

Quick and Easy Homemade: Laundry
An Albion District Library Workshop
June 18, 2013

The two most common reasons why people choose to make their own laundry products:

- Allergies, usually to fragrances, dyes, preservatives, stabilizers, or other additives
- Cost, homemade products tend to be less expensive, especially in bulk

The most common ingredients and why:

- **20 Mule Team Borax**
 - Approx. \$5.50/76 oz box
 - Since 1891. Natural laundry booster and multi-purpose household cleaner.
 - Only contains sodium, boron, oxygen, and water.
- **Arm & Hammer Super Washing Soda**
 - Approx. \$5.00/55 oz box
 - Detergent booster and household cleaner.
 - 100% fragrance and phosphate free.
- **Fels Naptha Laundry Bar and Stain Remover**
 - Approx. \$2.00/5.5 oz bar
 - Primarily formulated and marketed as a stain remover and pre-treater for oil-based stains, this heavy-duty laundry soap has been used for over 100 years.
- **Zote Laundry Soap Bar (Pink)**
 - Approx. \$1.50/14.1 oz bar
 - The basic natural ingredients are the same used to make bath soaps, non-abrasive and popular for washing delicate garments and the clothes of people with sensitive skin or baby's clothes.
 - Another of the distinctive feature is its fragrance: essential citronella oil, which gives the soap a pleasant smell similar to lime. Clothes washed with ZOTE tend smell fresh and fragrant for several days.
- **Ivory Soap (Original White)**
 - Free of dyes and heavy perfumes and is 99.44% Pure
 - Made in the USA
 - Proven and trusted brand for over 130 years
- **Hemp or Castile Soap (Unscented) – such as Dr. Bronner's 18-in-1 Soap or Kirk's**
 - Unscented (Baby Mild), Approx. \$12.00/32 fl. oz. bottle or approx. \$4.00/5 oz bar
 - Certified organic. No detergents. 100% Vegan. No foaming agents. Cruelty free with no animal testing.
- **Original (non-concentrated) Dawn Dishwashing Soap (Blue)**
 - Approx. \$2.50/12.6 fl. oz. bottle
 - Contains biodegradable surfactants and no phosphate
 - Great for grease or oil-based stains.
- **Dawn Ultra Pure Essentials Hypoallergenic Dishwashing Liquid**
 - Approx. \$5.00/24 fl. oz. bottle
 - Gently scented with no dyes or harsh ingredients, so it's safe for sensitive skin.
 - This hypoallergenic formula is gentle yet still provides grease-fighting power

Liquid (No Cook) Laundry Detergent Recipe

(1 gallon recipe)

- 3 Tablespoons Borax
- 3 Tablespoons Washing Soda
- 2 Tablespoons Liquid Soap of choice
(Dawn Original Blue, Dawn Ultra Pure Essentials, Hemp/Castile Liquid)

Put the dry ingredients in a one gallon jug using a funnel. Pour 4 cups boiling water into the jug. Swirl until ingredients are dissolved in the liquid. Let liquid cool. Then fill almost to the top with cold water. Add the liquid soap last to prevent over-foaming. Swirl or mix gently.

Use ½ - 1 cup per load, depending on size and soil level.

Although I don't have a front-loading or HE washer, I've read that it works very well in those washers because it produces very few suds.

You can safely concentrate this recipe to ½ cup + ½ cup + 1/3 cup (triple strength), but I don't recommend any stronger as the powders may not stay in suspension. Use ¼ - ½ cup per load.

Cost is <\$0.05/load at triple strength and ¼ cup.

Dry Laundry Detergent Recipe

- 2 Cup Borax
- 2 Cup Washing Soda
- 1 Bar Soap (Fels Naptha, Zote, Hemp/Castile, Ivory)

Grate the bar soap finely on a box or hand grater or put it through a food processor (used only for craft projects). Place into a large container with lid. Add the borax and washing soap. Mix or shake well to combine.

Use 1-2 tbsp per load, depending on size and soil level.

Cost is <\$0.05/load at 1 Tbsp.

Optional: You can add up to 2 cups of oxygen powder (OxyClean, etc.) and/or ½ cup of fabric softener scent crystals per batch.

Liquid Fabric Softener

The most common ingredients and why:

- **Distilled White Vinegar**
 - Naturally softens laundry by removing the soap and residue build-up
 - Vinegar contains small amounts of potassium and sodium, which softens hard water, discourages and works to dissolve mineral build up in the washing machine, and reduces static in the dryer
- **Baking Soda**
 - Helps to regulate the pH level in the laundry rinse water by keeping it from being too acidic or alkaline
 - Adding baking soda to each rinse cycle acts as a balance to suspend detergent or mineral deposits that can make clothing feel stiff

Recipe #1: Vinegar and Conditioner

- 6 cups hot (not boiling) water
- 3 cups white vinegar
- 2 cups Suave Conditioner, scent of your choice

Mix conditioner and 3 cups of the hot water well, until the conditioner is dissolved completely. Add the remaining water and vinegar, and mix well.

Store in a large container {empty fabric softener container, empty large vinegar bottle, etc}

Pour into a laundry ball (Downy ball, etc.) or use approx. 2 tbsp. in the fabric softener spot in your laundry machine.

Cost is \$0.06/load at 2 Tbsp.

Recipe #2: Vinegar and Baking Soda, with Scent Crystals

- ¼ - ½ cup scent crystals
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 cup baking soda
- 6 cups white vinegar

Add your scent-booster of choice to the hot water (from the tap will do) and stir. Let sit while you combine the other ingredients, stirring occasionally.

Add the baking soda to a large bowl. Then VERY SLOWLY add 6 cups of white distilled vinegar. The chemical reaction of the two will cause it to bubble up, but it will subside quickly. Once all the vinegar has been added, stir until baking soda is dissolved. Some of it will settle to the bottom of the bowl. That's okay.

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Pour the vinegar and baking soda mixture into a large container, then add the scent booster liquid. Shake to mix. This will separate as it sits. Shake to mix each time before adding to the dispenser or laundry ball.

Use $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup per load.

Cost is \$0.12/load at the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup scent crystal recipe and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup per load amount.

Homemade Dryer "Sheets"

Wet method #1: "Dip and Wring"

- 1 cup homemade fabric softener of choice
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 standard kitchen sponges, cut in half
- Sealable jar

Add the homemade fabric softener and water to a sealable container. Mix well. Add sponge pieces to soak. When you're putting a load into the dryer, wring 1-2 sponge pieces out until just damp and add to the dryer.

Wet Method #2: "Spray and Toss"

- 1 cup homemade fabric softener of choice
- 1 cup warm water
- Wash cloths or cut up towels in an easy-to-spot color
- Clean spray bottle (at least 16 oz)

Pour the homemade fabric softener and water to the spray bottle. Mix well, but gently. Keep the cloths in a convenient place. When you're putting a load into the dryer, spray the rag until just damp and add to the dryer.

Dry Method

- 1 cup homemade fabric softener of choice
- Wash cloths or cut up towels in an easy-to-spot color

Soak the rags in the homemade fabric softener. Wring just until they don't drip. Allow to dry *thoroughly* overnight. Depending on humidity and fabric, this may take up to 48 hours. Add one rag/cloth to a load. You can expect to use the same cloth 12-20 times before it needs to be retreated. Keep the cloths in a convenient place. The perfect choice for those concerned about "spots" from the wet methods.