

20 UNUSUAL USES FOR SALT



Because salt is for more than just high blood pressure.

Diamonds might be prettier and more durable, but there's another translucent rock that's even more valuable to us. We may not devote songs to salt or parade around with big hunks of it on our fingers, but we need it to survive, it makes food a hell of a lot tastier and it's got hundreds – if not thousands – of practical uses. Here are 20 unusual and surprising household, beauty and health uses for salt, from cleaning the chimney to brightening your skin.

Drip-proof candles

Don't you hate it when candles drip down as they burn, making a mess that's practically impossible to clean? Prevent this from happening by soaking new candles in a strong salt solution for 2-3 hours.

Clean smelly food spills

A little cinnamon in a pinch of salt will make dripped-on messes in the oven easier to clean, and prevent them from stinking up the house. Just sprinkle the mixture onto the drip soon after it occurs, while the oven is still hot. Once it has cooled, brush away the salt and the mess will come with it.

Test egg freshness

Got a questionable egg? Add two teaspoons of salt to a cup of water, and drop in the egg. If it's fresh, it will float; if it's past its prime it will sink right to the bottom.

Sanitize sponges

Used sponges harbor a shudder-inducing variety of bacteria. To restore them and kill some of those germs, suds them up, rinse them thoroughly and then soak them in cold, heavily salted water for an hour or two.

Kill poison ivy

Nobody likes poison ivy, the irritating vine that has ruined many an otherwise pleasant outdoor experience. Three pounds of salt mixed with a gallon of soapy water, applied to the leaves and stems of poison ivy with a sprayer, will kill this tenacious pest of a plant.



Extend broom life

Natural fiber brooms can last a lot longer if you use this easy trick: soak them in hot, salty water before their first use.

Soothe a bee sting

Remove the stinger, wet the sting and immediately shake on a paste of salt and water. Let it dry, and it will reduce inflammation and relieve pain.

Remove soot from chimney

A handful of salt thrown onto the flames in your fireplace will not only produce pretty, vivid yellow flames, it will help loosen soot in the chimney, preventing chimney fires and improving air flow.

Relief for canker sores

A saltwater gargle will take the bite out of a toothache and ease the pain of canker sores and sore throats. Dissolve two teaspoons of salt in 1/4 cup of warm water and swish it around in your mouth for at least 20 seconds, gargling if you have a sore throat. It will likely burn at first, but it works.

Keep clothes from freezing on the line

Add a little salt to the rinse water when washing a load of laundry to keep the clothes from freezing stiff on the clothesline. Soaking the clothesline in salt water will also prevent clothes from sticking to it in cold weather.



Restore artificial flowers

Who has time to clean every individual petal of a bouquet of silk or nylon flowers? There's an easier way. Just toss the flowers in a gallon-sized zip-lock bag along with about a cup of salt. Shake the bag well, and the salt will whisk away the dust and debris.

Keep milk fresh

Sour milk is the worst, especially if you don't realize it's gone bad until you've already poured it into your cake batter or coffee mug. Keep it fresh longer by adding a pinch of salt to the carton, pinching the spout closed and gently shaking to mix.

Make coffee less bitter

Over-brewed coffee that has taken on a bitter taste can be much improved with a tiny pinch of salt, which will also enhance the flavor.

Remove blood, wine and perspiration stains

Blot up spilled wine and then pour salt on top to absorb what's left, pulling as much of it out of the fabric as possible. Blood-stained linens can be restored in cold saltwater followed by a wash in hot, soapy water. To remove perspiration stains from clothing, dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a cup of hot water and sponge it on.

Prevent sliced fruit from turning brown

Dip sliced apples, pears and other fruits susceptible to browning in lightly salted water to preserve their fresh look. If your apple slices have withered, salt water will also perk them up.



Keep windows frost-free

To keep frost from accumulating on the windows in your home and your vehicle, dip a sponge in salty water and run it over the inside and outside of the glass, then rub dry with a soft cloth.

Deodorize shoes

Suck the stink-worsening moisture out of canvas shoes by sprinkling a little salt inside them and then wiping it out. Don't use this trick on leather or synthetic shoes, as it could dry them out too much and cause them to deteriorate.

Reduce eye puffiness

So you caught a late-night airing of *The Notebook* on cable and went through a box of tissues – nobody needs to know. Obliterate the evidence by mixing a pinch of salt in a little hot water and applying it to puffy, swollen areas around your eyes with a cotton pad. The salt will help draw out the moisture and tighten the skin.

Give your skin a glow

Massage a mixture of salt and olive oil into your skin in circular motions, leave it on for a few minutes and then wash it off. The massage increases circulation to your skin, the olive oil moisturizes and the salt buffs away dead skin cells.

Brighten yellowed linens

Dingy whites can be brought back to their crisp, white best without the use of bleach. Boil cotton or linen items in a big pot of water with a few tablespoons of salt plus a few tablespoons of baking soda.