

# How to Eliminate Skunk Odor

Staff  
Reviewed

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Skunks have a natural deterrent to protect themselves from predators, and this deterrent comes in the form of a nasty-smelling oil that contains sulphur compounds. Skunk spray has an unpleasant and pungent smell that can linger for up to a month if it goes untreated. The trick to eliminating skunk smell from your pet's fur, your hair and skin, clothes, furniture, and carpeting is to act quickly. The longer you wait to clean the affected area, the harder it will be to remove the smell.

## Ingredients

### Homemade Skunk Odor Eliminator

- ☐ 4 cups (940 ml) hydrogen peroxide, 3 percent solution
- ☐ ¼ cup (55 g) baking soda
- ☐ 1 teaspoon (5 ml) liquid dish detergent

### Method 1

### Getting Skunk Spray Off Your Skin

**1 Don't touch anything!** Skunk oil on your skin, clothes, and hair can easily transfer to other surfaces, including other people, clothes, furniture, and more. The more you touch, the more you'll have to clean, so avoid touching anything or anyone.

**2 Make a homemade odor removal solution.** In a medium bucket, mix together the hydrogen peroxide, baking soda, and dish detergent. Stir the mixture gently to combine all the ingredients. Don't stir too much, or you'll agitate the solution and make it bubble.

- The hydrogen peroxide and baking soda will break down the sulfur in the skunk oil and help to eliminate the smell. The detergent will break down the oil itself.<sup>[1]</sup>

**3 Wash your skin and hair with the solution.** Soak a sponge or loofah in the peroxide mixture and apply generous amounts to your skin. Use the sponge to lather the mixture, making sure you scrub from head to toe. Apply the solution to your hair as well, thoroughly massaging the cleaner into your hair and scalp.

- Be very careful not to get the solution in your eyes or mouth, as it will burn your eyes and is not safe to eat.
- Don't leave the solution on your hair for too long, as it can bleach your hair!

**4 Rinse yourself clean.** Rinse your body first to remove the cleaner and skunk oil, letting the solution sit in your hair for a few minutes. When you're finished rinsing your body, rinse the solution from your hair.

- Wash your skin and hair with the solution again if necessary, and rinse the solution off before washing with soap.

**5 Bathe with soap and water.** To remove any lingering odor and oil, wash your body with your favorite soap. Rinse well to remove any leftover residue and oil. Shampoo your hair, massaging the shampoo into your hair and scalp. Rinse out the shampoo and apply conditioner as usual.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Method

## 2

**Treating Pets That Have Been Sprayed**

**1 Get your pet outside immediately.** Skunk spray is an oily substance that can easily transfer from your pet to your furniture, carpets, drapes, and entire house. To prevent this from happening, don't let your pet inside after being sprayed, or get your pet outside as quickly as possible.<sup>[3]</sup>

- In inclement weather, keep your pet in a garage if possible, or confined to a single room in the house. A bathroom is a good choice, because that way you can bathe your pet in the shower.

**2 Make a skunk odor removal solution.** This homemade remedy is quite effective at eliminating skunk odor. In a medium bucket, combine the hydrogen peroxide, baking soda, and liquid dish detergent. Mix the ingredients gently to combine everything, but not so vigorously that you agitate the solution.

- You can use white vinegar in place of the hydrogen peroxide if necessary, but it's not as effective at eliminating the odor.
- Despite its popularity, tomato juice isn't very effective at removing skunk smell. Similarly, air fresheners and other products will likely only cover the smell temporarily, but won't actually get rid of it.<sup>[4]</sup>
- You can also try commercial skunk odor eliminators instead, but this homemade remedy is the most effective.<sup>[5]</sup>

**3 Put on gloves to protect your hands.** Skunk smell can also transfer to you. Before washing your pet, put on some old clothes and a pair of rubber or latex gloves to protect your skin.<sup>[6]</sup>

**4 Treat your pet with the concentrated solution.** Soak a sponge in the odor eliminator solution. Use the sponge to apply the solution to your pet's dry fur. Massage the solution into the coat to ensure it fully saturates the fur and skin. Don't use the solution near your pet's mouth or eyes.<sup>[7]</sup>

- Don't rinse your pet before applying the solution, as that will dilute the solution and make it less effective.
- The hydrogen peroxide may bleach your pet's fur, but it is safe to use and won't damage their skin.<sup>[8]</sup>

**5 Let the solution stand for five minutes.** Leave the solution to soak into your pet's fur and skin for at least five minutes. This will give the peroxide mixture time to work its magic and neutralize the sulphur compounds in the skunk spray.<sup>[9]</sup>

**6 Rinse your pet's fur thoroughly.** Using a garden hose or bucket, rinse your pet to remove the solution and wash away the skunk oil. Be careful around the eye and face area, as you don't want the solution to go into your pet's eyes or mouth.<sup>[10]</sup>

- If you do happen to get solution in your pet's face or eyes, rinse the area thoroughly with water.

**7 Repeat if necessary.** If your pet still smells after the first application, apply a second coat of odor eliminator solution and let it sit for another five minutes. Rinse thoroughly to remove any excess solution.

- When your pet is stink-free and you've cleaned anything else that smells, discard the homemade odor eliminator solution. The mixture is volatile and shouldn't be stored for later use.<sup>[11]</sup>
- The ingredients in the mixture can all safely be poured down the drain or flushed down the toilet.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Method

## 3

**Cleaning Clothes and Washable Fabrics**

**1 Soak your clothes in a diluted peroxide solution.** Fill a large bucket with one part hydrogen peroxide and six parts water. Remove your clothes, being careful not to spread the oil onto your skin or eyes. Place the clothes in the peroxide solution and let them soak for at least an hour.<sup>[13]</sup>

- For delicate clothes, soak them in a mixture of one part vinegar and four parts water.

**2 Wash your clothes in the washing machine.** After soaking for an hour, remove your clothes from the peroxide solution and wring them out in the sink. Transfer the clothes to the washing machine. Fill the detergent compartment as usual with your favorite detergent, and add ½ cup (110 g) of baking soda to the drum with the clothes. Wash the clothes on your regular cycle.<sup>[14]</sup>

**3 Hang the clothes to dry outside on a line.** When the cycle has finished and your clothes are clean, remove them from the washing machine. Take the clothes outside and hang them to dry in the sun. The sun's rays will not only dry the clothes, but will also help to eliminate any leftover skunk odors.<sup>[15]</sup>

- In winter or when it's not possible to dry your clothes outside, dry the clothes in a dryer. Don't put the clothes in the dryer until you're sure the smell is gone, otherwise you may set the smell and make it even harder to remove.<sup>[16]</sup>

#### Method 4

### Removing Skunk Smell from the House

**1 Open windows and turn on fans and vents.** One of the most effective steps you can take to eliminate skunk smell inside is ventilating the house and getting fresh air circulating.<sup>[17]</sup> Open all the windows in the house, turn on the kitchen and bathroom vents, turn on ceiling fans, and use standing or oscillating fans to move the air.

- If you have multiple fans, set up one inside in front of a window to blow in fresh air from outside, and set up another at a different window to blow stinky air from the house out.

**2 Use diluted bleach to clean hard surfaces inside and out.** In a large bucket, mix together a cleaning solution of one part bleach and nine parts water.<sup>[18]</sup> Put on gloves, dip a sponge in the solution, and wring out the excess. You can use the solution on hard surfaces inside your home, including linoleum floors, stone counters, concrete, and wood floors. Use the sponge to scrub patio areas, fences, decks, and exterior walls.<sup>[19]</sup>

- Use only minimal amounts of liquid on wood floors, and rinse the floors with plain water after applying the bleach solution.
- Only use this mixture on color-fast surfaces. Don't use this solution to clean furniture, fabrics, people, or pets.

**3 Spray the garden and lawn with a vinegar and dish soap solution.** In a large bucket, combine a gallon (3.8 L) of vinegar and 1 cup (235 ml) of liquid dish soap. Stir the mixture to combine the liquids, and transfer the solution to a spray bottle. Apply generous amounts of the solution to affected areas of the grass, shrubs, bushes, trees, and plants.<sup>[20]</sup>

**4 Steam clean carpets, drapes, and furniture.** Steam cleaning is the best way to clean carpeting, drapery, and furniture that's been affected by skunk oil.<sup>[21]</sup> The detergent will help to break up the oil and eliminate the smell, and the steam will rinse the oil from the fabric.

- Steam cleaners can often be rented from grocery or hardware stores if you don't have one of your own.

**5 Place bowls of vinegar around the house to absorb skunk odors.** Vinegar is great at absorbing odors, so you can use it to help remove any lingering skunk smell that is still in the house. Fill shallow bowls with vinegar and place the bowls near affected areas, such as carpeting and furniture. Leave the bowls out for one to two days, and discard the vinegar when the smell is gone.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Community Q&A

### Question

## What do I do if a skunk sprayed my dog in the face?

Kelly MacRae  
Community Answer

See a professional groomer. It's tricky to keep the peroxide mix out of your pet's eyes and a groomer will have the tools to help prevent that. My boxer just got a direct spray to his face and my groomer was more than willing to help, even after hours.

### Tips

- Prevent skunk encounters by keeping your pets on a leash during walks, keeping your yard clear of attractants like pet and bird food, and by securing garbage can lids properly.

### Warnings

- After a skunk encounter involving a pet, check the animal for bites and scratches, and get to the veterinarian right away if you find any.
- Your pet may also require veterinary attention if it has been sprayed in the eyes.

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