



# SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

## 20 shortcuts to spring cleaning

We call upon the experts to share their secrets on how you can spruce up your home this spring

### 1 FLORAL FOODIE

If you don't have any flower food to hand, just crush two aspirin and add them to a bucket of clean water to condition your cut flowers. Aspirin contains salicylic acid, which keeps the water free from bacteria and helps keep flowers looking fresh for longer.

*From florist Gina Bridgman (aprilshowers.info)*

### 2 DELIGHTFUL DISHWASHER TRICK

Does the dispenser drawer from your washing machine get clogged with soap and fabric softener? If so, pop it in the dishwasher. You can also use your dishwasher to clean oven racks and grill pans, or the microwave turntable (check instructions).

*From The Housewife's Handbook (Bloomsbury) by Rachel Simhon*

### 3 DROOPY BLOOMS?

Some cut flowers, such as tulips, carry on growing in the vase, which means they can droop. To help them stand up straight, cut the stem ends, wrap them in paper, and position them where the light comes from above, rather than the side. *From florist Judith Blacklock (judithblacklock.com)*



### PAN PROBLEMS?

## 4

If your pans are tricky to clean after cooking eggs, soak them in cold water. Hot water sets protein, and will set egg like concrete. The same principle applies to other protein-based washing-up problems, such as milk and porridge. Also from Rachel Simhon's book.



**5 DIY shower scrub** Combine two cups of water and two teaspoons of tea tree oil in a spray bottle. Spray over the shower, leave for 30 minutes, respray, then scrub and rinse to remove mould. [queenofclean.com](http://queenofclean.com) >>

**6 AN EASY-PEASY DEHUMIDIFIER**

A bundle of chalk will absorb extra moisture and keep clothing fresh and dry. It takes up much less room than an electric dehumidifier too. Mount a hook in the wardrobe, out of the way of clothes or linens. Fasten a rubber band around a dozen pieces of chalk, and cover the band with ribbon, allowing enough loop to hang chalk. *marthastewart.com*



**7 WAVE GOODBYE TO STATIC**

Stop the build-up of lint and dust on glass surfaces by adding one tablespoon of liquid fabric softener to a litre of warm water. Use a damp cloth – wrung out in the mixture – to clean the glass and reduce static (which makes lint cling). From *The Goddess Experience* (HarperCollins) by Gisèle Scanlon

**11 Wardrobe wonders** Herbs such as lavender keep clothing smelling fresh. Pop in a sachet, tie with ribbon and hang on the rail. Cedar and rosemary help keep moths away too. *marthastewart.com*



Spring clean in style!

MAKE IT SO MUCH EASIER WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS

**8 CLEANING CATWALK** Keep your clothes clean and look stylish in this cute strawberry-print PVC apron by Cath Kidston. Who said you couldn't be trendy while trawling through the housework? £22, *cathkidston.co.uk*.

**9 MINIATURE MOP** For those who like a sparkling clean without the elbow grease, try out Vileda's new 1, 2 Spray Mini – a handy, miniature version of the cleaning brand's bestselling mop. Simply fill the handles with water (no bucket needed) to get your windows, worktops and doors gleaming. £6.99, *vileda.co.uk*

**10 ECO-FRIENDLY CLOTHS** Cleaning doesn't have to be boring. Brighten up a mundane task with a funky, multipurpose eco-cloth by Sarah Smith. Each one is made of millions of powerful microfibrils, which absorb dirt, eliminating the need for chemicals and abrasive scourers – all you need is water. From £2 for 4, *sarah-smith.co.uk*.



# 10 of the best money and time-saving apps

**i IDEALO, FREE** Scan the barcode of a product (or type in the details) and Idealo will find the cheapest place to buy it. It searches more than 30m offers across 14,000 online sites. Includes everything from fashion and beauty products to DIY equipment.

**Q GUIDCO, FREE** Discover discounts at more than 3,400 British retailers with Quidco, and use the clever GPS function to find the nearest shops offering these deals. You can also get cashback when you shop in some high-street stores.

**★ WUNDERLIST, FREE** Short on time and need to plan your day? Try out this interactive to-do list. You can add notes and deadlines, and split your tasks into different lists. It will bring some organisation into your life, as you can sort tasks by date, share lists with others and set yourself reminders.

**P AA PARKING, £1.99 FOR ANDROID, WINDOWS PHONES AND ON ITUNES (£1.50 FOR NOKIA DEVICES)** Find the cheapest and most convenient car parks in the UK by using your current location or by entering an address. You can get directions and check space availability in real time, as well as opening times and nearby parking restrictions.

**H LIVE TRAFFIC INFO, FREE** This Highways Agency app lets you plan your journey around traffic jams and roadworks, homing in on your current location to give you the traffic news for the roads around you.

**kWh METER READINGS, £1.49** Enter meter readings for gas, electricity and water, and this app shows your usage and costs, and calculates possible savings by comparing your charges with other suppliers. You can even switch suppliers from your device.

**Rated FIND A TRADESMAN, FREE** Based on the RatedPeople website, which has a database of more than 30,000 tradespeople in the UK, this allows you to post the job you need doing, rate the quality of the work and read other people's reviews.

**ATM HUNTER BY MASTERCARD, FREE** Save time wandering around looking for your nearest cashpoint with the ATM Hunter app. It finds the closest ATM to you, without you having to input your address or current location, no matter where you are in the world.

**0870, 69p** Want to save money on calls to customer service numbers? This app turns 0870, 0845 and 0800 into 01 or 02 numbers (included in your contracted minutes). It won't work for every number, but it could save about 35p a minute.

**HOME BUDGET (WITH SYNC), £2.99** Designed to help you track your expenses and income, this app includes support for budgets, accounts, payees and bill tracking. It also has a handy "Family Sync" feature, which allows a number of devices to share details, making budgets and spending easier to control.



## Classy cleaner

Who better to give advice on spring cleaning than the deputy head of housekeeping at Claridge's hotel? Fresh from her appearance on *Inside Claridge's*, Anne Barnes shares her trade secrets

**12 FINGERPRINTS ON MIRRORS** I never use a glass cleaner on mirrors or glass, as they leave smear marks. I always use water, a wet cloth and a dry cloth. I find this gives the best results.

**13 SCUFF MARKS ON SKIRTING BOARDS** I use a multi-surface cleaner and a double-sided sponge to gently rub the mark out. If it doesn't come off with the sponge side, use the scourer side and a little bit of elbow grease.

**14 TIRED CURTAINS** Vacuum curtains, and pay attention to any pelmets where dust gathers. Then, if necessary, use a steamer for a better finish. Doing this regularly will extend the life of your curtains and soft furnishings.

**16 HOW TO GET THE PERFECT MADE BED**

**FLAT SHEETS** At Claridge's, we always use flat sheets, not fitted. Make sure the sheet is central on the bed with the same amount hanging over on three sides. Stand on one side of the bed, pull the sheet tight and tuck it under. Do the same on the other side, then at the bottom.

**DUVETS** Shake the duvet to redistribute the filling, then lay the duvet cover on the bed. Put two of the corners of the duvet inside the top end of the cover, then tuck in the rest of the duvet. Give it a good shake. Pull it up to 2in from the headboard and smooth it out so there are no wrinkles.

**15 Coffee rings** If you get to it quickly, a damp cloth should do the trick. However, if it has been left, try either linseed oil or beeswax.

**17 DUSTY WALLS** I use a dry microfibre mop. Start at the top and work down to remove dust and cobwebs. If walls are badly marked, try sugar soap and warm water, also good on woodwork.



## Three ways to make silver shinier

**18** Toothpaste (not the baking soda variety) works just as well as silver polish does for cleaning your silver items. Just rub it on like soap and wipe off with a paper towel to see instant results.

**19** Line your sink with aluminium foil and fill with boiling water. Add half a cup of salt and half a cup of baking soda, then put all your silver in to sit for about 30 minutes. The tarnish will transfer from the silver to the foil.

**20** To prevent silverware from tarnishing easily, tie up a couple of pieces of chalk in a cheesecloth and put them in the drawer with your cutlery. Your silver will stay cleaner for longer, and will appear shinier. w&h

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