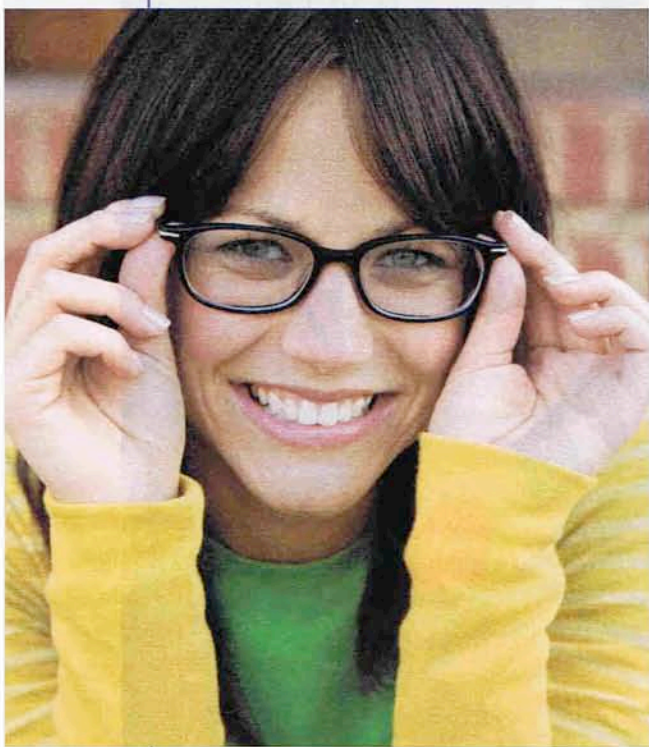


tip talk

organizing, cleaning, recycling & more



5 things to do with... toothpicks

- 1 TEMPORARILY SAVE YOUR GLASSES** Lose an eyeglass screw? Slide a piece of toothpick into the screw hole; add tape to hold things together until you can get them fixed.
- 2 DECORATE A CAKE** Prevent mistakes by lightly sketching your letters and flowers in the frosting with a toothpick before you pick up that piping bag.
- 3 PREVENT SHREDED TAPE** Stick a toothpick to the cut end of packing tape so you can find it next time. We know—brilliant.
- 4 FILL IN SMALL SCRATCHES** Next time you have a scratch that you want to fill with paint, putty or varnish, use a toothpick to spread it along the scraped area.
- 5 PLUG A GARDEN HOSE LEAK** Break off a third of a toothpick and slide it into the hole until the edge is flush with the hose. Wrap waterproof tape around the hose to secure. Should get you through the season.

BANKING ON BABY WIPES

I've never been a big fan of piggy banks—the hole just isn't big enough to dump change into, and more than once I've knocked them off the edge of the dresser, smashing them to bits. Last month I needed a container to lug my change to the bank and inadvertently discovered that empty baby wipe containers make great piggy banks! The hole in the middle is perfect for dropping in handfuls of change, and the containers are strong enough to handle \$75 worth of coins. Best part? Little fingers will stop helping themselves to your cash stash—the packaging provides a perfect camouflage for what's really inside.



THE BEST WAY TO recycle it

VHS TAPES

Now that DVDs have taken over, everyone has a pile of old VHS tapes gathering dust. To keep them out of landfills, drop them in the mail to Alternative Community Training, a nonprofit Missouri company that provides jobs to people with disabilities. Workers erase the tapes, reselling the ones that are in good shape and recycling the plastic parts of the rest. They've recycled more than 1 million tapes so far. Mail the tapes (at the cheaper USPS media mail rate) to ACT, 2200 Burlington, Columbia, MO 65202. ▶



solutions

take 5 minutes

Tote wire hangers back to the dry cleaner's so that they can be reused or recycled. You'll be doing a good thing for the environment—3.5 billion wire hangers end up in landfills every year—and you'll reduce closet clutter, too. Like this tip? Find it and many more in *The Green Year: 365 Small Things You Can Do to Make a Big Difference* by Jodi Helmer (\$14.95; Alpha Books).



shade problems solved!



No one really understands how window shades work, which is why most people have one...*ahem*, a few...that are "broken." Here's a cheat sheet to quick solutions.

SHADE GLITCH	ONE-MINUTE FIX
It stops in the middle and won't roll up all the way.	Pull the shade halfway down. Take the roller off its brackets and roll the shade back up by hand. Replace into brackets.
It rolls up with the force of a NASA launch. Sometimes all by itself.	When the shade is fully rolled up, take it down from its brackets. Unroll it halfway, then rehang.
It won't roll up—it's stuck all the way down.	Remove the shade. Pop the cap off the end that has the flat pin. With pliers, grab the flat pin, and twist it clockwise until you feel tension. Rehang.
It won't "catch" right and hold itself up.	It's the ratchet tooth mechanism. Take down the shade, and pull the cap off the end with the flat pin. Clean the metal pieces with a damp cloth, and lubricate by spraying only the rotating part with WD-40. Replace.

WORD OF THE MONTH: **SPRING**

1 (noun) The season between winter and summer. *Over 75% of people do spring cleaning—and most find that doing a thorough job now cuts down on cleaning time in the summer.* **2** (verb) To pay for. *Springing for an extra \$10 to \$15 tip when you need your handyman is a good investment—in the future he's more likely to respond to your off-hours calls.*

TRASH TIME

My garbage can is always a little smelly, no matter how often I bleach it. A cat-owner friend recently gave me a solution: Sprinkle cat litter into the bottom of each bag to kill odors. You can also toss a bit into the bottom of the can and change the litter whenever odors return. **wd**



gotta have it!

Let's face it, your sneakers rarely smell like lilacs. That's why I use Sports Sox, 8-inch cedar-filled pouches that slide into shoes to freshen them up. I have a few sets and drop them into whichever shoes need them. These amazing little pouches also dry out rained-on shoes in two hours, and they're heaven-sent for anyone with athletic kids. cedaramerica.com; \$17.95 for three pairs.

