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Homemade Vs. Commercial Cleaning Products

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Cleaning products use any combination of chemicals, acids or natural enzymes to dissolve dirt and disinfect household surfaces. Manufacturers like Clorox, Ajax and Lysol market commercial cleaners, prepackaged and formulated for use on specific surfaces. Homemade and natural cleaning products can also clean and disinfect surfaces, often for a fraction of the cost of their commercial counterparts. When deciding whether to go homemade or commercial, consider the pros and cons.

Advantages of Commercial Cleaners

Commercial cleaning products contain specific combinations of ingredients intended to bring out the best results on specific surfaces. Some ingredients, such as ammonia (commonly found in glass cleaners), can be purchased in their natural forms, but other useful ingredients, such as phosphoric acid (commonly found in rust cleaners and hard water cleaners), do not commonly appear by themselves on store shelves. As a result, commercial cleaning products can offer powerful ingredients that you otherwise would have difficulty obtaining. Also, specialized commercial products give you the added confidence of safety. For example, granite counter tops are highly sensitive to most acids and chemicals, and so using homemade cleaners can prove risky. A specialized granite cleaner automatically takes these risks into account and leaves you with a safe clean.

Disadvantages of Commercial Cleaners

If you read the label on any commercial cleaning products, you will likely recognize some primary ingredients like ammonia or citric acid, but you should also find some ingredients that you do not recognize. Commercial cleaning products can contain multiple

chemicals or acids, some of which emit toxic fumes, and you do not always know the safety or environmental impact. You can remedy this, to some degree, by purchasing green or natural cleaning solutions, but even some products advertised as "natural" contain hidden chemicals or allergens.

Advantages of Homemade Cleaners

When you create a homemade cleaning solution by mixing [baking](#) soda with water for a fine paste, or by adding a couple of drops of ammonia to a spray bottle filled with white vinegar (just to name two examples), you always know exactly what you have at your disposal. You have no hidden ingredients, and you can adjust your mixtures as needed to create the perfect cleaning agents. Common homemade cleaner ingredients include clear ammonia, distilled vinegar, baking soda, borax and citric acid, all of which are natural and safe for the environment.

Disadvantages of Homemade Cleaners

If you intend to mix your own cleaning solutions at home, you really need to do your homework. Before you begin, you must develop a working knowledge of which solutions react well with which surfaces. For example, vinegar works wonders on porcelain, but can destroy marble. When making your own cleaning solutions, you do not have the advantage of a paper label instructing you of the intended uses and warnings.