

I make my own screen cleaner.

Materials & Mixing

I put one (1) drop of unscented Dawn concentrated (syrupy) dishwashing detergent into a pint (16 oz, 500ml) of name-brand distilled water. I'm not after scrubbing bubbles here, it's just enough detergent to break the water surface tension and provide a mild de-greasing action.

I mix in a quart Pyrex measuring cup from the kitchen. I rinse once first with distilled.

Bottom-feeding when buying the water is dangerous. I have taken cheap distilled back to the store because it smelled funny (!!).

I divide the cleaner in half and make up two 250ml bottles and label them. That's a 250ml Nalgene® HDPE container from Adventure 16 camping supplies (7033520) in the picture. I intentionally bought new containers. This is not a good place for bad plastic or leaching chemicals.

The cloth is a 100% cotton bandanna from a western or railroad supply store. I think it's a good idea to wash it once *before* the first cleaning. See below.



Clean the Screen

I wash my hands.

I blow or brush away any dust or grit. I don't want to grind sand into my screen.

I moisten a folded corner of the bandanna and gently rub the surface. *It should never drip.*

I follow with gentle rubbing using the dry part of the bandanna. I expect most if not all of the fingerprints, smears and dirt to be gone with a careful, gentle application.

Heavy build-up of finger grease or near misses may require a second pass.

I expect the liquid to dry clear. No water spots or other marks. If marks are left, then I didn't get all the dirt off. The cleaner has no residue.



Wash the Bandanna

I clean the bandanna by swishing in a normal bubbly solution of Dawn and hot tap water in the Pyrex measuring cup from earlier. Rinse repeatedly in clear water until the bubbles go away and then *finish with a rinse in distilled*.

I usually get more bubbles in the final distilled rinse. I put that down to Los Angeles tap water. Air dry over a towel rack. I *do not* put the bandanna through the laundry or a hot-air dryer. Fluff products and fabric softeners make my bandanna squeezably soft, but the chemicals streak my screen.



Notes & Cautions

This distilled water technique works with most human interactive products: screens, CDs, DVDs, lenses, scanners, laptops, etc. Any product I can get close enough to breathe on should handle a bandanna moistened in a tiny amount of soapy distilled. This is even a very close cousin to the final film bath (Kodak Photo-Flo) I use when I'm developing my own black and white film and for the same reasons. Final cleaning and no water spots.

There are some delicate mirror systems (dichroic, semi-silvered, front-surface) and odd or exotic surfaces that won't like distilled, but there aren't many of them and the manufacturers are usually clear in the instructions. iPods and laptop screens expect to receive rough treatment, but not camera lenses. I treat camera lenses *very* gently. I leave them alone unless I see a thumb print or other obvious dirt. I swish first with a clean brush or blow to remove grit.

Many products warn against alcohol (Windex, Glass Cleaner). Alcohol is a chemical solvent and can cause damage. Several alcohols can leave residue.

