

[Living Naturally](#)

NATURAL SHAMPOO: ONLY TWO INGREDIENTS

By [Margaret Boyles](#)

Apr 30, 2018



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One day early last spring, I counted the ingredients of three shampoos and two conditioners sitting on a bathroom shelf; each contained at least 20 ingredients, many of them unpronounceable and three or four of them suspected [toxins](http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/). Two contained fragrances that made me sneeze. That day, I decided to try an easy two-ingredient method I'd read about for years, but that had always seemed too hokey. I've never looked back.

Borax (or baking soda) and cider vinegar

My new strategy calls for an alkaline washing ingredient—either borax or baking soda—followed by an acidic rinse of apple cider vinegar. That's it!

To my surprise, the two-ingredient method worked well, leaving my hair clean, shiny, and more manageable than any of the hundred products or combination of products I've used through the decades.

Cheap, easy, remarkably effective, and probably a lot safer. I always have these ingredients on hand for various household uses.

Like me, you probably won't believe that the baking soda or borax methods (either works equally well for me) will actually clean your hair, so you'll want to give it your first try on a vacation or weekend day when you have the time to repeat with your usual routine if you don't like the results.

I've seen dozens of "recipes" for this natural approach to hair care. I don't think the exact proportions matter. I just fiddled around until I found what worked well for me.

Here's how I do it:

- I pour a bit less than half a cup of either baking soda or borax (either or a mixture of both works equally well for me) into a small bowl and ½ cup of cider vinegar into another, then add a couple of cups of warm water to each bowl.
- I pour the dissolved baking-soda or borax solution through my wet hair.
- Then I rinse my hair well. Borax may leave some undissolved grit, but that rinses away quickly.
- Finally, I pour the vinegar solution thorough. I usually don't rinse it out, but you can. Either way, the vinegar smell disappears within minutes.

It took me a while to get used to the idea that just pouring a solution through my hair with no scrubbing or lathering could get it clean, but it really does.

I haven't found a need for conditioning, but I haven't tested my new shampoo through a dry New England winter yet. Advocates of this hair-care method suggest adding a few drops of olive, sesame, castor or some other oil to the washing solution for frizz or static control. I'll give that a try if it seems necessary.

Learn more

[Check the safety rating](http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/)(<http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>) on the personal-care products you use for yourself and your family. Environmental Working Groups staff scientists compare the ingredients on personal care product labels and websites with information in nearly 60 toxicity and regulatory databases.

[See more DIY natural toiletry products.](#)

ABOUT THIS BLOG

"Living Naturally" is all about living a naturally healthy lifestyle. Margaret Boyles covers health tips, ways to avoid illness, natural remedies, food that's good for body and soul, recipes for homemade beauty products, and ideas to make your home a healthy, safe haven. Our goal is also to encourage self-sufficiency, whether it's relearning some age-old skills or getting informed on



modern improvements that help us live better, healthier lives.

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