

# tip talk

organizing, cleaning, recycling & more



## 5 things to do with...flour

- 1 **CLEAN PLAYING CARDS** When those queens are looking gray, put them in a plastic bag with a half-cup of flour. Shake for a minute. Remove the cards, and shuffle the deck a few times over the sink to clear.
- 2 **UNSTICK A LID** Have a plastic container that closes a little too tightly for your taste? Dip the container edge in flour to prevent sticking.
- 3 **CLEAN HEAVY WHITE FABRICS** Spot-clean white canvas, leather, faux leather, vinyl and even curtains by rubbing flour into the dirt lines, then brushing clean.
- 4 **MIX UP SOME GLUE** Whip up craft glue for kids by mixing 1 part flour with 3 parts water. Boil, stirring, until it becomes a paste; store in the fridge.
- 5 **MAKE CLAY** Knead together 1 cup water, 3 cups flour and 1 tsp vegetable oil. Add food color. To store, moisten and wrap it in plastic, and put in the fridge.

## THE CLEANING PRO SAYS...

Want to save money? "Many commercial cleaning products are intentionally made too strong, so that you don't have to work too hard," says Barbara Roche Fierman, founder of the cleaning company New York's Little Elves. "Dilute the products you're using, green or not. You'll extend the life of the product *and* the life of whatever you're cleaning."



## gotta have it!

I was so eager to move into my new house that I didn't bother to repaint the bedroom beforehand. I kicked myself afterward about the boring white walls—until I found WallPops!, removable peel-and-stick wall designs. Choices include basic colors, trendy patterns and kid-friendly animals. Best part? WallPops! are removable, with no residue or paint damage to worry about. Set of five dots or squares, \$10; at The Home Depot. ▶

No purchase necessary to win prize. Please see abbreviated rules on page 4. Your carrier's standard messaging and data transfer fees will apply.



# solutions



## take 1 minute

Make sure your dishwasher is full before running it. You'll save about 15 gallons of water, and if you don't handwash dishes first, you'll save another 20.

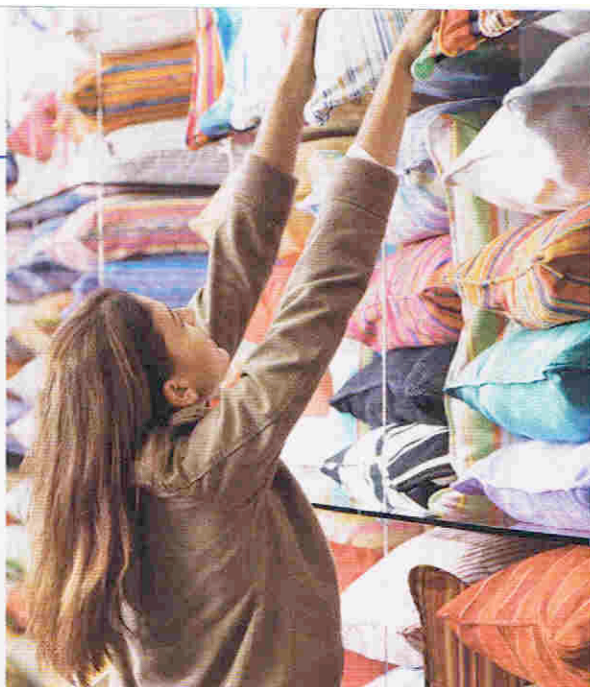
## should I order it ONLINE?

I recently bought a jewelry box on the Internet and was stunned when a *huge* box arrived at my door—it was the size of a small child! Looks like some household products are still best picked out in person. Home maven Angela Matusik, founder of home decorating website Shelterrific.com, tells us which items to schlep to the store for.

**PILLOWS** Never trust a pillow by its picture. Whether decorative or for sleeping, always feel it—and read the tag to make sure it's stuffed with what you think it is.

**COUCHES, LOVESEATS AND CHAIRS** "Never buy a couch or chair unless you've sat on it," says Matusik. "You spend a lot of time there, so it needs to fit your body."

**LAMPS** Go to the store and try a bulb in the lamp before you buy. "We accidentally bought one that makes the house look moody, like a disco," she says.



**DINNERWARE** "Flatware is one of those things you should always handle before you buy," says Matusik. "It's easy to end up with soup spoons as big as serving spoons, and serving plates that look like dessert plates."



## \$ SAVER: Boxes aren't just for shipping

Want a glass of Merlot? Don't buy a bottle—be savvy, try the newly hip wine-in-a-box, and you'll spend less without giving up quality. Not all are created equal, so try brands like Yellow+Blue, From the Tank or Boho. Actually a vacuum-sealed bag (in a box), some hold the equivalent of four bottles of wine for the price of two. "Some will stay good for three weeks," says Anu Arawa, founder of Swirl Events, a wine-tasting party company in New York City, "so you won't throw money down the drain." Look for boxed wine at your local wine shop.

## THE BEST WAY TO recycle it

### CELL PHONES

It's illegal to drop cell phones into the trash in California, and more states are expected to follow.

Instead, send them to Cell

Phones for Soldiers, a nonprofit (started in 2004 by two kids, now 16 and 18) that accepts all models (even really old ones!) and resells them to a recycling company. Proceeds buy calling cards for U.S. soldiers abroad to call their families—27 million minutes have been provided so far. Mail your phone to Cell Phones for Soldiers, 2555 Bishop Circle West, Dexter, MI 48130-9916. Print a receipt and free postage label at [CellPhonesforSoldiers.com](http://CellPhonesforSoldiers.com) wd



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