades, the top of my refrigerator, and under beds and heavy furniture with the wand. I also use it to dust corners and my ceilings. As a petite person, this **EnviroWand** makes my cleaning so much easier and quicker

because I can clean areas without having to climb up and down a step stool.

If and when my furniture needs polished after dusting – typically I tend to do this about twice a year – I make my homemade lemon/olive oil/white vinegar concoction shared above.

All-purpose cleaners

All-purpose cleaners are so handy, aren't they? Just spritz a little bit of spray, wipe with a paper towel, and your hard surfaces are disinfected.

But at what cost? Sure, 32 ounces of an antibacterial all-purpose cleaner only cost \$2.98. But what is the cost to your health?

Commercial products

I checked out the Environmental Working Group's rating of [Fantastik Heavy Duty All-Purpose Cleaner](#). My husband and I used to use it liberally on our kitchen counters. It received a rating of F because of:

- Alkyl Dimethyl Benzyl Ammonium Chlorides (C12-16). This ingredient is an antimicrobial pesticide that affects organs and respiratory systems.
- Alkyl Dimethyl Ethylbenzyl Ammonium Chlorides (C12-18) and Alkyl Dimethyl Ethylbenzyl Ammonium Chloride (C12-14). These ingredients affect respiratory systems.

Homemade alternatives

There are plenty of safer homemade alternatives.

You can make one all-purpose cleanser by mixing 5 drops of tea tree oil with equal parts of water and white vinegar.

You can also use plain old white vinegar to clean your counter tops – or hydrogen peroxide.

You can infuse **white vinegar with orange peels** (simply peel a couple oranges, add the rinds to a glass jar, cover with white vinegar, let the mixture steep for a couple weeks, and use as a spray.) But in my experience, the citrus-infused vinegar still smelled like vinegar and stained my surfaces orange.

You also can mix together 1 tablespoon liquid castile soap, 1/4 cup baking soda, and enough tap water to make a paste. Use this mixture as a non-abrasive cleaning paste, and rinse with water to remove the residue.

What I use in my own home

I've gone the homemade all-purpose cleaner route, and I didn't care for it. Because I'm typically crunched for time, I didn't care for making the sprays – not only were they inconvenient, but also I never knew exactly how effective they were.

Since this mid-2013 I've been using a damp Norwex EnviroCloth to disinfect my hard surfaces. The EnviroCloth is made of microfiber that acts like a magnet to dirt and grime. The dirt and protein that typically feeds bacteria is trapped in the microfiber – and Norwex's microfiber contains silver that begins to naturally disinfect the cloth right away.

Independent tests have shown that Norwex is more effective at killing E. Coli when compared to all-purpose cleaners and generic microfiber cloths.

It's the easiest cleaning I've ever done. And if I can clean my surfaces in the most effective way – and only use water and a microfiber towel to do it – then I'm sold. I love having absolutely odorless cleaning – as well as the most effective cleaning.

Floors

Floors naturally receive a lot of wear and tear. By taking shoes off before entering a room, you can reduce much of the dirt and pollution tracked in by shoes. But even without shoe traffic, floors still get dirty with crumbs, splatters, pet hair and dust. Because of this, vacuuming, mopping, and stain removal are typical cleaning chores.

Commercial options

Have you ever stopped to consider that commercial mopping and stain removal products may not be very healthy?

When the Environmental Working Group **evaluated 62 hard floor cleaners**, 29 products (46 percent) received an F and 23 products (37 percent) received a D.

When I used to mop my floors with a traditional mop and cleaner, Mop & Glo was my cleaner of choice. I would have liked to know that the EWG rated **Mop & Glo Triple Action Floor Shine** with an F because of:

- Ethoxyethanol, ethylene glycol monomethyl ether, and methoxydiglycol. All ingredients affect developmental, endocrine and reproductive systems.
- Unspecified fluorosurfactant. This ingredient causes biodegradation.
- Ammonium hydroxide. This ingredient is acutely toxic to aquatic life.

Stain removal on carpeting isn't any safer. Out of **36 carpet cleaners tested**, 17 products (47 percent) received an F and 15 products (41 percent) received a D. That's 88 percent of the tested carpet cleaners!

Resolve Triple Action Spray, a product I've used in the past, received an F for its inclusion of sodium salts

(affect developmental, endocrine and reproductive systems) and acrylic acid (is acutely toxic to aquatic life).

Safer alternatives

Once I began to clean with safer alternatives, I preferred cleaning my hardwood floors with [Murphy's Oil Soap](#). And I mopped my tile floors on my hands and knees with a [watered down castile soap](#).

For stain removal, I have really loved a [homemade concoction of cornstarch, white vinegar, dishwashing liquid, and hot water](#). It worked better than Resolve ever did. Simply:

Remove any part of the stain that you can. Sprinkle cornstarch on the stain and wait for 15 minutes. Vacuum the cornstarch off the carpet.

Mix one tablespoon clear dishwashing liquid, one tablespoon white vinegar, and two cups of hot water.

Use a light-colored towel or rag and blot, sponge, and scrub the stain away. Depending on the severity of the stain, this may take a lot of effort.

What I use in my own home

Now that I've been using Norwex products, the days of solely washing my hard surface floors on my hands and knees is over. I use my [Norwex mop collection](#) and switch between my dry mop pad and wet mop pad. I'm not a huge mopper or diligent floor cleaner, but this system is so much simpler and quicker than a broom and dustpan or old spongy – and germy! – mop that needed continually rinsed, squeezed, and replaced.

During my spring cleaning, though, I still wash floors on my hands and knees with Murphy's Oil Soap.

And when there's a stain on my carpet, I try to clean it up with a Norwex EnviroCloth first. But if it stubbornly won't come out, I use [my cornstarch/white vinegar/dishwashing liquid/hot water remedy](#).

Room-By-Room Cleaning

Looking for ways to clean particular rooms in your home? Check out these tips:

Living Room, Family Room, Dining Room, Playroom, Office and Bonus Rooms

I'm thankful that most of my house doesn't require specialized cleaning routines. When I'm cleaning my living room, family room, dining room, and playroom, I concentrate on the tasks I've previously detailed:

- Washing the windows,
- Dusting everything from the ceiling to the floor,
- Cleaning hard surfaces, and
- Sweeping or vacuuming the floors.

Granted, that's what I consider my maintenance cleaning. But each spring I undertake a deep cleaning where I wash walls, screens, window treatments, floors, and knick knacks.

Kitchen

Where I save time cleaning my living and dining rooms, I spend the majority of my cleaning time in my kitchen. Dishes and kitchen clean-up are three-times-a-day occurrences.

Unfortunately, because of time constraints I do have several spots that fly under my typical cleaning radar – my refrigerator, oven, microwave, and sink. I do notice that they need cleaned, but due to a full schedule, I don't have time to clean them as often as I'd like.

When I clean them, this is what I do:

Refrigerator

Chemical and homemade cleaners

Years ago, I tried using sprays like the [Clorox Anywhere Hard Surface Daily Sanitizing Spray](#). According to the Environmental Working Group's [Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#), it received a C for sodium hypochlorite (it affects human respiratory systems and is toxic to aquatic life) and hydrochloric acid (it also affects respiratory systems).

Homemade options

But all-purpose sprays never seemed to work very well in the cold environment of a refrigerator. So I tried liquid castile soap in warm water. Applying it – and scrubbing off spills – with old wash cloths was helpful. And the warm water seemed to help on the chilly glass shelves. But this method resulted in a lot of bubbles left on the surface, and a lot of rinsing, wiping and drying to take the bubbles away.

What I use in my own home

Finally I've found a quick, simple, non-messy, odor-free and safe way to clean the inside of my refrigerator and freezer: I use the [Norwex EnviroCloth](#).

Here's how I clean my refrigerator : I remove all the contents from a particular shelf. I wet my EnviroCloth with warm water – so it's damp, but not dripping wet. I wipe out the shelf with a quick swipe, and return everything to the shelf. When my EnviroCloth is dirty from my fridge crud, I simply rinse it out with warm water and get back to work. No fuss, no muss. My refrigerator looks super clean, yet I haven't had to go to the inconvenience of getting sprays and paper towels, or mixing up a warm, soapy bucket of water.

I happen to have a stainless steel refrigerator, so if I'm feeling very ambitious and clean my kids' artwork off the front, I dampen my [Norwex Window Cloth](#) with water and quickly polish the stainless steel.

Microwave

Years ago, I hated cleaning inside my **microwave** because plain old water and a dishrag didn't do the job. So I tried all-purpose sprays and paper towels, but I ended up using at least five paper towels and a *lot* of spray.

Commercial options

The sprays didn't smell good – even Nature's Source Natural All-Purpose Cleaner. A year ago I was happy buy it at a great bargain. The label *said* it was natural, and it wasn't artificially colored. It had to be safe, right?

Wrong. In fact, **it's received an F** from the Environmental Working Group in their **Guide to Healthy Cleaning**. The spray's stabilizer may affect human development, as well as endocrine and reproductive systems. The spray's cleaning agent is toxic to aquatic life. And the spray's fragrance, a non-specific ingredient, may irritate allergies and skin and may affect respiratory and nervous systems.

Homemade method

There's an easy, effective way to clean your microwave with water and lemon juice. Simply mix 2 tablespoons of lemon juice with 1 cup of water in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave the bowl for 90 seconds. Wipe the inside of the microwave with a soft cleaning rag.

Be careful with this method, though. While it's a chemical-free way to clean, there's a risk of getting burned with the boiling hot water.

What I use in my own home

Instead of accidentally burning myself with burning hot lemon water (trust me, I've done it before) or inhaling a bunch of fumes from all-purpose sprays, I've started cleaning my microwave very quickly and safely with Norwex microfiber.

Like all other areas of my kitchen, I wet my [Norwex EnviroCloth](#) with warm tap water, wring it out and wipe out my microwave – there's no odor, no mess. When my EnviroCloth gets dirty, I rinse it out with tap water and keep cleaning.

Sometimes, when I have a lot of stuck on gunk in my microwave, I use the [Norwex Scrubby Corner Cloth](#). (The scrubby corner is helpful when it comes to scrubbing, and the rest of the cloth is the same as an EnviroCloth.)

Oven

Did you know that [oven cleaners are some of the most dangerous cleaning products on the market?](#)

Commercial cleaning options

Take, for example, Easy-Off Fume Free Oven Cleaner. Cleaning without fumes is a good thing, right?

Yes, cleaning without fumes is a good thing. But NOT when you're dealing with a toxic product. In their [Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#), the Environmental Working Group gave [Easy-Off Fume Free Oven Cleaner an F](#) because it contains:

- Ethanolamine, a chemical that irritates allergies and damages skin. It also affects respiratory systems and organs.
- Butoxydiglycol, another chemical that affects the respiratory system. It also is a suspected carcinogen and may damage DNA and affect allergies, vision, as well as digestive, endocrine, nervous and reproductive systems.

Homemade remedies

For the past year and a half I've been using safe, natural and homemade ways to clean my oven – completely with baking soda and white vinegar.

I documented my first experience – flaws and all – in my post, [Make Your Own Oven Cleaner](#).

But I updated it, along with tips for less mess, in my post, [An Improved Homemade Oven Cleaner](#).

What I use in my own home

If you've read the my suggestions in this guide, you already know that I use Norwex products all.the.time in my home.

I wondered if Norwex could clean my oven – so I tried. I scrubbed with Norwex's stainless steel **Spirinetts**, and wiped away the grime with a **Norwex EnviroCloth**. It definitely worked – but it blackened my EnviroCloth. And my EnviroCloth was stained for quite a while.

Since I don't really want to stain my EnviroCloths, I've changed my approach and now clean my oven with a combination of homemade remedies and Norwex. Starting out with baking soda and white vinegar, I scrub with old, used aluminum foil and wipe all the black, burned on crud away with an old rag. Then I follow up with a light scrub with Norwex Spirinetts and finish everything with the EnviroCloth.

With surprisingly minimal effort and absolutely no chemicals, I have an amazingly clean oven!

Sink

All kitchen sinks need to be deep-cleaned. But because I want to keep all chemical cleaning products out of my home, I can't follow typical, commercial suggestions like [bleach](#), Comet, Ajax, [Windex](#), or Bar Keepers Friend anymore.

Commercial cleaners

Because Bar Keepers Friend is an old-fashioned cleaning product, I [assumed it was safe](#). But when I used it, the scent made me question if it was really as safe as I hoped.

After some checking on the Environmental Working Group's [Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#), I found that Bar Keeper's Friend – both the powder and soft cleaner – [received Fs](#). The products rated so poorly because of oxalic acid – an ingredient that affects organs. (Keep in mind that this same guide also [rated Borax with an F](#), and many naturally minded homemakers still trust and choose to use it.)

Homemade options

If you're looking for a safe way to clean your sinks, look no farther than your kitchen cupboards. I've had great success with half of a lemon, table salt, and baking powder. Using the salt as a scouring agent, I scrub it into the sink with the lemon half.

To try to lighten stains in my porcelain kitchen sink, I use baking soda *and* salt. (I've sadly found that due to the age my kitchen, certain stains on my counter tops and sink are there to stay – unless we replace them.)

What I use in my own home

When I'm not trying to scour my sink with the salt and lemon method, I love wiping my sinks out

with [Norwex EnviroCloth](#).

The EnviroCloth's microfiber attracts and holds dirt and grime. Once it's trapped in the microfiber, naturally antimicrobial and antibacterial silver that's in the EnviroCloth cleanses the cloth. I love this effective way of cleaning my sinks safely.

When deep cleaning my kitchen, I also dust or wash surfaces, clean window treatments and light fixtures ... and I empty all cupboards, drawers and refrigerator, one shelf or drawer at a time. By doing this, I can rearrange and organize more easily, and I sort food. It's amazing how expired or almost-finished food can hide in your pantry or refrigerator! Once the shelves and drawers are emptied, I wipe them out and neatly restock them.

Bathrooms

Did you know that [bathroom cleaners are some of the most toxic cleaning products on the market](#)? They're harsh in order to kill organisms – yet when used in bathrooms that typically have poor ventilation, the fumes can be quite overpowering.

A commercial choice

Let's take a quick look at [Soft Scrub Total](#) – it foams, sprays, and can work upside down. Yet it received a C in the Environmental Working Group's [Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#).

Soft Scrub Total includes fragrance that irritates skin and allergies, and sodium dodecylbenzenesulfonate, a chemical that's toxic to aquatic life.

Homemade choices

For safer, homemade options, you can clean your bathroom with white vinegar or hydrogen peroxide. (Hydrogen peroxide is a great, safe alternative to bleach.)

You also can make your own scrubbing paste out of baking soda and lemon juice.

Or, as I suggested earlier, mix together 1 tablespoon liquid castile soap, 1/4 cup baking soda, and enough tap water to make a paste. Use this mixture as a non-abrasive cleaning paste, and rinse with water to remove the residue.

What I use in my own home

For several years, I used liquid castile soap to clean my bathroom – just a squirt of it swished and scrubbed in my toilet bowl. I also cleaned counter tops and toilet seats with hydrogen peroxide. And I used Shaklee scrubs and sprays in my bathtub.

However, since I started cleaning with Norwex products in the summer of 2013, I simply clean my entire bathroom with water and a Norwex microfiber towel.

Here's my newly simplified bathroom cleaning routine:

When I'm done in the shower, I wipe down the shower walls with an **EnviroCloth**. There's no need to moisten since the shower's already wet. Sometimes – if it's been a while between cleanings – I use Norwex's **Scrubby Corner Cloth** to get soap scum off. And once in a blue moon I use Norwex's **Cleaning Paste** to quickly scour any hard-to-remove build-up.

Once my shower's clean, I move on to my sink and counter top. Again, it's just a quick swipe – and sometimes a little bit more thorough scrub – with an EnviroCloth.

If needed, I polish my mirror with Norwex's **Window Cloth**.

I touch up any spots on my floor with my moist EnviroCloth – since I have young children who sprinkle when they tinkle, I make sure to get the area around the toilet. Then, I rinse the EnviroCloth out with tap water and wipe down the outside of my toilet. I move on to the toilet seat and finally, as long as the toilet has been flushed first, I wipe down the inside of my toilet bowl.

Instead of getting totally grossed out, I trust that Norwex's naturally antibacterial and antimicrobial silver is cleansing the cloth right away. I then throw the EnviroCloth with my dirty load of laundry, wash, and dry it. Voila!

(Just so you don't think I'm completely bonkers for cleaning my toilet with an EnviroCloth, [you have to check out the results of an independent lab study on the EnviroCloth](#) ... it should make you think twice about using antibacterial cleaners when compared to Norwex!)

When deep cleaning my bathroom, I also dust walls and baseboards. I sort all toiletries, medication, dental hygiene items, and soaps. I keep what is safe, what I like and what I use. Then I toss whatever is expired or almost emptied.

I also launder my shower curtain and bath mat, and disinfect doorknobs and switch plates with a quick swipe of a clean, moistened EnviroCloth.

Bedrooms

Your bedroom should be a haven for you – a place you know you can retreat to unwind and relax. It's possible to create this sort of a space while safely cleaning it.

Yet I know that in my typical cleaning efforts, I focus on decluttering and tidying a room – not always on *cleaning* it. And in my home, our bedrooms are the dirtiest rooms. I neglect dusting the hard surfaces and sweeping our hardwood floors. Oh, sure, I put away our clean laundry, declutter our dresser and nightstands, and regularly change our sheets. But those regular chores hardly *clean* our room.

The problem is, *our bedrooms should be cleaned*, because we spend hours in bed every single night. And that means *we're breathing in dirt and dust particles all night long*.

I've tried using an air purifier when our house is closed up for cold weather, and we love to sleep *with our windows open* when it's warm. But those remedies don't *remove* the dust.

To avoid using the dusting and polishing sprays – or even the inconvenience of a homemade polishing mixture – I use Norwex's dusting mitt. I also use Norwex's Envirowand to dust under beds and dressers.

Every couple months I empty closets and drawers – and stick to one area at a time. I sort all of my belongings, including clothing, jewelry, knick knacks and books. I keep what I like and use, then donate or sell what I don't.

Laundry Room

When it comes to cleaning your laundry room, the most important task is to clean out your dryer. By doing this, you'll save energy and money on your electric and/or gas bill.

How often to clean?

After every load, clean out the dryer's lint trap.

Seasonally, wash the dryer's lint trap. (Once you've removed the lint, simply wash with mild soap and warm water.)

And every year, clean out the dryer's exhaust duct. Even if you clean the lint trap after every load of laundry, lint still will accumulate in the exhaust duct. Removing the trapped lint with a cleaning brush will help increase energy efficiency, reduce drying time, and prevent a potential fire.

(If you're really feeling green, add all of that dryer lint to your compost pile – **it's completely compostable.**)

While you're cleaning your laundry room, wipe out the inside and outside of your washer and dryer. (By this point, you can guess what I prefer to use in my laundry room – a damp Norwex EnviroCloth.)

The next step

This eBook details *how* to safely clean your home.

To find out *what* to clean, get a free printable Room-By-Room Deep Cleaning Checklist by [becoming an e-mail subscriber of *Accidentally Green*](#).

To find out why I clean this way - along with when and where I started - read my 89-page eBook, [Accidentally Green: How and why one family began making healthy changes that honor God and happen to help the environment](#).

About the Author

Hilary Bernstein writes about making healthy decisions that honor God and happen to help the environment on her blog, *Accidentally Green*. You can follow her on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#).



Through *Accidentally Green*, Hilary is part of the invitation-only [Healthy Child](#), [Healthy World Network](#), she was voted No. 13 in [Circle of Moms' Top 25 Eco-Friendly Moms of 2012](#), and was named to the [Top 100 Sites for Going Green](#) in 2012.

She is the [site editor at Keeper of the Home](#) and is a monthly contributor at [Keeper of the Home](#) and [Whole New Mom](#). Hilary is part of the [Positively Real Media Network](#), [Green Sisterhood](#), [Alternative Living Network](#), and [Green Moms Network](#).

Her first eBook, *First Bites*, helps parents instill healthy eating habits during a baby's first year. Her second eBook, *Accidentally Green*, shares the story how and why her family decided to go green.

An experienced journalist, Hilary worked at *The Gazette*, a daily newspaper in Medina, Ohio, for ten years as a columnist and editor of the lifestyle section, where she focused on family, food, home, travel, and entertainment. While at *The Gazette*, she wrote hundreds of articles, was awarded second place as the Associated Press Best Columnist in Ohio in 2003, and directly supervised a staff that won more than twenty-five awards. Previously she was employed as a staff writer at *Christian Mission* magazine in Charlottesville, Va.

Hilary graduated from Otterbein College with a bachelor of arts, cum laude, in journalism. While at Otterbein, she was an editorial intern at *Release* magazine in Nashville, Tenn.; and *Worldwide Challenge* magazine, based out of Campus Crusade for Christ's world headquarters in Orlando, Fla. Hilary's *Worldwide Challenge* article, "Tending Our Talents," is still used in Campus Crusade for Christ's training materials.

She most enjoys being a wife and mother. Hilary and her husband live in Ohio with their son and daughter.