

April 26, 2016

How often you should clean your toilet — and the right way to do it

Whether you call it "the can" or "the commode," a toilet by any name can stink.

Despite being the most popular seat in the house, the toilet rarely gets the cleaning it deserves. Who better to teach us the right way to clean it than Leslie Reichert? The Queen of the Throne specialized in bathrooms when she ran her cleaning business.

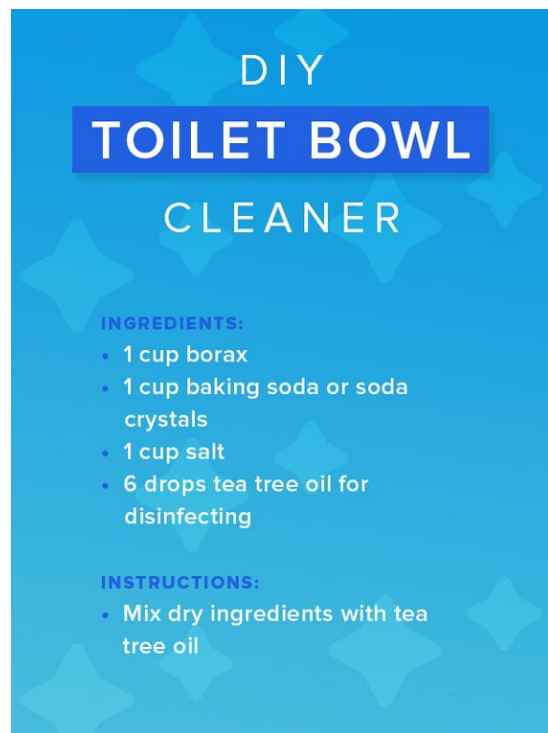
"I've cleaned over 11,000 toilets in my life," she admits, and now she's teaching us her ways.

The tools:

- Reichert's basic toilet bowl cleaning powder: 1 cup borax, 1 cup baking soda or soda crystals, 1 cup salt, 6 drops tea tree oil for disinfecting. Mix dry ingredients with tea tree oil. (While Reichert recommends natural cleaning products, regular cleanser can be substituted.)
- Pumice stone
- Toilet brush with an under-the-rim brush on the tip
- Large microfiber cloth, folded into eighths
- Scrubby sponge

Cleaning inside the toilet bowl:

- Once a week: For a thorough weekly cleaning, turn off the water to the toilet and flush so all the water empties out of the bowl. Sprinkle the toilet cleaning powder into the toilet bowl and, wearing gloves, scrub the bowl and under the rim using a scrubby sponge. Add 1 cup of distilled white vinegar to the toilet after scrubbing with the powder. Allow this to sit for an hour, if possible, before turning on the water and flushing. Now you have one clean toilet!
- Daily: To extend the effects of the weekly cleaning, swish the toilet bowl every day using plain water and a toilet brush. This is a maintenance tip only. It doesn't replace the weekly cleaning regimen.



Does your toilet have more rings than a punk rocker? Remove stains and rings using a pumice stone. (Nothing does it better once you get over being up close and personal with a toilet.) Do this chore during the once-a-week cleaning when the bowl is empty. Wearing your rubber gloves, sprinkle toilet cleaning powder on the stains/rings, then use the pumice stone and a little bit of elbow grease to scrub them away.

Cleaning the outside of the toilet:

- Every week, clean the entire outside of the toilet. Using a damp microfiber cloth that's been folded into eighths, start wiping at the top of the tank and work down. You'll be using only an eighth of the cloth at a time. Wipe in this order, folding to a fresh portion of the cloth after each step:

-flusher handle and the tops and sides of the tank -top and inside of the toilet lid - top of the toilet seat, then the underside-porcelain area between the tank and the toilet seat where the bolts are. Urine often collects there. Continue cleaning the top and inside of the porcelain rim- outside of the bowl and the base

Technically, the floor around the toilet is not the toilet, but we all know what lurks there. (If you have boys in the house, you know what I mean.) There are products on the market (enzyme-based Urine Off and probiotic-based Chrisal) that consume urine from surfaces and eradicate the odor. These work best on fresh urine spills as opposed to a year's worth of urine build-up.

Toilet tank: When slime is obvious in the toilet tank, it's time to clean it. According to Doyle James, president of Mr. Rooter Plumbing, all you have to do is: drain the tank by turning off the water valve below the tank and flushing the toilet. Apply an all-purpose cleaner, like Reichert's DIY version, to the inside of the tank. Let this sit for 10-15 minutes before scrubbing with a toilet brush, old toothbrush or scrubby sponge. Turn water on and flush.



HOW TO CLEAN A TOILET

WHAT YOU NEED

- Reichert's basic toilet bowl cleaning powder:
 - 1 cup borax, 1 cup baking soda or soda crystals, 1 cup salt, 6 drops tea tree oil for disinfecting. Mix dry ingredients with tea tree oil.
- Pumice stone
- Toilet brush with an under-the-rim brush on the tip
- Large microfiber cloth, folded into eighths
- Scrubby sponge

HOW TO CLEAN THE INSIDE

1. Turn off the water to the toilet and flush, so all the water empties out of the bowl.
2. Sprinkle the toilet cleaning powder into the toilet bowl and, wearing gloves, scrub the bowl and under the rim using a scrubby sponge.
3. Add 1 cup of distilled white vinegar to the toilet after scrubbing with the powder. Allow this to sit for an hour, if possible, before turning on the water and flushing.
4. Remove stains and rings using a pumice. Don your rubber gloves, sprinkle toilet cleaning powder on the stains/rings, then use the pumice stone and a little bit of elbow grease to scrub them away.

HOW TO CLEAN THE OUTSIDE

1. Using a damp microfiber cloth that's been folded into eighths, start wiping at the top of the tank and work down. You'll be using only an eighth of the cloth at a time.
- Wipe in this order, folding to a fresh portion of the cloth after each step:
- flusher handle and the tops and sides of the tank
 - top and inside of the toilet lid
 - top of the toilet seat, then the underside
 - porcelain area between the tank and the toilet seat where the bolts are
 - outside of the bowl and the base