

30 baking soda tips

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My original article on baking soda being an earth friendly household chemical replacement was mainly about what the substance is and how it's made. I also briefly touched on a few useful tips in how the substance can be used, but in this article, I've jotted down a stack of baking soda tips - some of these I've tried myself, others I'm yet to give a whirl.

Special note: always spot test any home concoctions first before going all out. That doesn't just apply to baking soda, but any tips provided on GreenLivingTips.com - or any other site for that matter :).

Kitchen

- A bowl of baking soda in your fridge will help remove excess moisture and absorb odors.
- Sprinkle some in your veggies crisper and cover with a cloth or paper towel for crisper veggies that last longer.
- Sprinkle baking soda onto a damp sponge for cleaning out your refrigerator and benchtops without scratching.
- Dissolve a couple of tablespoons of baking soda in water in a microwave safe bowl, then bring to the boil in your microwave. Allow to sit for a minute or two, then you should easily be able to wipe out any baked on stains, plus your oven will microwave will smell fresher too.
- Sprinkling baking soda in the bottom of rubbish bags will help to control odors as you add trash.
- To give your dishwasher a good clean, run it through a cycle and use baking soda instead of detergent.
- Baking soda can be thrown on stove fires to extinguish the flames. The carbon dioxide generated when the powder burns starves the fire of oxygen.
- Wash chemicals and pesticides off fruits and vegetables in a pot filled with water and 3 - 4 tablespoons of baking soda added.

On a somewhat related note, here's something interesting I came across. Baking soda is sometimes used when boiling vegetables to preserve their color. That practice is not recommended as it destroys the vitamin C content of vegetables.
General home

- Anywhere that moisture is a problem, such as cupboards under sinks, place a bowl of baking soda to help control humidity. You'll need to occasionally stir the powder for maximum effective life.
- Crayon or texta marks on walls? Try applying baking soda/water paste on an old toothbrush and lightly brush the affected area.
- Water stains on wooden floors can be removed with a sponge dampened in a solution of baking soda dissolved in water.
- Sprinkle some baking soda into your vacuum bag to help reduce musty/pet smells being spread throughout your house when vacuuming.
- Sprinkle baking soda on rugs and carpets before vacuuming as a deodorising treatment. Most carpet powders you buy are baking soda based! Just a brief note on this - not recommended for areas that are very humid as the baking soda may stay in the carpet.
- Mops can really stink out areas where they are stored. If your mop is getting on the nose, don't throw it out, try soaking it in a mixture of 4 tablespoons baking soda and a gallon of water for a while.
- Stains on porcelain sinks, toilets and plastics can be removed by applying a layer of baking soda and then using a damp sponge . I found this to work particularly well on a water stain in a sink that couldn't be shifted otherwise without the use of heavy duty chemicals and scratching the surface.

Plumbing

- As an alternative to caustic soda for clearing blocked drains, throw a cup of baking soda down the drain, followed by a couple of jugs of boiling water.

Garden

- Baking soda can deter ants - pour a solid line in areas of activity and they won't cross it.
- Mix a tablespoon of baking soda, a teaspoon of (earth friendly) dish detergent and a gallon of water to make a spray for treating roses against black spot fungus.

Laundry

- Work a baking soda and water paste onto stains prior to washing to help remove them from the fabric
- Half a cup of baking soda added to a full load of washing will help brighten your wash and remove odors.

Workshop/auto

- Mix a paste of baking soda and vinegar and apply with a pot scourer to remove light rusting
- A baking-soda/water paste applied to chrome surfaces, allowed to dry then buffed off will leave chrome shining!
- Baking soda applied to fresh grease and oil spills on your garage floor will draw away the oil, which can then be scraped off.

Pets

- Baking soda lightly sprinkled and mixed into cat litter will help control odor.
- Eliminate odor after you've cleaned up pet accidents by sprinkling over the dampened area with baking soda; allow to dry and then vacuum.

Personal

- Whoofy shoes getting you down? Get a couple of old socks, fill up the toe sections with baking soda, place into the offending shoes and leave overnight to help remove odors.
- A thick paste of baking soda and water applied to bug bites can provide relief.
- A half teaspoon of baking soda mixed into a glass of water can act as mouthwash.
- Sprinkle baking soda onto regular toothpaste to create a whitening toothpaste

Miscellaneous

- To clean jewelry, use a paste of 3 parts baking soda to 1 part water, apply the mixture the piece, allow to sit for a couple of minutes, rinse off and then polish with a soft cloth.
- Sprinkle your Christmas tree with baking soda to mimic snow - a much more environmentally friendly alternative to some of those chemical snow sprays!

With so many uses you'll likely use a lot and buying baking soda in small boxes probably won't be too economical. Have a chat to your local baker who may be able to supply you with larger quantities or try contacting a bakery supplies company as some sell direct to the public.

You can also save money on baking soda by re-using it. For example, once it has served its purpose as a fridge deodoriser you can put it down your sink to help keep your drains clear.

Phew, that's quite a list of baking soda tips - it's such a versatile substance and certainly a greener way to get many jobs around the house done. My list is by no means exhaustive and I'm sure I've missed a bundle of ideas and applications! Please add your own tips below!

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