



Tackling hard water and calcium build up

When arriving in a new country you are often faced with puzzling things. One of the first for us was the very posh and neatly stored squeegee in the shower cubicle in our new apartment. Our landlords explained that after every shower we needed to squeegee down the tiles to prevent the build up of calcium (or *kalk* as it is in Danish). At first we thought this was just an example of being over house proud but we soon realised that the serious issues of calcium build up and also the effects of using such hard water. Copenhagen has the hardest water in the whole of Denmark so it is something you need to be aware of.

This is a quick run down of the products you can use to both prevent the build up of calcium and also the tackle it if it becomes a problem and then you can have a beautiful bathroom.

PREVENTION

Most cleaning products here will boast some element of calcium removal and you will spot '*anti kalk*' on a lot of standard bathroom and kitchen cleaning products and this is a good place to start in keeping places calcium free with your weekly clean. As is the aforementioned squeegeeing of the tiles and glass doors around your shower area. You can pick up cheap and functional shower squeegee in Ikea.

For washing machines and dishwashers there are tablets, such Calgon, you can buy to add to the wash to prevent the build up of calcium in the machines as this can lead to premature death of very expensive white goods.

TACKLING THE PROBLEM

Unless you are very fastidious or lucky there will be a time when you will need to de-calcium items in your home. You can either go the chemical route or the natural one.

First the **chemical way**. The supermarkets sell some fairly hefty chemical products, usually from a brand called *Borup*), in a separate section to the regular cleaning products. These are strong and non diluted chemicals that need to be stored very safely in your home. Generically you need to



look for products under the banner of '*rens og afkalker*'. *Borup* do a thick calcium remover for tiles called *kalkfjerner (tykflydende)*, which is a thick creamy and also one for taps and sinks/toilets called *rust og kalkfjerner*. They also have a special one for kettles and coffee machines '*afkalker (lugtfri)*'.

For washing machines there are a few rinses and capsules you can use to flush out the machine – *Dr Beckmann's vaskemaskinerens* is a good one and also general *afkalker* tablets from various brands.

The natural way uses either vinegar or citric acid. You can blitz your house in one go with cleaning vinegar. Half vinegar and half water in your coffee machine or kettle will flush them out. Run/boil one to three times and then rinse away the calcium. Keep hold of the vinegar mixture and use it to soak shower heads or clean taps.

I also use boxes of citric acid (*citronsyre*) to flush out my washing and dishwashing machines. This can be found either with the chemicals or the general cleaning products and you need to use on for cleaning and not cooking. This is multipurpose from tackling your dishwasher, coffee machine and you can use this to soak shower heads as well.

HAIR AND SKIN

You will notice that moving to a hard water area will play havoc on your hair, skin and nails at the start. Invest in some decent conditioner, hand cream and face cream to help prevent drying out too much.