

20 UNUSUAL USES FOR LEMON JUICE



When life gives you lemons, use them to clean your house.

Juicy, aromatic and highly acidic, lemons bring out the flavor in sweet and savory foods but they nearly always play a supporting role in the kitchen. Stop relegating them to the rim of your glass and give these winter citrus fruits their due – because they're serious cleaning and freshening powerhouses. These 20 unusual uses for lemon juice will make your home look and smell fresh, brighten your laundry, and improve your hair, nails and skin.

Quick tip: roll a fresh lemon under your palm on the countertop to soften it up for easier juicing.

Fingernail Brightener

Nails looking dull and yellowed after a long period covered in dark polish? Just squeeze a lemon into a small dish, clean your nails and soak them in the lemon juice for a minute or two. Some women claim that this treatment will also make nails stronger, particularly when adding a tablespoon or so of **olive oil** to the dish.

Food Preservative

Keep cut fruit and vegetables like apples, pears, avocados and potatoes from turning brown by squeezing on a little bit of lemon juice. You can also perk up droopy lettuce by soaking it for an hour in a bowl of cold water and the juice of one lemon.

Emergency Deodorant

Caught smelling less-than-fresh, with no deodorant around to save the day? Cut a lemon in half (or snag a wedge from your drinking glass) and rub it under your arms. The citric acid in lemon juice will reportedly kill odor-causing bacteria. In fact, you could use this trick to ditch conventional deodorants altogether.

Odor Destroyer

Even garlic, fish, mothballs and that disgusting gunk in your garbage disposal can't stand up to lemon juice's odor-eliminating power. Use a cut lemon or fresh-squeezed lemon juice to remove bad smells from your refrigerator, cutting board, microwave or practically any other surface. You can even add it to the cooking water of stinky foods like cabbage, or just simmer lemon peel in water on the stovetop as a natural air freshener.

Insect Deterrent

Many insects are highly sensitive to smell, including spiders, ants, fleas and typically so-hardy-they're-almost-alien cockroaches. Squirt lemon juice in windowsills, the thresholds of doors, along baseboards and into any cracks where insects might get into the house. Add lemon juice to your floor wash for even more insect-repelling action.



Lighten Age Spots and Freckles

There's some debate as to whether this actually works, but if you're desperate to reduce the appearance of freckles or dreaded age spots, lemon juice might be worth a try. Apply lemon juice with a cotton ball once per day and over time – we're talking months – they may lighten a little bit.

Glass Cleaner

Lemon juice will make hard water stains, debris and other marks on glass disappear. Use straight lemon juice on a sponge for tough jobs, or dilute a few tablespoons in a cup of water and spray it on. Wipe it off with newspaper for totally transparent windows (that might just kill a bird or two.)

Stain Remover

Sweat, mildew, berries, wine, oil – pretty much any substance that leaves a stain on fabric can be removed with good old lemon juice. Durable fabrics can be rubbed with a paste of lemon juice and salt while more delicate fabrics might require a gentler touch, saturating the stain with lemon juice and then washing it out.

Sore Throat Soother

Gargle with a teaspoon of lemon juice in 1/8 cup of warm water to help shrink swollen throat tissue and kill bacteria. Frequent cups of hot tea made with a tablespoon of honey and a tablespoon of lemon juice will also do the trick.

Toilet Cleaner

When mixed with household borax (not the insecticide kind), lemon juice can remove even those stubborn rust stains from the toilet bowl. Make a paste of borax and lemon juice and apply it to the stain with a scrub brush or sponge. Let it sit for up to two hours, then scrub away.



Metabolism Booster

Does lemon juice really boost metabolism? Some of the claims raise red flags as being a bit too enthusiastic, and most of these lemon-based “metabolism boosters” are recommended as food replacements in starvation diets. But hey, adding a little lemon juice to your water every day will make it taste better, and drinking more water can definitely help you lose weight. So, there’s that!

Dandruff Treatment

Lemon juice may not cure dandruff or prevent it from occurring in the first place, but it can remove flakes that are already present so you don’t have to worry about them making an appearance on your clothing. Massage lemon juice into your scalp, leave it on for ten minutes and shampoo as usual.

Metal Polish

Slice a lemon in half, dip it in salt and rub it onto metal surfaces like stainless steel ranges and copper pots to eliminate grime and make them gleam.

Rice De-Sticker

A few drops of lemon juice added to simmering rice will keep it from sticking to the pot, making clean-up a lot easier.

Hair Highlighter

You can achieve natural-looking highlights at home with nothing more than a little lemon juice, a sunny day and something to occupy your hands for an hour or two. Either apply it directly to the strands you want to highlight or get an overall lightening effect by spraying on a diluted mixture of 1/2 cup lemon juice to 1/2 cup of water. The intensity of the lightening will vary depending on your hair type and texture.



Laundry Brightener

Just as it removes stains, lemon juice can act as a natural, non-toxic alternative to bleach. Add a quarter cup of juice to the washing machine to brighten whites. Lemon juice's stain-removing power is further heightened by hanging the treated laundry up to dry in the sun.

Heartburn Relief

The efficacy of this trick depends on whether your heartburn is caused by too much acid in your stomach, or not enough. If it's the latter, drinking a little lemon juice in water can quickly relieve discomfort.

Facial Treatment

Applied with a cotton ball, a little lemon juice acts as an astringent, eliminating oil and tightening pores for a smoother look. Mix salt and lemon juice into a paste for an all-natural exfoliant.

Itchy Skin Soother

Apply full-strength lemon juice to unbearably itchy skin rashes like poison ivy to soothe them and keep them from spreading.

Hangover Help

The next time you're groaning in pain the morning after enjoying just a tad too much alcohol, try drinking a little lemon juice squeezed into warm water or tea. Not only does it help you re-hydrate, but the lemon juice can reportedly help balance the pH levels in your body and replace the vitamin C lost in the binge.