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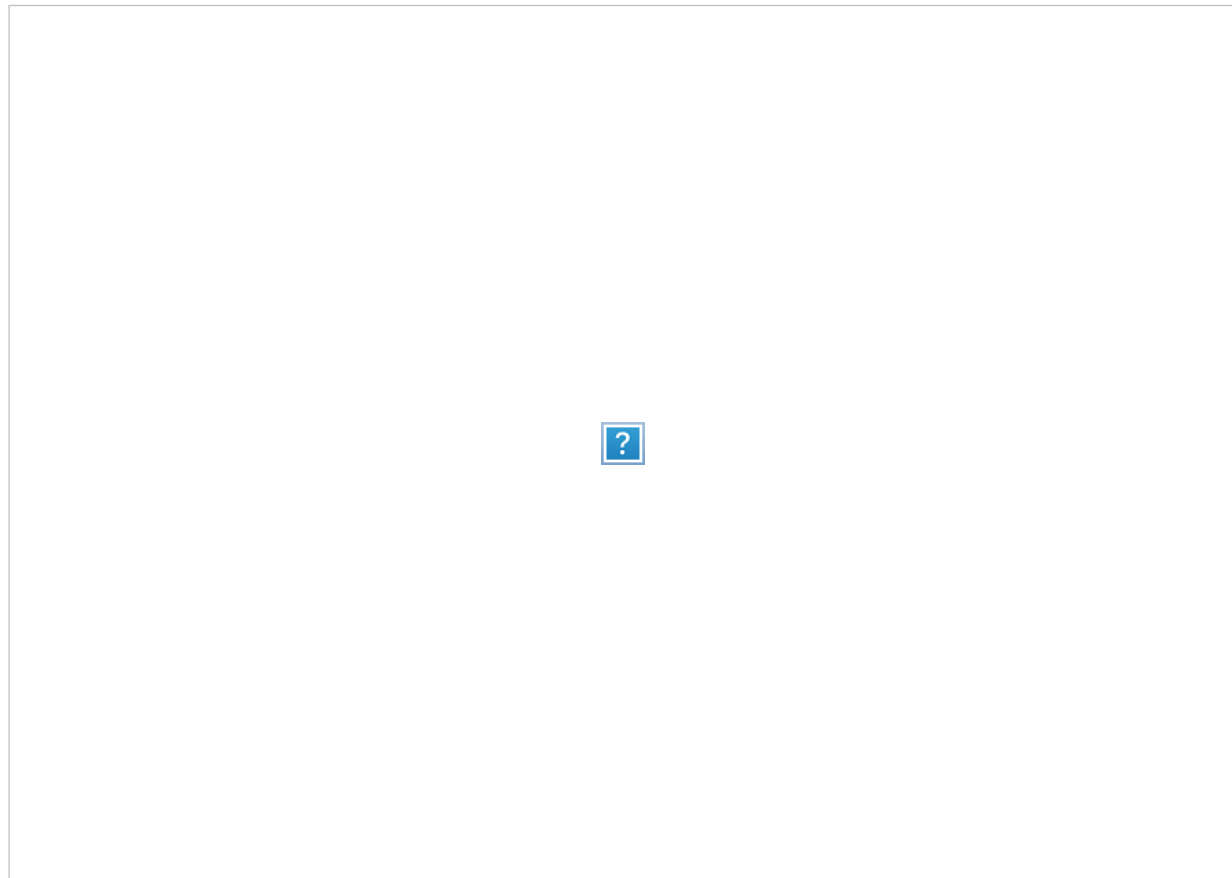
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Choose Microfiber Cloths for Chemical-Free Cleaning

We all have to clean. At one time, that meant exposure to unsafe chemicals and lots of waste. Things have improved as more natural and eco friendly cleaning products have become available. Now, quality microfiber cloths can be a durable option to add to your supplies; replacing paper towels or those popular disposable cloths that end up in the garbage. They reduce the need for water and cleaners, and can help to remove bacteria.

Depending on how you are cleaning now, we hope what you read here will inspire you to look for creative ways to reduce waste and toxicity with microfiber cloths – it's an eco-friendly switch worth making.



Quick Facts: Green Cleaning with Microfiber Cloths

- **Microfiber cleans bacteria 99% effectively:** That's from a study of hospital floors cleaned with a microfiber and cleaning solution (69% better than a traditional wet mop with the same solution).^[i]
- **Microfiber is a recommended tool for green cleaning:** [Green Seal](#) recommends the use of microfiber cloths and mops because they remove and hold fine particles and oil that other cloths cannot.^[ii] In an EPA study, they even recommend microfiber mops for use in hospitals.^[iii]
- **10x longer lifespan:** Depending on quality, microfiber mops can cost double the purchase price of a conventional mop, but last 10 times as long – 300-600 washes, compared to traditional cloths lasting up to 50.^[iv] ^[v]
- **\$612 average cleaning supplies budget:** The average American spends \$612 on housekeeping supplies and \$150 on laundry and cleaning supplies.^[vi]
- **95% reduction in water and chemicals = money saved:**^[vii] If 4 microfiber cloths costs \$30 but lasts six years and you use only water with them, your savings could be in the \$1,000s by replacing paper towels, disposable cloths/dusters, and cleaners.

Take Action! Eco Friendly Cleaning Products

1. **Use microfiber for most cleaning jobs:** Microfiber cloths can be used to clean any room – start with the cleanest areas and finish with the dirtiest (last is the bathroom then the floor).^[viii]
 - Use dry for: removing pet hair, dusting.
 - Slightly dampen a cloth with water for most cleaning: windows, stainless steel, electronics, floors, soap scum, damp dusting.
 - Use cleaning solution and a slightly damp cloth for areas that require disinfection (toilet area, food preparation surfaces). Do not use with bleach.
2. **Eco-friendly, labor-friendly microfiber brands:** It's not easy to determine, but make an effort to buy eco-friendly and labor friendly. While there is no mention of fair trade on their website, [Starfiber](#) has a [greener clean commitment](#). Another option is [E-Cloth](#) which meets the [Green Depot Green Filter](#) for responsibility (responsible manufacturing, worker protection, environmental protection).
3. **How to care for microfiber:** Rinse your microfiber cloth in warm or hot water after each use and let it air dry. Microfiber cloths can also be machine washed without fabric softener and should be kept separate from lint forming items.

Dig Deeper: Microfiber Cloths

- Read the US Environmental Protection Agency's [Environmental Best Practices for Health Care Facilities: Using Microfiber Mops in Hospitals](#).
- Clean doesn't mean disinfected or sanitized. Read more from [Green Seal](#) and the [California Childcare Health Program](#). Both recommend microfiber cloths and the use of cleaners.
- Some microfiber cloths contain germicides or nanoparticles of silver. Read this Friends of the Earth list of [Research into health & environmental risks of nanotechnology](#).

Image By [Steve A Johnson](#).

^[i] *Using Microfiber Mops in Hospitals*. (2002, November). Retrieved from US Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/region9/waste/p2/projects/hospital/mops.pdf>

^[ii] Green Seal. (2008, September 5). *Green Seal Proposed Environmental Standards for Residential Cleaning*

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http://www.greenseal.org/Portals/0/Documents/Standards/GS-49%20Stn%20Dev/GS-49_residential_cleaning_Background_Document.pdf

[iii] *Case Study: Are Microfiber Mops Beneficial for Hospitals?* (2003). Retrieved from Sustainable Hospitals Project:
<http://www.sustainablehospitals.org/PDF/MicrofiberMopCS.pdf>

[iv] (Case Study: Are Microfiber Mops Beneficial for Hospitals?, 2003)

[v] *Microfiber: Crunching The Numbers.* (2009). Retrieved from Clean Link: The Professional Cleaning Industry's Online Resource: <http://www.cleanlink.com/hs/article/Microfiber-Crunching-The-Numbers-10569>

[vi] *Average annual expenditures and characteristics of all consumer units; Consumer Expenditure Survey 2006-2010.* (n.d.). Retrieved from US Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/cex/2010/standard/multiyr.pdf>

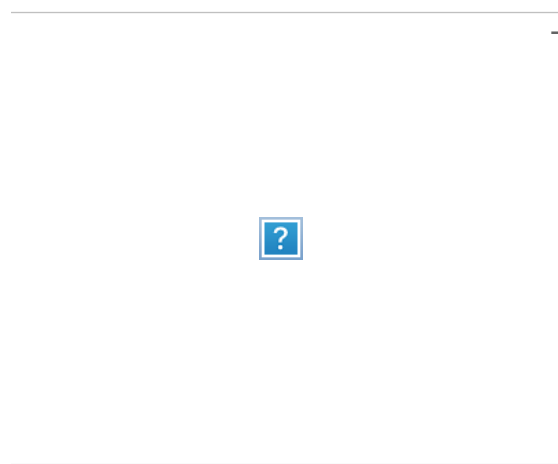
[vii] (Using Microfiber Mops in Hospitals, 2002)

[viii] *Best Practices for Surface Decontamination and New Room Decontamination Methods.* (2012, September). Retrieved from Disinfection and Sterilization: <http://www.disinfectionandsterilization.org/Slides.htm>

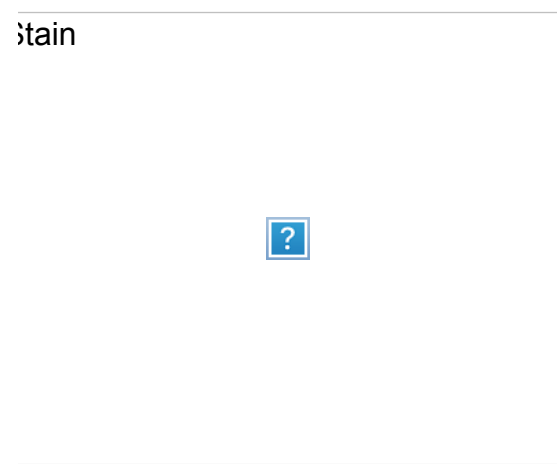
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