

Green Cleaning for Dog Homes

Tips for a clean, toxin-free home that will make you and your dog feel better.

By Schar Ward

Spring is in the air, and suddenly thoughts of a clean house are filling your head. But a clean house full of toxic residue won't be any better for your dog.

Your pets spend a lot of time licking themselves after lying around on the floor, so it's important to clean with green products.

These tips will get you started on a clean, toxin-free home that will make you and your dog feel better. Wipe your dog's paws before she comes indoors.

Vacuum your carpet and furniture with a vacuum cleaner that has a sealed HEPA filter. The sealed filter keeps picked-up dirt in the vacuum, so it won't get blown back into the air.

Get your carpet cleaned by a company that uses dog-friendly cleaning solutions. Companies should freely disclose the products used in their cleansers, including any toxic to animals.

Wash your wood floors with Murphy's Oil Soap or a little vinegar in a bucket of warm water. Dry the floor after washing. This helps prevent your dog's paws from slipping when she runs on the floor.

If you have tile or vinyl flooring and want to disinfect it, use a solution of 3-percent hydrogen peroxide and water. I recommend one tablespoon to a small bucket of water. No need to rinse or dry, plus there's no odor. Test any area prior to using this solution.

To remove a bad stain on your carpet, mix one cup of white vinegar with four cups of water in a spray bottle. Spray the spot, allow to set for a few minutes, then rub with a damp cloth. Sprinkle the area with one cup of baking soda. Don't be surprised if it bubbles. Test in a hidden area first. When the mixture is completely dry, vacuum thoroughly. If the stain was caused by urine, the baking soda will help remove the odor.

For the other surfaces in your home, such as kitchen and bathroom fixtures, use baking soda and castile soap. Kill mildew in showers with hydrogen peroxide.

Nontoxic cleaning can give you satisfaction in knowing that your home is a place where your dog can relax without absorbing chemicals.

Schar Ward has owned Domestic Engineering, a Twin-Cities-based professional cleaning service since 1973, and has written four books on cleaning, including "It's About Time: Time Saving Tips For Every Day" (The Book Peddlers, 2006). Schar is also known by her alter-ego, Clara Klutz, www.cleaningwithclara.com

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