

Tech Tips:

Choosing a Cleaning Product

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When choosing a multi-purpose cleaning product, it's a good idea to look for one where the pH level is balanced so that it is an effective cleaner, but isn't so strong that it will harm the surface being cleaned. This is especially important if the surface has a sealant or wax coating.

The pH scale runs from zero to 14. The mid-point of the range, 7, is considered neutral; pure water is a neutral liquid. Liquids that have a pH higher than 7 are considered to be basic, or alkaline. Most hand soaps and bleach are alkaline cleaners. Basic or alkaline cleaners do well at removing oils and fats, so if you're looking to degrease your engine, try a cleaner with a higher pH.

Solutions with pH levels measuring zero to 7 are considered acidic; coffee, sodas, and lemon juice are examples. Acids break down difficult stains, making them easier to remove. So, if you're looking to get some rust off your deck or scrub away a waterline stain, a cleaner with a lower pH will do a better job than one with a high pH. Anytime you use an acidic cleaner, however, be sure to rinse the area being cleaned with fresh water afterward.