

There is nothing like fresh air, but that's not what you get when you buy plug-ins, sprays, and other air "fresheners." Instead you are more likely to get chemically manufactured smells, itchy eyes, nausea, rash and over a longer period of time breathing problems and possibly internal organ damage. That's because most commercial air fresheners contain formaldehyde, VOCs and other toxic chemicals.

See [Scented laundry](#)



[detergent, room fresheners and toxins](#) for more information on the ugly side of room fresheners.

Instead of trying to cover up your house smells with chemicals, try some of the following, most of which will remove or reduce the scents that offend.

The first thing you can do is clean regularly, which of course, is easier said than done. I certainly don't do it, with all the other more important things I'd rather be doing such as writing about it instead.

An old favourite, put baking soda in an open container in the fridge or other closed area. This will absorb odors. When to change it? The baking soda company would like you to think that you should change it every 3 months. I would say you should change it when it's not working anymore. Alternatively, cleaning your fridge with baking soda and vinegar and putting lids on the food will keep most odors at bay, unless you love stinky cheese and tripe.

For cooking odors try boiling vinegar and water while you do the dishes. Or if you like spices, try boiling water with cinnamon, cloves or rosemary. For the fruity types, try boiling slices lemon or grapefruit or orange. This will help clean your pots as well so do this before you wash them.

For unwanted bathroom smells, your first line of defense should be a ceiling fan and an open window. If not, try incense or a scented (soy-based or bees wax) candle. If you can, keep your towels somewhere else so that they don't get damp in the steam and then start to go moldy.

For regular household odors, put bowls of vinegar around the house and let it do its work, or soak some cotton in vanilla and leave it in a dish around the house.

Odors emanating from your carpets can be dealt with by cleaning the carpet with vinegar and baking soda. If you are attempting to eliminate cat odors be sure to stay away from ammonia based products, as they tend to smell like urine and are an invitation to return. Here kitty kitty kitty...

Finally, my favourite way to air out our house is to open two windows on opposite sides of the house and use a fan in one of them to draw air out.

If you have other ideas, we would love to hear them.

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