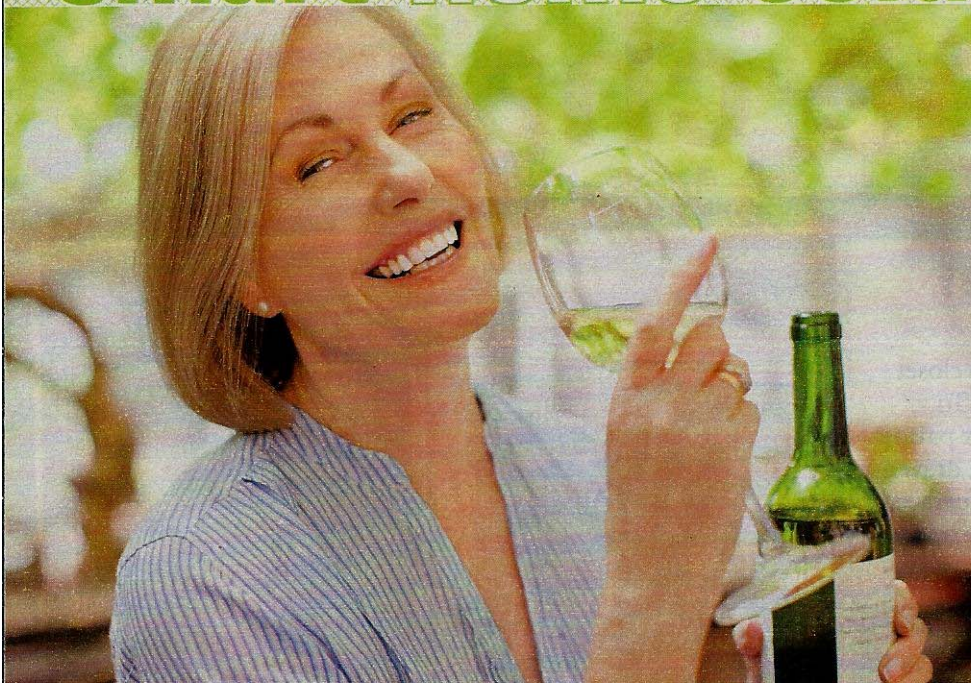


smart home solutions



Reader Tip

Quick fix for a missing cork

“Cleaning up after my girls’-night-in gathering, I noticed a half-empty bottle of wine with no cork in sight. Luckily, I remembered my pal’s trick of ‘sealing’ the bottle with a candle. I microwaved an old unscented taper for 3 seconds to soften the wax, cut an inch off the bottom and stuck the piece in the neck of the bottle. The makeshift stopper fit perfectly, and when I wanted a glass of wine the next day, it pulled out just as easily as a regular cork.”

—Allison McAdams, Baltimore

Squeeze out every last bit of toothpaste

Uh oh—you just about finished the toothpaste and your husband still has to brush his teeth. Instead of dashing to the drugstore, submerge the tube in a glass of hot water for 1 minute. The warmth will expand the tube and loosen any trapped toothpaste so your husband can get in one final round before buying a replacement tomorrow.



Make visible hem stitches vanish

While lowering the hem on your son’s school pants, you notice the previous line of stitches is very visible. The fix: Dip a clean rag (a white one will prevent staining) into a mixture of equal parts distilled white vinegar and water. Lay the pant cuffs on top of the damp rag and go over the stitches with a hot iron until they disappear. The vinegar’s acetic acid will soften the material, while the steam will expand the fibers to their original condition.

Revive an old dust mop in seconds

Even though you’ve only had it for a few months, your dust mop seems to be pushing around the dirt on your floors rather than picking it up. Don’t lose faith in it just yet—simply trim ½ inch off the tool’s cotton strands. Frayed ends lose their ability to attract dust bunnies, but a quick clip will refresh the fibers so they lift dirt with ease.



Money saved: \$14 for a new dust mop

Outsmart cleaning-supply chaos

Somehow your disinfecting sprays, detergents and other cleaning products always end up toppling into a huge hard-to-navigate pile. To ensure you never have to hunt for the right product again, try hanging a clear shoe organizer over the back of the utility-closet door and placing the bottles in the separate slots. All your supplies will be easy to see and access just when you need them. Bonus: It’ll save space!

The little trick to an easier paint job

The last time you painted your bedroom, it seemed like you spent more time rearranging the drip-catching newspaper under the can than actually painting. Prevent annoying drips by hot-gluing a paper plate (or several) to the bottom of the can. The plates will capture the stray drops and go wherever you go, so you can complete the job without skipping a beat. When you’re finished, simply remove the plates and store the can for next time.

