

# Spring is here: It's time for you to come clean

## CLEANING

*continued from Page H1*

water, add a few drops of detergent, and pour the solution into a spray bottle. Spritz those dull panes, then buff in a circular motion using last week's Globe. (Don't forget to wear gloves, lest you end up with ink-stained mitts.) Gedutis recommends cleaning on a cloudy day, so that the sun doesn't dry the solution too quickly.

**Avoid this sticky situation** Don't use typical household glass cleaners, which can create a filmy coating. And put away the paper towels, which leave lint.

### STUBBORN, GRIMY GROUT

**Solution** Try powdered oxygen bleach, according to John Coyne, product director and executive editor at BobVila.com. Mix the product with water according to the instructions, apply to the grout, and let sit for 15 minutes. Next, scrub the area with a stiff-bristled brush before rinsing with water. Oxygen bleach "is virtually as powerful as

chlorine bleach but much more pleasant to work with," Coyne said, adding that it doesn't discolor clothing. "Chlorine bleach irritates skin, eyes, can make people feel lightheaded and woozy, even nauseous. It's noxious. ... Oxygen bleach contains borax and hydrogen peroxide. It doesn't make you feel sick." You can find it in most grocery stores and home centers.

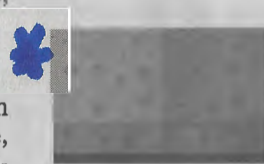
**Avoid this sticky situation** Rinse only with fresh water so you don't reintroduce stains. Make sure there is adequate ventilation when you use any product that contains bleach.

**STAINED CARPETS** (Why did you think finger painting was a good birthday party idea?)

**Solution** Go easy. "Start with the mildest possible solution. Go for natural cleaners, things like baking soda, vinegar, or water, which won't make you want to gag," Coyne said. He recommends a 10-50 solution of white vinegar and water. Moist-

en a rag with the solution and blot the area, working from the outside in, so you don't spread the stain. (Don't rub, even if you're frantic — this will only embed the offending substance.) Another handy item for recently spilled liquids? Salt. "Pour a mound of salt over the affected area. The salt absorbs lingering liquid," Coyne said. Let it sit overnight, then vacuum it up.

**Avoid this sticky situation** Test your cleaner in an inconspicuous spot to determine how your surface will react.



### STICKY STONE COUNTERTOPS

**Solution** To preserve stone countertops, use a sealer (available at hardware stores) every six to 12 months. This

penetrates the top layer of stone to make it less porous, so that it won't absorb stains or liquid, said Carlotta Cubi, executive vice president of Cumar Marble and Granite in Everett. Simply wipe it on with a rag. For regular cleaning, look no further than in your sink. "I like hand-dish-washing detergent. It's mild enough to use on any stone, and it's also a degreaser," Cubi said. When you've finished the dishes, wipe down the counter with your damp but not-too-sudsy sponge. She also likes to use Pledge's Multi Surface Everyday Cleaner 99% Natural.

**Avoid this sticky situation** Don't use an ammonia-based product like household window cleaners, which appear to make surfaces shiny but could deteriorate your countertop's sealant, rendering it more porous.

### DUSTY CRYSTAL CHANDELIERS

**Solution** In the old days, people often dismantled their chandeliers to clean each piece by hand. Unless you're hosting a "Downton Abbey"-style feast, you can opt for a gentler approach. Simply prepare a spray bottle with



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one part isopropyl alcohol to three parts distilled water, said Lucy Dearborn, owner of Lucia Lighting & Design in Lynn. Don a pair of white cotton gloves. Spray one glove with the solution and keep the other one dry. Polish each crystal with the damp glove; wipe with the dry one. Note: A thorough crystal-by-crystal cleaning could take three hours. Turn on a juicy movie and get going. **Avoid this sticky situation** Make sure to use fresh rags or gloves for your precious chandeliers; those with residue from household cleaners will tarnish and weaken fixtures.

### STREAKY STAINLESS STEEL

**Solution** Kevin Lovett at Economy True Value in Brookline swears by ZEP stainless-steel polish, which he uses to make display kitchens shine.

"There isn't a strong chemical smell," Lovett said. Another favorite brand? Method, which he says is resistant to fingerprints.

**Avoid this sticky situation** Don't spray ammonia-based cleaners or bleach on your appliances. They could stain.

### WOOD FURNITURE RIFE WITH DUST BUNNIES

**Solution** Use a damp cloth and high-quality carnauba oil, said Sarah Ohlson Saunders, visual associate at Room & Board, a modern-furniture store in Boston. She likes nourishing orange and lemon oils from Parker & Bailey, which can be found in stores. Apply monthly to a clean cloth, polish in the direction of the grain, then buff. For regular maintenance, a damp cloth does the trick.

**Avoid this sticky situation** Don't use household polishes with products that contain petroleum distillates or silicone, common ingredients that can leave residue.

### DUSTY LEATHER SOFAS

**Solution** Use a duster or a damp cloth weekly. "Leather is a natural material; people don't realize that you need to dust your leather as you would any other furniture," said Paula Pomponio, showroom manager and interior designer for Roche Bobois Boston, a high-end furniture company. If the leather is soiled, wipe it with a damp cloth, careful to remove any traces of moisture. (Really soiled? You can apply a mild soap to your cloth.) Use a leather conditioner three times a year. Apply it using a soft cotton cloth, coating the surface. Don't rinse. Wipe it with a fresh cloth.

**Avoid this sticky situation** Do not enjoy a talk-out feast while perched on your leather furniture. Oil is lethal. "It leaves a stain and discolors the hide," Pomponio warned, recalling a customer who dropped Chinese food on her sofa with upsetting results.

But do treat yourself to takeout when you're finished cleaning. You deserve it.

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