

MAKING YOUR OWN CLEANING PRODUCTS

Did you know that the ingredients in your shampoos and soaps are largely unregulated? Not only could these products be harmful to you, they could be harmful to the environment. Author Michael DeJong believes if you are not willing to put something in your mouth, you shouldn't be slathering it on your body.

On The Early Show on Tuesday, May 12, 2009, DeJong talked about the ingredients that are essential to making your own grooming products. He told how to make homemade soaps and shampoos that keep you squeaky clean while saving you money -- and helping the environment.

DeJong co-authored "Clean Body: The Humble Art of Zen-Cleansing Yourself." **To read an excerpt, go here: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/14801490/Clean-Body-Excerpt>**

It's his second book in a series of 20, all about using natural ingredients to clean everything from your home to yourself. Clearly, this book focuses on personal grooming. An interesting side note: The book itself is environmentally-friendly, made of recycled paper and vegetable-based inks.

When Michael moved to NYC, he supplemented his income by cleaning houses. This is what prompted him to become an advocate of natural cleansers.

In this book, Michael is suggesting that instead of buying all of those tubes of lotions and body soaps, you make your own. Why? There are two key reasons:

1) According to Michael, the majority of ingredients in personal grooming products are largely untested, unregulated, and even unlisted. Manufacturers say they don't want to reveal "trade secrets" by completely listing all active and inactive ingredients that appear in their products, but in the meantime we are applying these potions liberally to our body's largest organ! While the FDA has strict regulations on what you eat and the medicines you take, personal care products carry few regulations.

2) Once shampoos and bubble baths are rinsed off your body and down the drain, they can wreak havoc on the environment. They are not necessarily removed from water, despite purification systems, and they wind up polluting our water sources, not to mention our drinking water. Plus, think about all of the little tubes and containers you throw away each year that contained these products ... They sit in landfills for years.

Michael's general approach to grooming products: If you wouldn't put it in your mouth, don't put it on your body!

Keeping that mantra in mind, here are 5 essential ingredients you need to make your own personal care products:

Baking Soda
Lemon
Salt
White Vinegar
Olive Oil

How did he arrive at these five ingredients? For starters, he researched how people cleansed themselves before the advent of all of today's products. Not surprisingly, they used natural, easy-to-find products. He wanted to keep the list really simple because "simple is easy."

"I didn't want it to be a stretch," Michael said. "I want people to get what they need at the grocery store while picking up dog food and flour and other things. Plus, it's good for the times right now where everybody feels broke."

The book is broken down by body part. Each section offers different "recipes" for softening skin, purifying hair, ect, combining the above ingredients in different ways, and applying them to the skin differently.

How does he answer skeptics, people who are afraid to try his suggestions because they have sensitive skin or other concerns? The ingredients above are completely inert, he explains. It's hard to hurt yourself with them, unless you scrub too hard with the salt. So why not at least give it a try? You may be surprised by how much you enjoy these simple concoctions!

On the show, Michael quickly combined the ingredients for one of his all-time favorite at-home spa products: the citrus derma-dip. Here's the "recipe" description in the book:
"Cut two lemons into super-skinny slivers. Dribble half a dozen drops of olive oil onto the citrus slices. Give it a toss, and finish with three cups of sea salt. Then, it's hands off while the concoction cures for at least five minutes. Add your citrus derma-dip to a hot and steamy bath."