

## What is the History of Cleaning Products?

A soap-like material found in clay cylinders during the excavation of ancient Babylon is evidence that soapmaking was known as early as 2800 B.C. Inscriptions on the cylinders say that fats were boiled with ashes, which is a method of making soap. The ashes contain potassium and sodium hydroxide that react with the triglycerides in the fat to form soap. Soapmaking was an established craft in Europe by the seventh century. The chemistry of soap making stayed essentially the same until 1916, when the first synthetic detergent was developed in Germany in response to a World War I-related shortage of fats for making soap.

Commonly referred to as detergents, these are non-soap washing and cleaning products which are synthetically or chemically combined raw ingredients. Detergents have almost entirely replaced soap-based products laundering, dishwashing and household cleaning. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were extensive advancements in the development of household cleaning detergents to which were efficient, cost-effective and easy to use.

1950s	Automatic dishwashing powders, liquid laundry detergent, hand dishwashing detergent, fabric softeners
1960s	Prewash stain removers, enzyme detergents
1970s	Liquid hand soaps, fabric softener sheets, detergent with fabric softeners
1980s	Detergents for cooler water washes, automatic dishwashing liquids, concentrated laundry powders
1990s	Super concentrated detergents, automatic dishwashing gels
2000s	Disposable cleaning wipes, premeasured dissolvable packets, natural options, spa scents



## Why Make Cleaning Products at Home?

There can be many reasons why someone might want to make their own cleaning products, such as saving money, using less toxic and more environmentally-friendly products, and concerns about allergens and irritants. Homemade products leave out added water, coloring and fragrances which require more product per use. Also the ingredients used to make your own cleaners are often very low-cost. For environmental concerns, when you make your own products you lessen the amount of packaging and often reuse containers to store the cleaners. Using common natural ingredients reduces the use and waste of harmful chemicals, which also lessens opportunities for allergens and irritants.

## Ingredients in Many Homemade Cleaners

The majority of store-bought cleaning products are derived from petroleum-based products, silicon and other chemicals. But most of us have the things we need in our pantry to make cheaper, less toxic and more environmentally-friendly cleaning products. The basic ingredients in many homemade cleaners are:

- Vinegar
- Lemon juice
- Rubbing alcohol
- Washing soda (can be found near the laundry detergent in most stores)
- Borax (also near the laundry section)
- Mild dish detergent
- Liquid bleach
- Baking soda
- Ammonia
- Water