

## 5 THINGS:

### Simple Ingredients Put Zen In Cleaning.

By Karen Klages  
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You will never houseclean again if Michael de Jong has his way with your manner of thinking. You will be Zen Cleansing the nooks and crannies of your existence -- both physical and spiritual.

An artist who needed some fast money and turned himself into a part-time housekeeper on the side, the New York-based De Jong developed his own cleaning rituals based on the idea that "to joyously give yourself up to cleaning" is an act of oneness with the Universe. His other idea: Get rid of the harsh store-bought cleaners. All you need are five simple household ingredients: baking soda, borax, lemon, salt and white vinegar.

In an effort to wipe the slate clean for the New Year before us, we dipped into De Jong's book "Clean: The Humble Art of Zen-Cleansing" (Sterling/Joost Elffers Books, 136 pages, \$7.95) for five of his cleansing recipes -- which have the added benefit of being eco-conscious.

- 1. Got mud?** For a fresh mud spot on your carpet or rug - sprinkle with baking soda to cover the spot completely. Wait 20 minutes, then vacuum.
- 2. Un-color your world.** Baking soda to the rescue again -- this time when crayon is the offender. If you find the waxy color on clothes or other launderable items, De Jong recommends adding 1 cup of baking soda to the wash and laundering as usual. If the crayon doesn't come out of the fabric the first go-round, wash the item again before placing it in the dryer. (Heat from the dryer can set the wax and color for good.) To get crayon off walls, make a paste with baking soda and water and scrub. Rinse with clean water.
- 3. Bleach be gone.** Make your own bleach substitute for laundry by mixing up 1/4 cup of borax to 2 cups water.
- 4. Ink be gone.** Lemon will do the trick on tablecloths and napkins (or any sort of cloth) that had an unfortunate encounter with ink. Simply place lemon juice directly on the spot. Let it sit overnight, then launder as usual. Repeat if necessary before placing the item in the dryer.
- 5. Rings and things.** Scour away soap scum rings from bathroom sinks and tubs with full-strength white vinegar, applied with a sponge or cloth. Then wipe clean. The potent vinegar also will do wonders on grout, applied with a toothbrush and some muscle.

