

June 2017
A Special Supplement to
the Oneida Daily Dispatch

Your HOW-TO GUIDE To Easy Living



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HOW TO
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Household
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HOW TO
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HOW-TO



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the Oneida Daily Dispatch

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HAPPY 4TH OF JULY

How to embrace digital organizational tools

When internet usage switched from mere fad to fully functional, few people may have imagined just how profound — and mobile — it would become. While electronic use was largely stationary as recently as a few years ago, it's now second nature for users to send and receive information on the go.

Smartphone use has increased dramatically in recent years, and these pocket-sized devices can be reliable hubs of information. The same devices that keep people in touch can help them stay more organized. Here's how to use mobile devices to stay on top of schedules and other organizational jobs.

Calendars

One of the more useful smartphone organizational tools is the calendar app. Depending on the operating system or app used, calendar entries can be synchronized across phones and devices. That makes it possible to pull up your calendar while on the go or when sitting at a desktop computer. Calendar apps can be optimized using reminders, alarms and even recurring entries.

Shopping

Smartphones have revolutionized shopping, but even those who still shop in more traditional ways can use their mobile devices to make the process easier. Apps like Out of Milk can keep a running tally of ingredients and items in the pantry to make it easier to maintain shopping lists. The virtual megastore mySupermarket enables you to compare prices at major retailers and then decide



where to buy certain products. The site works with each retailer to fulfill the order. Favado will build a shopping list based on local sales and favorite brands. The app can even notify you when particular items go on sale or recommend relevant coupons.

Financial Management

The same capabilities that were once exclusive to desktop computers are now available on mobile devices. Online banking, bill pay and check deposit functions have cut down on the time needed to fulfill many banking operations. Bank and credit union apps enable users to quickly check their balances or transfer money on the go. What's more, apps such as Evernote can help you

organize and save receipts or other information. Retrieve these items from your camera roll or through Evernote's cloud services. Other receipt management apps serve similar functions

Mobile Scanning

Along a similar vein, mobile scanning functionality enables you to capture just about anything and turn it into a digital file. Text, multi-page documents, business cards, signatures, and more can be scanned and stored digitally, then retrieved and printed, if necessary. This can help cut down on paper clutter.

Mobile digital organization is the wave of the future. With phone in hand, smartphone users can run and organize many aspects of their lives.

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ways to
use less
energy
when the
weather
warms

The temperature is rising, and that can be a good thing for those people who love long days of outdoor recreational activities. Sometimes, though, there can be too much of a good thing, and consistently hot temperatures may become uncomfortable and even dangerous. Finding ways to keep cool without spending a fortune or using a lot of energy is challenging but possible.

1. Find Your Comfort Zone

Determine an indoor temperature that works best for the household. Keep the thermostat set as high as possible to maintain that comfort level. If you will be out most of the day, set the programmable thermostat at a higher temperature, and then lower the temperature about an hour before you plan to return home. This reduces the number of hours the air conditioner is running.

2. Keep Curtains Closed

Draw the blinds and close curtains on south- and west-facing windows during the hottest times of the day. This prevents the interior of the home from heating up.

3. Maintain Air Circulation

Invest in ceiling fans, which can move air through the home. This will help prevent pockets of hot air in certain spaces. According to the

U.S. Department of Energy, even in homes with air conditioning, ceiling fans enable homeowners to raise the thermostats on their AC units by about 4°F with no reduction in comfort. Attic fans can draw heat out of a home through vents, also helping to reduce indoor air temperatures. These devices can reduce reliance on air conditioners, especially on moderate days or cool nights.

4. Cook Outdoors

Put that backyard grill to good use. Plan meals around outdoor cooking so the ambient heat will stay outside and you will not have to turn on the oven or the stovetop. Include side dishes, such as salads, fresh vegetables and fruits or gazpacho,

that can be served cold. If you must heat something indoors, try doing so in the microwave.

5. Run Appliances at Night

Wait until the washing machine or the dishwasher is full before turning on the cycle. Temperatures are cooler at night, and you may not notice the extra heat in the home generated by such appliances. Consult your energy bill as well. Sometimes energy rates are lower in the evening than during the peak hours of the day.

6. Line Dry Clothes

Maximize that fresh air and warm sun by hanging freshly washed clothes to dry outdoors. This also works for quickly drying swimsuits and towels used at the pool or the beach.

7. Rely on Natural Light

In the summertime, the sun stays out longer, so you'll be less reliant on electric energy to keep things illuminated. Spend more time outdoors so you can read, play or chat in the sunlight while keeping indoor lights off.

8. Determine Pool Filter Efficiency

Experiment with reducing the amount of water filtration time until you come up with an amount of time that still maintains water sanitation. If you think your filter and pump are no longer working efficiently, consult with a pool supply retailer.

When the heat is on, learn strategies to keep homes cool and use less energy in the process.





How to streamline household cleaning

Travel down the cleaning aisle of a neighborhood store and you will be met with product after product designed for specialized cleaning. There are sprays for windows, cleansers for electronics, carpet-cleaning foams, and scouring solutions for tubs and showers. Although many of these are effective, the average person can rely on just

one cleaning aid for a wide variety of tasks: vinegar.

Vinegar is a versatile product that can be used in everything from cooking to pickling to preserving foods to household cleaning. Vinegar is made by two distinct biological processes, offers The Vinegar Institute. Via fermentation, yeast will first change the natural sugars in the vinegar-

to-be material solution into alcohol. The second process involves a group of bacteria called “acetobacter,” which convert the alcohol into an acid.

Vinegar can be made from any fruit or natural material containing sugar. For the purpose of generalized cleaning, white vinegar is the most common type used and is typically made from corn. Utilizing vinegar around the house is quite simple, and can be used in various ways around the house.

Remove lime buildup. Vinegar is good for cleaning faucets and showerheads. Make a paste of one teaspoon of vinegar and two tablespoons of salt. Apply to sink fixtures and rub with a cloth. Fill a plastic baggie with vinegar and attach to the showerhead with a rubber band. Let sit a few hours to overnight and then rinse away the mineral deposits.

Brighten laundry. Add ½ cup white vinegar to the wash cycle. It will help loosen stains and brighten clothing. An added benefit is the acid will reduce static cling.

Disinfect cutting boards. Give cutting boards an extra cleaning by spraying them with straight vinegar, then rinsing to clean.

Clean the disposal. Make sure food residue doesn't clog garbage disposals and lead to odor. Mix vinegar and baking soda in the drain and allow the bubbling action to remove built-up residue. Use a scrub brush for extra scouring.

Get streak-free windows. Mix a 50-50 solution of vinegar and water in a spray bottle. Use to clean windows and other glass surfaces. Wipe away with a microfiber cleaning cloth so no lint is left behind.

Eradicate pet odor. Pour a little bit of vinegar into an empty litter box. Let stand for around 20 minutes, then rinse with cold water. Vinegar also can be used to blot up pet stains on the carpet. Just test color-fastness in an inconspicuous area first.

Banish water stains. Fix water stains and rings on wood furniture by mixing equal parts vinegar and olive oil. Use a soft cleaning cloth moving in the direction of the wood grain. Polish using a clean cloth.

Vinegar can be used all around the house — these were just a few of the dozens of ways to rely on vinegar. Just steer clear of using it on natural stone and marble, as the acid could cause damage.

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How to Clean and Prepare Outdoor Furniture for the Season

As temperatures rise, people increasingly venture outdoors to soak up the sun, enjoy the mild breezes and entertain under the open sky. Clean and comfortable furniture can make outdoor entertaining that much more enjoyable.

After months in storage or nestled under protective tarps, outdoor furniture likely needs a good cleaning before it's put to the test once again. Mildew may have formed, insects may be hiding out within cushions or other crevices and dirt may have accumulated — even if the furniture was cleaned before being stored away. Experts recommend cleaning outdoor furniture between three and four times per year to keep it in optimal condition.

Before cleaning, determine the material your furniture is made of, as some cleaning products may not be safe for all materials. When in doubt, read the care tags on cushions and other products or refer back to the original packaging for cleaning instructions. Always test a cleaning solution in an inconspicuous area first.

The following are some additional general furniture cleaning guidelines.

Wood

Wood comes in many varieties, from hard and softwoods to wicker furniture. Mild oil-based soaps and products geared especially to cleaning wood can be handy. On wicker and painted woods, it may be best to dilute the solutions before use. Hardwood furniture and built-in decking structures may benefit from annual sanding and then reapplication of a protective finish to maintain the look of the wood for long periods of time.

Plastic Resin

Commercial cleansers may be too harsh to use on plastic resin furniture. Before risking discoloration or scratching, try some ingredients that are may be lying around the house. For example, use a wet sponge dipped in baking soda as a mild abrasive to clean resin. Just be sure to thoroughly rinse off the powdery residue afterward.

Automatic dishwasher detergent mixed with a gallon of warm water also may do the trick. The detergent contains a mild bleaching agent that will not cause damage like straight bleach.

Glass

Dish detergent and general home cleaning solutions work well on glass surfaces. Remember to clean all sides, including bottom-facing areas. After cleaning, use vinegar or a glass cleaning solution and a microfiber cloth to produce a streak-free shine.

Outdoor Cushions

Outdoor fabrics are derived from different materials. However, this general-purpose recipe, courtesy of the DIY Network, may help clean many outdoor fabrics. Mix 1 teaspoon dishwashing detergent, 1 quart warm water and 1 tablespoon borax together. Saturate a sponge and use it to wash the cushions. Let it sit for 15 minutes and then spray it off with a high-force hose. Stand the cushions on their edges to dry outdoors.

Remember, vinegar can help inhibit mildew growth. Therefore, keep a bottle of diluted vinegar around to spray on plastic mesh and furniture that gets wet from the rain or a pool. Store outdoor furniture away from inclement weather whenever possible to prolong its life.

Salmonella is 'no yolk' when raising backyard chickens

City dwellers and suburbanites have flown the coop, so to speak. A growing interest in raising chickens has enabled coops and nesting birds to spring up in neighborhoods one would not typically associate with chickens.

Sometimes dubbed "urban homesteading" or "urban farming," these homegrown operations enable people to enjoy fresh eggs from the comfort of home. Henhouses are just another extension of methods to reap the benefits of fresh, local and nonfactory-produced foods.

Although advocates insist that raising chickens on a small scale makes the birds less likely to carry disease than factory-farmed chickens, anyone raising chickens needs to be aware of the potential for disease — particularly salmonella. Also, it's important to care for chickens in a manner that is humane and in line with local laws.

What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a common bacteria that lives in the intestinal tract of humans, other mammals and some birds, including chickens. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that approximately 1.2 million illnesses and 450 deaths are attributed to salmonella annually in the United States. The illness causes diarrhea, fever and abdominal

cramps between 12 and 72 hours after infection and can last between four and seven days. Salmonella can cause death when not properly treated with antibiotics.

Spreading Salmonella

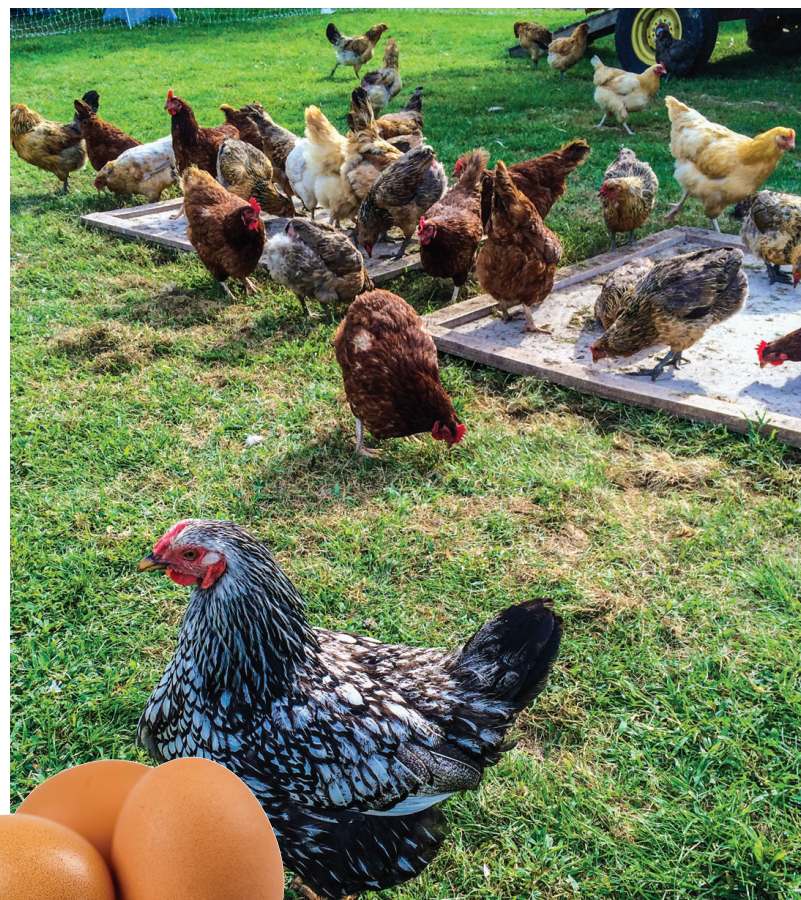
Although humans cannot catch salmonella from chickens the way one would contract a cold, they can catch it through handling or consuming eggs of infected birds. The rural newsletter and farming resource Grit says salmonella can then be transmitted to humans who eat improperly cooked meat or eggs from infected birds or from putting their hands in your mouths after touching chickens or eggs that have come in contact with contaminated rodent or chicken feces.

The elderly, people with weakened immune systems and young children are at the highest risk for salmonella infection than others. Children who help gather eggs and do not thoroughly wash their hands afterward can be at increased risk.

Reducing Risk

Maintaining clean conditions and routinely inspecting chickens for good health can help lower the risk of salmonella infection. Chicks and adult chickens that have salmonella may produce loose yellow or green droppings; have a drop in egg production, increased thirst and decreased feed consumption; and show signs of weight loss. Look for rodents in the henhouse, as infected mice or other small rodents may transmit salmonella as well.

Chickens also need safe, roomy clean conditions to remain healthy and content. According to the resource MyPetChicken, a diet of whole grains and seeds also may be associated



push dirt away from the shell's pores.

Old eggs are more susceptible to bacteria penetration. Storing eggs at room temperature may cause them to degrade faster. Once eggs are gathered, individuals should wash their hands and make sure the eggs are chilled.

Salmonella can be prevented in backyard chicken coops. Plus, it's important to note that risk of infection is very small. The American Egg Board's Egg Safety reference says an average consumer might encounter a contaminated egg once every 84 years.

with decreased salmonella colonies. Some experts warn against washing eggs as a preventative method. According to a report written by Diane Schivera, an organic livestock specialist for the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, thoroughly cleaning egg shells can remove a protective "bloom" that prevents bacteria from entering eggs. Eggs shouldn't be scrubbed, but some suggest a warm water rinse that will

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How to establish a household budget

Household budgets can help families thrive and survive should unforeseen financial issues arise. Establishing a household budget is no small task, as numerous factors must be considered to come up with a budget that secures families' futures without sacrificing their everyday quality of life.

Finances

To develop a budget everyone in the household can live with, heads of household should first get a firm grasp of their finances. First determine how much money is coming in and how much money is in savings. Then make a list of the family's financial obligations, including costs associated with housing, food, transportation, utilities, and other monthly bills like student loan payments. Be thorough in this examination and you should get an idea of how you're spending your money and where you can make any cuts if need be.

Behaviors

Heads of household should make honest assessments of their behaviors with regard to money. Are you prone to impulse shopping? How closely do you track your daily spending? Can you cut back on certain daily expenses, such as morning cups of coffee from the coffee shop or restaurant lunches? While you might have little leeway with regard to large expenses like car and housing payments, you can likely save substantial amounts of money by cutting back on small, daily expenses that can add up to substantial amounts of money over time. Track your behaviors with

regard to "spending money," jotting down each purchase you make, no matter how small it seems. After a couple of weeks tracking your daily spending, a picture of your financial behaviors should develop and you can then see if there are any areas where you can save money.

Determining a Need Versus a Want

Once you see how you behave financially, you can then make a list of those daily and monthly expenses that qualify as a need and those that fall into the "want" category. For example, morning coffee might be a need, but why not brew that coffee at home and take it with you rather than buying a costly cup at the coffee shop near your office each day? You can keep some of the items that fall onto your want list as a daily or monthly reward, but try to eliminate those that are compromising your monthly finances. And remember to include contributions to a savings account in your list of needs.

Build Your Budget

A firm grasp of income, bills and behaviors and the knowledge of what's a need versus a want should put heads of household in position to develop their budgets. Stick to your budget for a month and then assess how you and your family adjusted. While the adjustment might prove difficult at first, by the end of the first month you might notice any financial-related stress you had been feeling has begun to dissipate, and you might even make an effort to tighten the purse strings a little more as you look to save more money.



The technology of today is vastly different from that which was available as recently as 20 years ago. Perhaps nowhere is that more evident than with regard to televisions. Once heavy and relatively small, televisions are now lightweight and larger than ever. In addition, televisions now come with enough specifications and gadgets to make the average consumer's head spin when it comes time to purchase a new TV. While the right TV depends on a host of factors, the following are some tips to simplify your next television purchase.

Give Strong Consideration to 4K Televisions.

4K televisions have become more affordable in recent months but still come with a slightly higher price tag than the alternatives. However, many consumers feel the extra money is worth it. 4K televisions, often referred to as "ultra HD," offer substantially more pixels than more the HD TVs of yesteryear. Many 4K TVs come with high dynamic range, or HDR, which produces more intense colors for viewers.

Pay Attention to Refresh Rate.

According to the technology and consumer electronics website CNET.com, refresh rate is how often a TV changes the image on screen. LCD and OLED televisions are subject to motion blur, which refers to the blurry look that can develop around objects in motion on your television screen. That blurry look is partially a byproduct of your brain noticing the motion and anticipating

where that object is going to be next. Refresh rate can help to combat motion blur, but only if the refresh rate is high enough. CNET notes that TVs with refresh rates no less than 120Hz can be enough to combat motion blur. Any TV with a refresh rate less than 120Hz might still bother viewers affected by motion blur.

Look for a TV with Multiple HDMI ports.

HDMI ports enable viewers to plug their devices into their televisions. That's important as viewers are increasingly relying on alternatives to cable and satellite companies to provide their content. Rare is the new television that does not come with HDMI ports, but make sure any TV you're considering has enough ports to support all of the things you hope to do with it when you get it home.

Consider a Sound System or Sound Bar.

Today's televisions are thin, lightweight and aesthetically appealing. But that thinness does affect the sound quality of modern televisions because the speaker drivers must be smaller for the TVs to be so thin. As a result, the sound created by modern televisions is not as robust as the sound produced by the televisions of yesteryear. At the very least, consider a sound bar to improve the sound coming from your television. If you have some money to spend, a home audio system can dramatically improve the sound coming from your TV.

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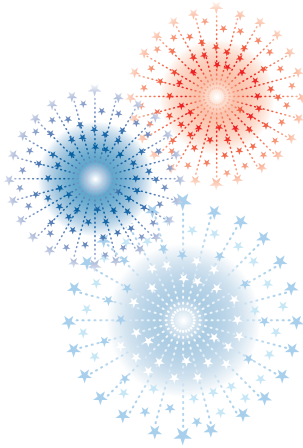
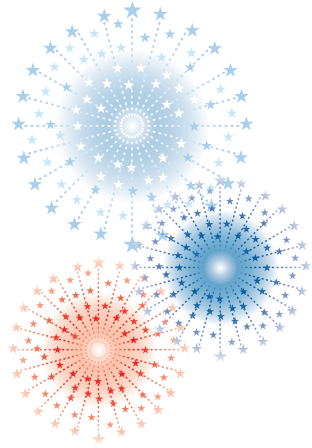
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Understand how
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How to clean and maintain your new cookware

Cookware is as varied as the foods cooks can prepare. Running the gamut from ceramic to cast iron to stainless steel, cookware is available in various styles that fit cooks' lifestyles and budgets.

Home cooks have more options than ever before when outfitting their kitchen equipment, and different cooking materials may raise questions about how to clean and maintain new items. Here's a look at some popular cookware materials and how to care for those pots and pans.

Ceramic

Ceramic coatings are made from inorganic, nonmetallic film layers on hard materials to create nonstick surfaces that are generally resistant to scratching. Because they can be safer than some other nonstick alternatives, some consumers may prefer ceramic to other materials.

Even though ceramic is durable, it is not impervious to damage. Use wooden, silicone, plastic, or nylon utensils when cooking with ceramic. Metal utensils may mar the surface. Even though the cookware is nonstick, using a small bit of oil or butter can help prolong this feature. Cooking sprays are not recommended.

Ceramic should be handwashed with soap and water to keep it pristine. Some people recommended periodic deep cleanings with baking soda and water to remove any residue.

Cast Iron

Cast iron cookware has been around for generations. One of the key things to remember about cast iron is that a proper seasoning of the material will help cooking and cleanup.

General instructions for seasoning a cast-iron skillet involves heating it up on the stovetop until it's smoking hot, then rubbing a little oil into it and allowing it to cool. According to cast iron cookware manufacturer Lodge, each time you cook, you will help maintain this seasoning.

Cast iron can rust, so it should be handwashed with a stiff scrubber (no soap) and dried immediately. Rub a thin coating of vegetable oil to protect it from moisture.

Stainless Steel

Stainless steel materials are versatile in the kitchen because they do not rust. Plus, pots and pans can move easily between the stovetop and oven. Because stainless steel is not nonstick, heating up the cookware first before adding oil and food can prevent items from sticking to the surface.

Cleaning may require soaking in warm, soapy water and then scrubbing with nonabrasive sponges. Specialty nonabrasive cleaners designed to restore stainless steel from discoloration also can be used periodically.

Copper

Copper cookware is quick to warm and distributes heat very evenly. They are often a tool of the trade when heat-sensitive recipes call for careful temperature control.

Copper is highly reactive and isn't food-safe on its own. Copper usually features a protective layer of nickel or stainless steel to make it food-safe. That means avoiding abrasive cleansers or sponges.

Another rule of thumb is to reduce the heat under copper pans and pots because they are such good conductors of heat. This will prevent stuck-on foods, making for easier cleanup.

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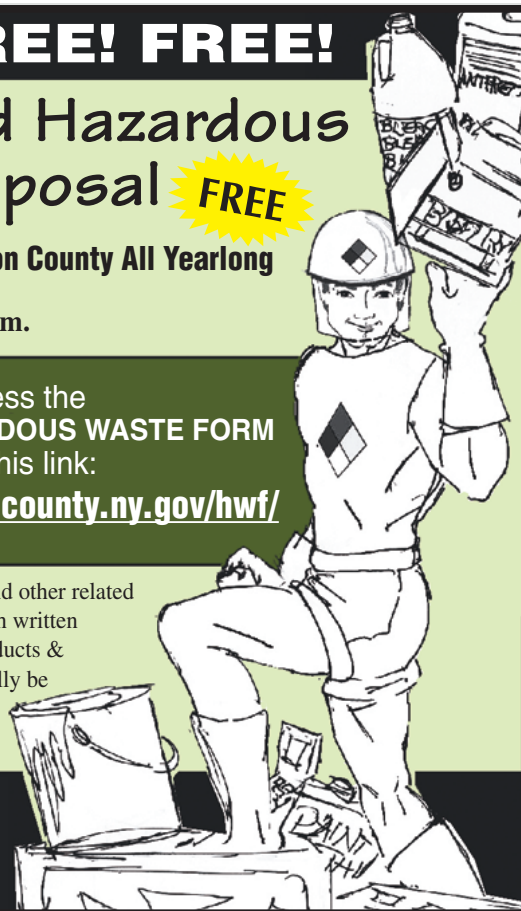
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Grilling foods to be safe and healthy

People rely on indoor and outdoor grills to prepare foods all year long. Not only can menu items made on the grill taste delicious, but they also may be healthier than foods cooked via other methods. When done correctly, grilling is a versatile way to cook tasty foods relatively quickly.

One of the challenges of cooking over high, open heat is the difficulty in determining just how long to keep foods over the flame. Take them off too soon and they may be undercooked. Wait too long and items may be dry and charred. Use these tips to make grilling easy and safe.

Preheat and prepare the grill

Be sure to preheat the grill to between 400°F and 500°F. Use a nonstick spray on the grates while the grill is heating. This way foods will not stick and create a mess that will ultimately require considerable cleaning.

Buy a Meat Thermometer

One of the easiest ways to take the guesswork out of grilling is to use a meat thermometer. By knowing internal temperatures in a few seconds, grillmasters can have juicy foods that are cooked to the correct temperature so foodborne illnesses do not become a problem. Cooking by sight is inaccurate, as the outside of the food may look well done even though the inside is still pink. Thermometers allow cooks to avoid cutting open foods to check doneness, spilling out tasty juices in the process.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture advises on minimal internal temperatures for meats and poultry (https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/safe-minimum-internal-temperature-chart/ct_index). Keep in mind that food continues to cook when it is taken off the grill. Therefore, removing a few minutes before it has reached a certain temperature is ideal.

Fish is Fast

Don't avoid grilling fish because of its delicacy. Using wood planks or any of the newer grilling gadgets available can keep flaky fish from falling through the grates. Plus, fish is an ideal go-to when one is really short on cooking time. If necessary, experiment with varieties of fish that are durable, such as salmon or tuna.

Leave an Empty Spot

Have an unheated area of the grill or one that is set to a low temperature so there is somewhere to move food if a flare-up occurs or if something is cooking too fast. This is also a good spot to finish foods that may need a little more time over indirect heat — such as burgers that require melted cheese.

Use Sauce at the End

Avoid charring foods by using sugary sauces toward the end of cooking. Otherwise, the sauce can burn quickly and contribute to potentially carcinogenic char.

Grilling can be made easier with a few tricks of the trade. The results will be delicious, healthy and safe to enjoy.





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How to incorporate more reading into your schedule

Those who want to boost their health and happiness need look no further than a good book to do so.

Reading helps people of all ages expand their vocabulary. For students, that can translate into improved scores on standardized tests and performance in school. Reading also can lead to higher scores on general tests of intelligence, according to researchers at the University of California, Berkeley.

One of the main advantages to reading, particularly for adults, is that it helps keep minds sharp longer. According to the journal *Neurology*, reading gives the brain a good workout, which can improve memory function. This can slow down the process of cognitive decline.

Reading also helps boost concentration. Multitasking, checking email, watching television and chatting on social media can cause stress levels to rise and productivity to wane. Conversely, when reading a good book or informative article, all attention is focused on the story. This focus can be extended to other things, such as school or work projects.

Now that just some of the reasons to read have been presented, people may wonder just how to increase their propensity to read. The following are some ideas to get started.

Buy several paper books. While all books and reading materials can be beneficial, paper books may help people stay focused longer. Based on the research paper, "Reading from paper versus screens: A critical review of the empirical literature," by Andrew Dillon, figures vary according to means of calculation and experimental design, but the evidence suggests a performance deficit of between 20

percent and 30 percent when reading from a screen. People can't toggle between apps when reading a paper book versus text on an e-reader, reducing distractions.

Subscribe to magazines and newspapers. Have plenty of reading materials handy, which can easily be tossed in a tote bag or carried to and from appointments. Resist the urge to use a mobile device, opting to read a magazine or paper instead.

Read at the gym. Bringing a book along to the gym has dual benefits. Not only will one be engaging the brain as well as the body, but also becoming absorbed in a chapter or interesting piece can prolong the workout. That means spending more time on that treadmill, elliptical machine or stationary bike to finish the meaty part of a chapter.

Read before bed. Skip late-night television watching in favor of a relaxing read. Blue light, which is emitted from televisions, mobile phones and tablets, signals to the brain that it isn't time for sleep.

Therefore, melatonin production can be delayed, making it more difficult to fall asleep. Reading a paper book by a dim light may be relaxing enough to induce sleep. In addition, according to the organization Weight Watchers, snuggling up with a good read tamps down levels of unhealthy stress hormones such as cortisol. Feeling stress-free is a relaxing way to wind down from a tough day.

It is easy to include more reading in your day, especially when people understand the benefits reading provides the mind and body.

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Host a successful yard sale

Instead of giving away unwanted items that have gathered dust around the house, many people turn to garage and yard sales to transform their clutter into some extra money. Yard sales may not be a “get rich quick” scheme, but they present an environmentally friendly way to clean up a home. What’s more, they can be an ideal way to connect with neighbors and meet new people. Any money earned is an added bonus.



Statistics collecting resource Statistics Brain says that roughly 165,000 yard/garage sales take place in the United States each week. Nearly 700,000 people purchase something at those sales, leading to millions of dollars exchanging hands.

Yard sales may seem straightforward, but there are a few strategies to ensure such sales go boom rather than bust.

Choose the Right Date and Time

Plan when to hold the sale by looking at the calendar and choosing an open weekend. Many people host their yard sales on Friday, Saturday or Sunday mornings, theorizing that this is when the most people will be free to browse their wares.

Begin early in the morning so that shoppers will not need to disrupt their schedules much to visit neighborhood sales. A 7 a.m. start time will attract the early birds and free up most of the day.

Advertise the Sale

To reach the maximum number of shoppers, advertise your sale in various ways. Signage around the neighborhood announcing the sale is one method. Signs should be bold, simple and easily readable for passing motorists.

Place ads in local newspapers, online and on grocery store bulletin boards, and use social media to spread the word of the sale even further. Be sure to give ample notice of the sale so that shoppers can mark their calendars.

Make for Easy Browsing

Arrange goods for sale into categories and pay attention to presentation. You may generate more sales if items are easy to see and browsing is made easy. Put items you expect to draw the most attention popular near the end of the driveway to entice passers-by.

A neat and inviting appearance also may convey that you’ve taken care of your home and your belongings. Play some music and offer light refreshments to create a convivial atmosphere.

Price Things Reasonably

It’s tempting to overprice items, but a good rule of thumb is to mark things for one-half to one-third of the original value. Be open to negotiation, but try to haggle with a “buy one get one” approach, rather than marking down the price considerably. After all, the goal is to get rid of as many items as possible, with financial gain a distant second.

Yard sales are popular ways to make money and clear homes of unwanted items. Hosts can make their sales even more successful by employing a few simple strategies.

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Top ways to increase productivity at work and beyond

In today's competitive job market, individuals need to channel all possible assets to get ahead. Working more efficiently and improving productivity can be an advantage to anyone.

Despite the technological advancements available to help streamline tasks, many workers admit to being sidetracked during the workday and may need pointers to improve their efficiency on the job. Productivity at work can trickle over into habits that can be utilized at home and elsewhere. The following are several ways to improve productivity levels.

Determine how much time you spend on common tasks. Take a day to calculate how much time you're devoting to certain parts of your workday. For example, is email correspondence bogging you down for several hours? Once you have a clearer picture of how you are spending your time, you can develop an effective plan to maximize your work hours.

Acknowledge that you can't run like a robot. The human body does not do well with prolonged multitasking. One of the strategies for being more productive is to work for an hour to an hour and a half, then take a break.

Change your hours. When possible, explore flex time with your employer. Getting to work before everyone, or coming in later and staying after traditional hours can lead to greater productivity. There will be fewer distractions and less rush-hour traffic, and you can reap a greater sense of accomplishment. Consider working a weekend day and taking off during the week. Then you'll have

the added benefit of getting personal tasks done while others are at work.

Work as a team. Have some trusted people on your team to whom you can assign important tasks. Find colleagues that excel in certain areas and tap their strengths. With various wheels in motion, jobs can get done more quickly.

Stop multitasking. Psychologists have determined that multitasking can bog down productivity. According to the American Psychological Association, the mind and brain were not designed for heavy-duty multitasking. Individuals think they're getting more done, but they may not be handling tasks effectively. Instead, focus on

one job at a time and only move on once it is completed.

Write things down. A to-do list floating around in your head can become overwhelming. The physical task of writing things down and crossing items off the list one-by-one can help you sail through tasks effectively. If you're a mobile person, jot the list down on the notes function of a smartphone or use a task app that syncs with calendar functions.

Schedule fewer meetings if possible. Meetings can sometimes be a waste of time. Before reserving the conference room, see if a resolution can be made via group text, email or other correspondence.



Evidence suggests that work meetings can be a time drain. Find a different way, such as through group texting, to solicit insight from coworkers.



Birthday party pointers to make kids, parents happy

Childhood is filled with many memorable moments. Among the more memorable are children's birthday parties. During their children's formative years, parents may wrestle with ideas, themes, etiquette, and more as they plan birthday parties to remember. Hosting birthday parties that touch on all the

right notes can be easier if parents follow a handful of strategies that many parents have been employing for years.

Involve Your Child. Chances are your son or daughter has been plotting out ideas for his or her party since last year's festivities ended. Ask questions about what he or she would like to do this year. Seek your child's input on the guest list and preferred theme. Playing an active roll in party planning can make kids even more excited about their birthday parties.

Focus on fun and making your child feel special. Some parents feel birthday parties must be expensive and all-encompassing bashes. But many children simply want parties that allow them to participate in an activity they enjoy, eat sweets and share the experience with their closest friends. Recognizing this can help parents keep their workloads and budgets in check.

Trim the guest list. Parents should not feel the need to invite every acquaintance to their children's birthday parties. Parents understandably don't want to exclude or offend anyone by leaving them off the guest list. However, try to limit the guests to around 10, including the guest of honor. This makes the entire party more manageable.

Keep it quiet. Make sure your child avoids bragging about the party at school or at extracurricular activities. Doing so may offend those classmates who are not on the guest list. Send invites directly to homes rather than distributing them at school so that no one feels excluded. Develop backup plans. There's no accounting for the weather, illness, venue cancellations, or food flops. Always have a plan B (and, ideally,

a plan C and plan D) so that the kids can stay entertained.

Encourage drop-and-go. Hosting young children can be stressful. And when parents attend the party as well, entertaining duties expand to an entirely different level. Recruit another helper or two and be sure parents know you are comfortable with them not staying for the party. They may even appreciate your looking after their children for a few hours. Plan for additional guests. Part of planning for the unexpected includes being able to accommodate a few extra children. You never know when a sibling will have to tag along or a last-minute invite pops up, so keep some extra snacks and favors on hand just in case.

Open gifts after guests leave. Opening gifts is time-consuming, and young children may not be adept at filtering their comments. No one should go home feeling their gift was not appreciated.

Keep children's birthday parties simple so guests and hosts have as much fun as possible.



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How to keep kids engaged over school breaks

Children in North America will spend, on average, more than 900 hours attending school in a given year. The average school year in the United States lasts 1,016 hours, the equivalent of 42 continuous days. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, many developed countries begin their academic



years in September and end them in June. Some, like Australia, feature four terms with two-week breaks in between each term. Others go to school for most of the year — with various holiday breaks in between — and then get the bulk of their time off during the summer.

As much time as kids spend in school, there will be times when they are left to their own devices, and during these times it's easy for them to forget classroom lessons. Sometimes called "summer learning loss" or "summer slide," this forgetfulness sees many students fail to retain all of their lessons over prolonged breaks from school. Studies indicate that students score lower on standardized tests at the end of the summer compared to their performance on the same tests at the beginning of summer. Anywhere from between one to three month's worth

of educational achievement can dissipate during prolonged breaks from the classroom. To help ensure that those hard-earned lessons are not so easily forgotten, parents can help children remain intellectually engaged in various ways over school breaks.

Stick to a schedule. Try to maintain a schedule similar to school, with children waking at the same time each day and going to bed at similar hours. This will make it much easier to get back into a routine when a new school year begins.

Encourage reading. Set aside time for reading each day. All it generally takes is 15 to 30 minutes of reading per day for kids to remember their vocabulary lessons and maintain their fluency and comprehension skills. Children may enjoy picking their own books rather than having a required reading list.

Keep a math book handy. On long car trips or rainy days, children can do a few math problems to keep their skills sharp. This will help keep learning loss to a minimum. Math workbooks may be available at bookstores, or parents can look

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GOLF CLINIC (Ages 7-11)

July 11th, 12th & 13th



This program is designed to promote a fun and educational experience to kids ages 7-11. Participants will be introduced to the fundamentals of golf by a golf instructor while learning sportsmanship, technique and respect for the game. This is a great clinic whether your child is a first-time player or has played before.

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CAMP (Ages 11-16) July 11th, 18th & 25th

This program is designed to promote a fun and educational experience to kids ages 11-16. This program runs three weeks that includes lessons as well as organized game time. Participants will be introduced to the fundamentals of golf and will have an opportunity to meet and work with the golf professional. These participants will learn some more advanced skills, but is also a good opportunity for first time players.

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Reading is a great way for students to keep their brains sharp during prolonged school breaks.



online or ask a teacher for a summer to-do packet.

Plan educational trips. Vacations and day trips can be fun, entertaining and educational all at the same time. Science centers, museums and living history locations can bring to life information learned in the classroom, even on family vacations.

Learn at camp. Many children attend camp for a portion of their school breaks. Look for camps that do not simply babysit children, but engage them through enrichment activities.

Take a class. Children and families can learn together by exploring new skills. Enroll in something educational and enjoyable, such as a music or dance class, a STEM seminar or something else that engages the mind and body. This gives everyone a chance to learn something new and have a great time together as a family.

Parents and educators can reduce lesson loss over school breaks by encouraging families to remain intellectually engaged in any way they can.

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How to save money on vacation

Going on vacation often means throwing a little caution to the wind and indulging here and there on purchases or experiences a person wouldn't normally make at home. According to a 2015 CBS News poll, the average American is entitled to 16 days of paid leave each year, and the average Canadian worker 19 days. Such time off is an opportunity to fit lots of fun into a relatively short period of time.

are available for just about any purchase — even vacations. Check all travel websites to see if there are any deals to be had. Don't overlook discounts related to your membership in clubs such as AAA or AARP or those linked to your alumni or military organization. According to RetailMeNot, having a social media account can help, too. Travel deal sites and airlines may post about flash sales.

Frugal travelers may want to be sure they're spending their hard-earned money in the smartest ways. Traveling without breaking the bank enables the average person to take more vacations and continue to make invaluable memories.

Plan meals. Look into economical restaurants before departing. Know where you'll be eating and when, including packing a lunch or enjoying a hotel-provided breakfast. Enjoying a big lunch can be more frugal than indulging on dinner.

Here are some suggestions on making a getaway, whether it involves lots of traveling or staying close to home, more affordable.

Rent small. If renting a car, choose the smallest model that will fit your needs. In addition, there's no need to pay for a large room that you don't plan to spend much time in, so resist the temptation to book large hotel rooms.

Be flexible. Travelers who are flexible in their departure dates and times can usually find great rates because they have the ability to shop price instead of date. Various airline websites and travel discount services show the average flight prices across several days. Frugal fliers can select the lowest price. The same can be true when booking hotels and other vacation components.

Consider public transportation. Investigate the public transportation options at your destination. Such options may not be as convenient as taxis, but they may be more economical.

Pack light. Many airlines now charge extra for baggage fees — especially for suitcases that exceed the weight limit — so don't bring along unnecessary items. Hotels typically provide toiletries for free, so save space and money by removing such items from your luggage. Chances are if you didn't pack an item, you can still find an affordable alternative at your destination.

Book based on currency. Stay abreast of currency exchange rates. Such rates can make a big difference in choosing a destination, particularly if your money will be worth more internationally. Also, try booking a vacation through the local country's version of the same travel site.

Use coupons. Coupons aren't only for getting cents off your favorite brand of tissue at the supermarket. Coupons and discount codes

Skip tourist hotspots. Talk to the locals to find out where to get the best deals. Try local foods, brews and more for a cost savings.

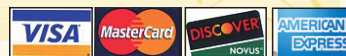
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The internet provides unbridled access to information for those who are smart about usage.

Learn to be safe when going online

Data from the International Telecommunication Union estimates that more than three billion people are online using the resources of the web in various ways. Such widespread access and connectivity can lead to a host of positive effects. But internet accessibility also comes with some safety concerns.

People go online for myriad reasons, but as the internet continues to remove barriers, it also can remove some of the inherent privacy people believe they have — making their personal information more accessible to cyber criminals. Safe web browsing involves understanding potential hazards and how to avoid them.

WiFi access lockdown

Many internet connections are now powered by WiFi access. WiFi is a technology that uses radio waves to provide network connectivity. That means those devices in the vicinity of a wireless router “hot spot” can access the internet, according to the media resource CCM Benchmark Group. Some hot spots are located in public locations to make shopping or dining experiences more appealing. Others are created from home internet routers. To ensure safe browsing, perform tasks that require the sharing of private information (e.g., banking and shopping) via a locked-down, password encrypted router. That makes it more difficult for hackers to gain access to sensitive personal information.

Gaming & social sites

The internet has made the online experience much more social. Whether enjoying an app or playing a game, individuals can easily collaborate and communicate with

others online. But it is impossible to know exactly who is on the other end of that digital connection. Online communities are often made up of anonymous strangers, and discussions may not be moderated. It is easy for anyone — young or old — to inadvertently give away personal information that can be damaging. Caution should always be used when communicating online, even in seemingly harmless ways. Usernames should be completely anonymous (avoid birthdays or ages), and never give passwords, addresses or other contact information to strangers.

Pause before posting

Pause before posting anything online. Remember that the information you post will remain in cyberspace forever. Think about how it would feel to have an employer, parent or law enforcement individual come across a photo or a comment that may be inappropriate later on.

Tighten security settings

Review privacy settings on any new application to determine if any personal information can be gleaned from an account. This should not be limited to social media sites. Check photo and video settings to ensure that metadata is not linked. This may include the geographic location where the photo or video was taken. People should express their wishes to family and friends so they can tighten privacy settings.

Buy reputable apps

Keep in mind that there is money to be made from online access. Apps requiring in-app purchases, downloads and the like may not always be on the up and up. Exercise caution when money is exchanged online.

Safe online usage requires diligence and awareness of the many potential dangers that may be lurking online.

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