



## How to Clean Windows

The call came unexpectedly. It was my mother. She was in a panic about the need to clean year's worth of dirt off the windows on her house. "I love ll the views," she said, "but I don't want to spend the whole ay cleaning windows." No problem, I told her. In "Name that Tune" fashion, I told her how she could clean windows with not five, not four, but only three window-cleaning tools -- and do it faster than she ever thought possible. "This, I want to hear," she said.

### Outdated methods

Too often, window cleaning turns into a dreaded chore. That's because until now we've cleaned with everything from old shirts, discarded towels, newspaper, and pallets of paper towels. If that's what I had to work with, I'd board up my windows. But, clean windows aren't out of your reach.

The problem with windows is that we think we need gallons of specially formulated window spray to get them clean. After only ten minutes of spraying and pumping, you'll wind up with kung-fu grip and a huge bill for all that spray. But with a small investment in a car window sponge and squeegee cleaning stick, some ammonia, and a few microfiber cloths, you can clean your windows in no time.

Microfiber is my absolute, hands-down favorite cleaning cloth – for everything. Whether it's dusting, cleaning shiny surfaces like granite, glass-topped cooking surfaces, or polishing stainless, nothing cleans as well as microfiber. Look for microfiber cleaning cloths in the automotive sections of dollar stores, megamarts, or variety stores. These cloths will leave your windows completely streak-free and won't deposit lint on them or give you blackened hands like newspaper does. Simply put, if you don't use microfiber, you'll wipe those windows until your arm wants to fall off, leaving you feeling like the Venus di Milo.

### The recipe

To clean your windows, fill a bucket with water and then follow the instructions on your favorite bottle of sudsy ammonia to make your cleaner. A whole bottle of ammonia costs about a dollar and will make gallons of cleaner, making it an economical choice. Or, you can do what I do and simply add a quarter cup of sudsy ammonia to a gallon bucket of water. (Sudsy ammonia has a little bit of detergent that helps make the dirt come off easier.) Put in your squeegee and get the sponge wet with the ammonia water. Scrub

the windows with the sponge, squeegee off the excess water, and polish dry with a microfiber cloth. Bada bing, bada boom, you're done.

Ah, that's great for the outside windows, but what about the inside windows, you ask? Dampen a microfiber cloth with your ammonia water and wring it out. Wipe the inside windows with the wet cloth and follow with the dry cloth. Voila! You're finished again in nothing flat.

The phone rings. It's Mom, singing my name. Her arms are still moveable she's happy to report, and her hands aren't in a frozen death grip from all the squirting of window cleaner and she's finished with the inside and outside windows in under two hours. Now that's a job well done and done, well, fast. Every carpenter will tell you that any job is easier when you have the right tools – and that's true for window cleaning too.

Until next time, make your living space more beautiful with sparkling windows.

*Kathryn Weber is a decorating and lifestyle columnist and the publisher of RealHOME E-zine, the e-zine with ideas and tips for today's real families. To subscribe, log on to <http://www.realhomeezine.com> and get this free special report, *The 10 Habits that Help You Keep a Cleaner House*.*

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