How to Do Just About Anything

From organizing your closet to surviving a nuclear disaster, we’ve got dozens of new skills for you to try.

BY: MARISA LASCALA

Look back on your New Year’s resolutions. Did you vow to become a smarter, handier, more well-rounded person? That’s all well and good, but did you come up with a game plan for how to do it, too?

No? Lucky for you, we did. Westchester’s packed with experts ready to teach you everything from the art of faking conversations with wine snobs to shedding those holiday pounds (while at work). Read on, and learn how to...

[Arts & Leisure]

...Buy Art That’s Not Junk

Be honest: would you know a genuine Jackson Pollock from a splattered drop cloth? With a few pointers from a pro—gallery owner Anelle Gandelman of Anelle Gandelman Fine Art in Larchmont—and a little time to develop your eye, you just might.

1: Do Your Research. “Avoid impulse buys,” Gandelman says. “If considering artwork by a living artist, research whether the work is priced appropriately relative to the artist’s sales history and other comparable artists. Ask for more information on the artist, such as what notable collections his work can be found in, if he’s received any reviews, or if the artist has been in any museum shows.” Gandelman says that, when considering artwork on the secondary market (i.e., art that has had previous owners), provenance (the previous owners and how they acquired the art) and a condition report are important.

2: Buy from Reputable Dealers. “Avoid tourist galleries, galleries in malls, or buying art on a cruise ship. The ‘art’ in these galleries tends to be overpriced and usually is purely decorative—that means it will not hold its value or appreciate over time.”

3: Beware “Limited Editions.” According to Gandelman, “limited-edition” prints are just overpriced reproductions of original artwork. “They often have edition sizes of more than one hundred, and the
signature is usually printed on the piece. However, don’t confuse these with fine art prints, such as etchings that are original pieces in their own right.”

4: Develop Your Eye. “The more art you look at, the more you will refine your personal tastes, and the more you will be able to identify ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ art through comparison.”

5: Buy the Best You Can Afford. “It’s better to buy a great work by a lesser-known artist than an inferior work by an established artist for the same price,” Gandelman says. “Even famous artists have created bad work at some point in their careers.”

6: Trust Your Own Taste. The bottom line, says Gandelman, is, “love the art you buy.”

...Win at Beer Pong

Okay, so maybe it’s not a full-blown sport—yet. But beer pong is growing in popularity and, for those of you looking to gain an edge on your fellow pong player, these simple guidelines should help.

1: Take Your Time. “Playing beer pong is like shooting a foul shot; no need to rush your shot,” says Sam Pines, CEO of World Beer Pong Tour, LLC.

2: Aim at a Cup. “Some players just throw the ball and hope it goes in,” Pines says. The cups that you should be aiming for first are the front cups, Pines advises. “Pretend it’s bowling. Aim for the front cup and you will be fine.” It also makes your shot a lot shorter.

3: Have Good Technique. Have a good grip on the ball you are working with. Pines likes the three-finger grip with the thumb on the left side of the ball, and the pointer and middle finger on the right.

4: Don’t Forget Defense. “Your opponent might try to sneak a bounce shot in on you,” Pines says. “Make sure one player is always trying to block these shots, and the other player is catching rebounds.”

5: Know When to Rack. A traditional beer pong game is played with 10 cups and two cups remaining. “I recommend always taking the four rack on your first rack and two on the second rack,” Pines says. “If you are losing by a large margin to your opponent, go with the six rack first.”

...Go Wild in Westchester

Who says the 'burbs are too tame? True, swinging from a jungle gym is more our style than swinging through an actual jungle, but there are still lots of ways for adventurous types to get in touch with their wild and crazy
sides right here in Westchester. Here's how:

1: Howl with the wolves. Meet, howl, and yes, if you wish, dance near the wild ancestors of all those Larchmont Labs and Purchase peek-a-poos at South Salem’s Wolf Conversation Center (914-763-2373).

2: Drive yourself wild. Yes, Virginia, Westchester’s not all SUVs and Volvos. Who needs NASCAR when you’ve got Grand Prix New York Racing in Mount Kisco (914-241-3131)? Let loose and get that adrenaline pumping on Grand Prix’s European-inspired indoor racetrack.
3: Take a walk on the wild side. What White Plains lacks in vines to swing from it more than makes up for in swinging watering holes. Embark on your own wild animal pub crawl with stops at The Brazen Fox (914-358-5911; thebrazenfox.com), Black Bear Saloon (914-422-3270; blackbearwp.com), and The Thirsty Turtle (914-993-0505).

4: Get your big game face on. Hungry for a safari-type dining experience? Chow down on steaks, ribs, and fish prepared in wood-fired ovens at Mighty Joe Young’s in White Plains (914-428-6868) and dine amid flaming torches, antlers, hardy palm trees, and piped-in calls of the jungle.

5: Capture your own safari style. Are you so over the cargo pants thing? No pith helmet handy? Fortunately for you, faux exotic skins are really big this season. Hunt down leopard-print cashmere gloves by Autumn Cashmere ($132), a snake-patterned rayon scarf from Paris ($98), or a leopard-patterned pashmina and silk scarf by Tolani ($112) at Great Stuff (Chappaqua, 914-238-0057; Rye, 914-967-1377; Scarsdale, 914-723-0504). Or head to Siren in Mamaroneck (914-777-2122) for a faux alligator evening bag ($65) and leopard-print kitten heels by Martinez Valero ($138).

...Find Your Car at The Westchester

The Westchester has 3,200 parking spots. How the heck are you going to find yours?

1: Park in the Same Place Each Time. Memorize the parking section closest to your favorite store, then always park there. To find out the parking section closest to your favorite store, see the box below.

2: Write It Down. The ticket you get when you enter the parking garage is the perfect place to jot down your space and section number, since you need it when you’re leaving anyway.

3: Pay Someone Else to Worry About It. The Nordstrom valet is on Paulding Street off Westchester Avenue, and the Neiman Marcus valet is located on Pauling Street off of Maple Ave.

Keep your life from turning into a Seinfeld episode by using this list to figure out where to park in The Westchester—then park there every time. BTW: The parking lot is divided into East Parking and West Parking. You get to the East lot from Bloomingdale Road or Paulding Street. You can enter the West lot from Pauling Street or Hale Avenue.

Park on P1 East and go up the escalator to Retail 1 for Burberry, 7 for All Mankind, Tiffany & Co., Sephora, Theory, Hugo Boss, Sony Style, and David Yurman.

Park on P3 G, and enter onto Retail 1 for Barney’s New York CO-OP, Elizabeth Arden Red Door Salon, Tumi, Gucci, and Salvatore Ferragamo.

For Abercombie & Fitch, Marni, Victoria’s Secret, and Cole Haan, park on P5 G, and enter onto Retail 2.
For Apple, Pottery Barn Kids, Bose, Swarovski, Godiva, and Starbucks, park on P7 F, and enter onto Retail 3.
For Verizon Wireless, J. Jill, Amy's Hallmark, Aldo, and Foot Locker, park on P7 G, and enter onto Retail 3.
For P.F. Chang’s, park on P3 West.
For Neiman Marcus, park on P3 G (Retail 1), P5 G (Retail 2), or P7 G (Retail 3)
For Nordstrom, park on P1 East, P2 East, P4 West, P5 F (Retail 2), or P7 F (Retail 3).

...Get Cast in a Reality TV Show

1: Apply. “I can’t tell you how many people ask me what they should do to be on a reality show, and then when I ask if they’ve applied, they say no,” says Mark Yawitz, co-founder and president of realitywanted.com. “You’re not going to get on if you don’t even apply.”

2: Read the Instructions. “People complain all the time that applications are too long,” says Yawitz. “But my response to them is, this show is only on air once or twice a year, meaning you are only applying once or twice. It’s not that bad.”

3: Keep Photos Current. “You want to send at least two clear and current photos of yourself—one headshot, one body shot,” Yawitz says. “If you are thirty-nine, don’t send a picture of yourself when you were twenty-five. And if you have blonde hair in the picture you send, don’t show up as a brunette if you’re called.”

4: Don’t Apply for Everything. “The casting world is a small world,” Yawitz says, “They don’t like it when they see the same person applying for every show online.”

5: Look for Open Casting Calls. “Just because you apply for a series online, doesn’t mean you can’t attend an open casting call in your area,” he says. Yawitz recommends doing both.

6: Don’t Call Back. “So many people ask what they should do after they apply,” Yawitz says. “My answer? Nothing. If they like you, you’ll get a call.”
Except for the obvious—ability to write— aspiring freelancers need to bring two things to the WM table: (1) a knowledge and understanding of the county, and (2) compelling, original ideas that fit the magazine. We’ve received inquiries from writers in Thailand and India, but, unfortunately for them, writing and reporting about life in our own backyard cannot be outsourced.

E-mail us a great idea—with proof that you have the writing chops to execute it—and we’ll be happy to consider it. Some final tips: DO include relevant writing samples with your query (what you wrote in your college literary mag doesn’t count), DO consider our lead time (we work at least three months in advance), DO be brief (we don’t have the time or the desire to read War and Peace-size pitches) and DON’T pitch us stories that merely rehash and recite the obvious.

...Deal with a Difficult Boss

Like a marriage, the key to a good work relationship is “trust and communication,” says JoEllen Vavasour, director of human resources and professor of human resource management at the College of New Rochelle. To deal with a tricky boss, Vavasour recommends:

1: Figure Out Your Boss’s Work Style. “Smart workers know how to manage their bosses,” Vavasour says. “Is your boss better in the morning or in the afternoon? Does your supervisor prefer e-mail or face-to-face talking? If your boss is a control freak, anticipate it. Go to him first. Say, ‘This is what I’m working on, let me know if you have any thoughts or questions.’ That makes him feel like he’s in control.”

2: Get into the Groove. Check in on a regular basis to avoid conflicts. “The best thing is to keep open lines of communication,” she says. “Then no one will be surprised by anything. Being surprised really frustrates supervisors.”

3: Use E-Mail Carefully. “Be careful what you put in writing,” she says. “Make sure that you’re not using e-mail as a de-stressing tool.”

4: HR Can Help. When you have no idea how to handle a possibly sticky situation, HR can be a great tool. “There is no one-size-fits-all approach,” she says.

5: Pick Your Battles. “You do that in all relationships. We all want to own our work, especially if we’re proud of it. Sometimes we have to step back and remember it’s not personal.”
...Handle a Secret Office Romance

Romance in the workplace may not be such a bad thing. “There is no reason why people can’t meet in the office,” says Dr. Elliott Rosen, director of The Family Institute of Westchester. “If you’re interacting day in and day out with the same group, the laws of statistics are in your favor.” CareerBuilder.com surveyed 8,000 employees, and 40 percent of respondents admitted to dating someone in the office. If you find yourself becoming romantically involved with a co-worker and you’d like to maintain a low profile with it, keep the following in mind...

1: Know your company’s rules. Know your office’s policy on workplace relationships. Sometimes offices require relationships to be disclosed to HR, and others prohibit fraternizing with co-workers altogether. Discuss this with your partner; someone may have to switch departments, or even switch jobs. And, according to Forbes, it’s almost never worth it for a supervisor to start dating an underling: “Worst case scenario,” says employment attorney Kathleen McKenna, of New York’s Proskauer Rose law firm, a boss-underling affair that goes south and results in a sexual-harassment suit.”

2: Behave professionally. Keep the romance off company property; at work, it’s strictly professional. Don’t send personal e-mails from your work account—or even your work computer. Text messages may be a safer bet, but, then again, you don’t want to be caught in a Kwame Kilpatrick situation.

3: Maintain your other office friendships. Office employees eventually become like one big family, complete with jealousies, favoritism, and all sorts of complicated family dynamics. You don’t want to change your routine enough to arouse suspicions, or worse, offend your office friends. Don’t forget about that weekly coffee outing you used to have with your cube-mate or the communal lunches you used to head up in the lounge area.

4: Have an exit strategy. According to Careerbuilder, 31 percent of office romances end in marriage. Think about what would happen if the relationship flamed out, and be prepared to deal with the raw emotions of seeing your ex in the workplace every day.
Cope with Blushing

The only way to truly avoid blushing is to avoid life in general, thus “eliminating” the triggers that activate a blush, according to Dr. Erin Walker, a board-certified dermatologist at the Westchester Medical Group in White Plains. Like the sight of a loved one, the memory of a really special time with said loved one, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, sun, stress, spicy foods, exercise, wind, a change in weather. Given the alternatives, we’d rather be in the pink.

Wash Your Hair—the Right Way

Marty Sareri, a junior stylist at the Pirri International Hair Group in Eastchester who shampoos loads of heads of hair every day, isn’t shy about lecturing clients who don’t properly moisturize (guilty as charged) or otherwise care for their tresses. “The first thing I do is diagnose the hair,” he says. “The right shampoo or conditioner can make or break your style.” For dry hair, choose moisturizing products; volumizing ones for fine or thin hair. And for those who color, use products for color-treated hair. Sareri’s favorite product? “Pirri Element’s Lava Glaze. It’s made with bergomot oil and aloe vera, gives great shine, and works on all hair types.” Water temperature too is key. “Heat opens the cuticle of the hair, cool closes it. So if you wash your hair in hot water, the color will fade sooner. A cool rinse will close the cuticle, locking in the color. You can probably extend the life of your color two to three weeks by sticking with lukewarm to cool water.” Oh, and about the “lather, rinse, repeat” instructions on the back of the shampoo bottles? Forget it. “That’s just a gimmick created by marketers to sell more product,” Sareri says. “Most people are fine with a single shampoo.”

Avoid Going Bald

In an era of hair transplants and wigs, there are solutions to losing your prized locks. According to Yael Halaas, MD, a board-certified facial plastic surgeon from Scarsdale, you don’t have to live the rest of your life in a baseball cap.

1: Skip the Tight Hairdos. Hairstyles including cornrows, tight braids, and hair extensions have long been know to cause alopecia, or baldness, says Dr. Halaas.

2: Use Products. Dr. Halaas recommends using Propecia and Rogaine together: “Propecia prevents the stimulation of the hormone that causes hair loss, and Rogaine increases blood flow locally.” Rogaine is available in a foam solution or shampoo that can be used daily for a couple of months ($30 for the foam or $6.99 for the shampoo). Propecia requires a prescription.

3: Cover It Up. Dr. Halaas notes that, in addition to wigs, hair transplants, and laser surgery, a less extreme option is Topix, a powder that you sprinkle on your head to make your hair look thicker.
...Get a Tattoo

So you’ve finally gotten over your fear and decided to get that rebellious tattoo. What next? Have you decided where to put it? (Perhaps the newest tattoo hotspot—your ribs?) We asked local ink expert Chris Wilcock, co-owner of Addicted to Ink in White Plains, the steps to follow to get that tat.

1: Find a Design. Dragon or unicorn? Heart or skull? Wilcock suggests Googling different images, then printing out the ones you like to take to your tattoo artist.

2: Mark the Spot. “You can’t have multiple words on your wrist, and you don’t want a tattoo in a place with dips because it will look distorted,” he says. So where are the most popular locations? For girls: foot, lower back, and hip. For guys: ribs and arms.

3: Know When Cheap Is Too Cheap. Tattoos can cost $50 to a couple of hundred bucks. “If someone is willing to give you a tattoo for twenty dollars, that’s a red flag,” he says. “They are cutting corners somewhere.”

4: Prepare for the Pain. Remain seated at all times, and minimize your fidgeting by distracting yourself. Many tattoo shops provide entertainment such as television, magazines, and Xbox. The most important part of preparation? A full stomach, Wilcock says. “Clients who tend to faint arrive on an empty stomach.”

5: Understand the Aftercare. Scabbing, bleeding, and fading are common occurrences after getting tattooed and are no cause for panic, says Wilcock. And stay calm if you wake up to find that your bed sheet has an ink stain with your tattoo design. It’s all part of the healing process.

...Get a Tattoo Removed

It is an incontrovertible truth that your skin will look old and crepey much longer than it will look young and hot. So that cute little rose bud on your tush may be appealing in your firm and fabulous 20s, not so much so in your 40s or 50s. If you didn’t have the foresight to get your tats done with erasable ink (a biodegradable ink that is more easily removed via laser), you’re going to have to face the painful, expensive truth of multiple, painful, expensive laser treatments. How many? Plan on six to eight treatments, says dermatologist Dr. Walker with the Westchester Medical Group. How expensive? Figure at least $1,000. The number of visits and cost are determined by the size and colors of ink, black being the easiest to remove; brown and green the hardest, Walker reports. “I had one patient who wanted to wear a backless Vera Wang wedding gown—it took seven months to remove the multi-colored winged Pegasus that covered her entire shoulder. A small black zen symbol would’ve been much easier to remove.”
First, know this: you’re not alone: acne is the most common skin condition in the country, affecting nearly 80 percent of those aged 11 to 30. Dr. Brent Wainwright, a board-certified dermatologist and an assistant clinical professor at NYU’s School of Medicine, offers these tips:

1: Gently wash affected areas twice daily. Vigorous washing and scrubbing can irritate your skin and worsen acne.

2: Use a cleanser that contains salicylic acid; it helps exfoliate skin cells, which may plug the pores. (Try Neutrogena Oil-Free Acne Wash.) Higher concentration salicylic acid products are available for “spot-treating” individual lesions (Clinique Acne Solutions Spot Healing Gel is one).

3: Use an oil-free and non-comedogenic (meaning doesn’t clog pores) moisturizer. Try Olay’s Total Effects Daily Moisturizer or Anti-Aging Anti-Blemish. Even better, use a moisturizer with SPF as certain acne products can make you skin more sensitive to the sun (and you’ll prevent photo-aging).

4: Don’t pop, squeeze, or pick at blemishes. This can result in scarring.

5: Go to a pro. Prescription treatments may include topical medications and/or oral antibiotics that kill the acne bacteria and reduce inflammation. Newer therapies include ultra violet and laser light sources which target the acne bacteria and may decrease sebaceous (oil) gland production.
**Make a Perfect Mojito**

“The key to a good Mojito is fresh ingredients,” says Alex Cheblal, chef and co-owner of Belle Havana (35 Main St, Yonkers 914-969-1006). Here is his Cuban/French restaurant’s winning recipe for one perfect Mojito.

\[
\frac{1}{2} \text{ lime, wedged} \\
3 \text{ spoons finely ground cane sugar} \\
7 \text{ fresh mint leaves} \\
\text{Crushed ice to fill glass} \\
3 \text{ oz white rum (not dark)} \\
2 \text{ oz limejuice} \\
1 \text{ oz club soda}
\]

Muddle (crush in a large glass using a pestle) lime, sugar, and mint. Add crushed ice, white rum, and limejuice. Gently shake, and then add club soda.

**Chop Onions Without Crying**

CIA-trained chef Jill Rose, owner of Chiboust in Tarrytown, recommends chopping onions when they’re cold, and with your mouth closed. “If you have the time, pop them into your refrigerator for at least an hour,” she says. Why? The onion’s smell comes from a sulfur compound contained inside. At lower temperatures, the sulfur compound’s molecules become less active and potent. And when you do work with them? “Keep your mouth closed” to reduce the amount of the irritating sulfuric compound you inhale. And to get the smell off your hands afterward? Rub them on a stainless steel utensil under a steady stream of running cold water.

**Use All the Vegetables from Your CSA**

Don’t get us wrong: we love community-sponsored agriculture. But everybody has a vegetable he or she just can’t stomach (Yuck! More Swiss chard?), and there are just some weeks when you need an army to finish it all. We asked local farmers and foodies how to make the most of the CSA share.
1: Drizzle It with Oil and Then Some. “I’ve never met a vegetable that couldn’t stand a little olive oil, onion, and garlic sauté with a little goat cheese tossed in,” says Lisa Schwartz of Rainbeau Ridge in Bedford Hills.

2: Dry Out. “We make a lot of kale chips,” says Kurt Gabel of Katonah’s Green Fork Farms, who makes them by drying and salting the kale.

3: Be Creative. “Some of the best recipes I’ve created are the result of an overloaded CSA box or an overzealous trip to the farmers’ market,” says Nicki Sizemore, Rainbeau Ridge’s cooking-class chef. “How else would I have discovered that kohlrabi is delicious in a stir-fry or that Brussels sprouts can make a terrific salad?”

4: Throw It All in a Frittata. Frittatas are “fast, easy, and nutritious, and can be thrown together with a limitless combination of herbs and vegetables,” says Sizemore. For Sizemore’s own frittata recipe, visit westchestermagazine.com.

5: Can It. You can never eat all those fresh groceries now, but you might have a hankering in a few months. Can those veggies, or make jam with your luscious raspberries. “In late August and September, there is a multitude of tomatoes, and it’s great to put them up,” says Marian Cross of Amawalk Farm in Katonah.

6: Find a Better Program. You can buy a membership with Rainbeau Ridge’s Community Agricultural Partnership, for example, which gets you access to the garden, where you can then purchase veggies à la carte; that means you never need to look at kale again if you don’t want to.

...Get a table at Tarry Lodge

Call (914) 939-3111 promptly at 10 am—one month before you want to dine. Tarry Lodge starts booking tables at 10 am exactly one month ahead to the calendar date (e.g., if it’s January 13th, that would be February 13th). Prime times (between 6 and 9 pm) fill up first. Saturday prime-time reservations for the month usually are gone within 15 minutes. “Some have better luck with Internet booking because you bypass the possibility of being put on hold,” says Managing Partner Nancy Selzer. So try tarrylodge.com and click on “online reservations.”

A reservation for dining midweek or Sunday is somewhat easier. “There are very, very few restaurants in Westchester where you couldn’t get a reservation on a Tuesday night,” says Philip McGrath, chef-owner of the Iron Horse Grill in Pleasantville.

Placing calls for a table for four on four consecutive Tuesdays yielded these results:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Available Seating(s)</th>
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<td>First Tuesday</td>
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<td>Second Tuesday</td>
<td>6:30 pm or earlier or 9 pm or later</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third Tuesday</td>
<td>5:15 pm or 8 pm (yeah, a cancellation!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourth Tuesday</td>
<td>6 pm or 8:45 pm only</td>
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And for the worst of procrastinators—call the same day you’re interested in dining. “By early afternoon, we’ll have completed confirmation calls and know about cancellations,” Selzer says.

If nothing else, you can order antipasti, pizza, or salads to go. Selzer says, “There’s a nice little sliver of park on the river down the street that’s a picnic just waiting to happen!”

...Fake Being a Wine Expert

When it comes to wine, you may not know your Tuscans from your tannins—but you don’t want to sound so clueless. According to frequent Westchester Magazine contributor W. R. Tish of Wine for All in Katonah, to make it look like you actually listened at that wine tasting...

1: **Know Which Are the Buzzy Regions.** Wines from Spain, Argentina, South Africa, Washington, and organic wines are hot now. Which are not? Australian and high-end Napa wines, along with high-alcohol reds such as Cabernet, Merlots, Shiraz, and Grenache. “High-alcohol reds tend to be expensive,” Tish says, and bigger wines tend to be less versatile with food.

2: **Know How to Spot Good Wine.** In general, the more specific the wine’s origin, the more refined is the wine. A Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, for example, is considered better quality than a Pinot that simply comes from California.

3: **Know What Not to Say.** While it may seem smart to quote a wine expert or disagree with the latest wine ratings from a famed critic, it often is a dead giveaway that you are a wine ignoramus.

4: **Increase Your “Real” Wine Knowledge.** “A good, knowledgeable retailer is a wine lover’s best friend,” Tish says. And for the book lover, pick up Oldman’s Guide to Outsmarting Wine.
...Organize A Closet

Linda Samuels of Croton-on-Hudson, founder of Oh, So Organized!, gives us her best tips.

1: Gather six 30-gallon plastic bags. Label them Donate, Resale, Discard, Dry Clean/Repair, Launder, and Maybe.

2: Remove all empty hangers to automatically create additional space.

3: For every single item, ask yourself: Does this fit? Does it look good on me? Do I absolutely love it? Is it in good condition? The “keepers” remain in the closet; all others are placed into one of the six bags as labeled above.

4: Choose a method to arrange what remains. Possibilities include “like things with like” (pants with pants, skirts with skirts), grouping by color or function, or hanging entire outfits together. “There is no right or wrong way,” Samuels says. Do make sure your clothing is all hung facing in the same direction and use double hanging poles for shorter items (shirts, jackets, etc.) to increase closet capacity.

5: Dispatch “leftover” items to their ultimate destinations.

...Garden Without Ruining Your Hands

Is your green thumb slowly growing into a dirt-caked, cracked-nail, rough-skin hand? Nip that problem in the bud. Garret Negri of Mariani Gardens helps figure out how to keep your backyard beds without sacrificing your skin. “Hands are most important tools a gardener has, and what you do for them is very important,” she says.

1: No Gloves, No Buds. Gloves keep the dirt out of your fingernails, the poison ivy off your skin, and the thorns away from your soft parts. Not to be sexist, but the brand of glove that Negri finds most effective happens to be named Womanswork ($30). “They’re heavy-duty and ventilated but lightweight and textured for grabbing pots.” If you enjoy the tactile pleasures of gardening, Foxgloves’s designs are much thinner and allow you to feel the soil and roots better. “At that point,” Negri notes, “you’re really just protecting your nails.”

2: Tool Around. One of the best things you can do for your hands is buy an ergonomic set of trowels and hand rakes. The forward-thinking design of the set minimizes stress to the hands and makes it easier to work the earth. “It’s one of my bestselling items. Because they’re ergonomic tools, a lot less energy is required for
3: Soak It In. After a rough day in the field, your hands deserve a little pampering. Crabtree & Evelyn, located in The Westchester, has an award-winning line of products specific for gardeners, “developed to soothe, nourish, and protect work-roughened hands,” the company claims. We recommend the Hand Therapy Cream ($14 for 3.4 fl. oz.), which smells yummy at the very least.

For more gardening products and tips, visit Mariani Gardens, 45 Bedford Rd, Armonk (914) 273-3083.

[Health & Fitness]

...Eat More, Exercise Less, And Feel and Look Better

Having second helpings and reducing your time at the gym will yield disastrous health results, right? “Not necessarily,” says Barrie Wolfe, a Scarsdale-based registered dietician. Here is Wolfe’s best advice for how to indulge a bit more while hopping on the treadmill a bit less.

1: Eat more lean protein. Fish, chicken, and lean red meat have lots of protein—and little fat or calories. For example, five ounces of lean sirloin has 300 calories and six grams of fat, as compared to the 500 calories and nine grams of fat in five ounces of fatty chuck steak. Pair this with a large and healthy green salad; add some low-fat dressing and you have yourself a feast. The ideal meal plate should be one-quarter protein, half vegetables, and one-quarter starch, Wolfe says. And eat your protein first, as some studies show that doing so helps speed up your metabolism, which in turn helps you burn more calories and store fewer as fat. Additionally, protein fills you up and helps prevent the blood sugar crashes that can ruin healthy diets. “When your blood sugar levels are even, you’re not going to snack,” says Wolfe. “You’re just going to feel full for a longer time.”

2: Have high-fiber/low-calorie snacks. Fiber is basically indigestible plant material, says Wolfe. That means it slows the breakdown of food in your stomach, making it sit there longer and keeping you feeling full. Like protein, it also slows down sugar’s absorption into the bloodstream, which helps stop the cycle of craze and crash that faster absorption causes. So skip low-fiber snacks such as peanuts (8 oz dry-roasted = 166 calories) and go for high-fiber ones, like popcorn (8 oz, even with butter = 35 calories). Fruits and vegetables make better snacks than chips or candy, partially for this reason, and some whole-grain breads have three grams of dietary fiber per slice, as compared to white bread’s half gram.

3: No Need to Exercise Like a Maniac. Twenty minutes’ worth of low-impact cardio on the treadmill or elliptical does nicely, but there are even lower-tech, more time-friendly solutions. Donald Bunch, a personal trainer at Family Court Sports in Elmsford, says that keeping in shape can be as simple as keeping up with “a lot of small things.” He suggests, for example, parking the car far away from the supermarket. “That’s
something simple that everyone can do,” says Bunch.

**...Get a Six-Pack—Fast!**

Brian Neale, director of coaching at Altheus Health and Sport, says that the best way to achieve a six-pack fast is through cardio, weight training, and abdominal training, not just the latter. “Often abs are hidden by fat. Lose the fat by doing some sort of cardio activity. Weightlifting also helps in bringing out the abs. You can’t lift an arm or a leg without working the core.”

**...Stick to an Exercise Routine**

“To stick to a routine, lose your current one,” says Frank Daniels, personal trainer at New York Sports Club of White Plains and Scarsdale. Daniels explains that when you do the same thing at the gym every day, week to week, you become bored and lose interest. So change: just do it.

**...Sneak In Exercise at the Office**

Just because you work in does not mean that you can’t work out. According fitness experts Barbara Cullen, the personal-training director at Club Fit in Briarcliff, and Mervyn Tugendhaft, personal trainer at the Saw Mill Club in Mount Kisco, there are many opportunities to sneak in exercise at work.

**1: Use the Stairs.** A 150-pound person burns on average five calories per flight of stairs climbed.

**2: Get Up, Stand Up.** Instead of emailing your co-worker three cubes down, get out of your chair and walk over. While talking on the phone, get up occasionally to keep your blood flowing.

**3: Deskercise!** Any isotension, or the squeezing of a muscle for an extended period of time, helps build strength and burn calories.

Tugendhaft recommends substituting a chair with a stability ball (easily purchased for about $20 at Sports Authority or Target), which will activate your core muscles. If your boss finds sitting on a rubber ball unprofessional, use weighty office supplies (try a heavy tape holder) to do bicep curls or tricep extensions (repeatedly lifting the object from behind your back over your head). Also try knee tucks in which you lift legs up off the floor to contract your abs. Additionally, lunges and squats make for a good quick-break exercise. Just remember, the benefits are cumulative—everything helps.
...Deal with Cheapskates

Let’s face it, there’s at least one in every bunch—including every family. What to do? Melissa Leonard, a local etiquette/protocol consultant (establishyourselfNY.com) advises:

1: When out to dinner with a cheapskate, suggest that each of you covers his own expense for the meal. This way neither party feels awkward or annoyed when the bill arrives.

2: When exchanging gifts with a cheapskate, set a money limit. And, more importantly, keep it low.

3: When it comes to how much money you think a cheapskate should spend on you when it’s his/her turn, keep your expectations modest. Rather than getting mad at what you perceive to be his/her lack of generosity, think of it as a lesson in being thrifty (and remember it is the thought that truly counts).

...Manage Adult Bullies

You know that theory that bullies are insecure and hate themselves deep down? Well, it’s a myth, says The Bully Coach, aka Joel Haber, a White Plains-based psychologist and expert on child and adult bullying. And that goes not just for bullies on the schoolyard, but for bullies in the boardroom and the workplace, too. So, if you think you’re gonna stop a bully by helping her feel good about herself, forget about it. She already feels good about herself—too good. And that’s the problem. She feels even better when she gets the better of you. “On PET scans, their pleasure centers actually light up when they hurt people,” Haber says. Here are his tips on how to deflect and combat bullying.

1: Look ’Em in the Eye. Bullies thrive on intimidation, says Haber. If you’re on the receiving end of verbal bullying or abuse, “look the bully in the eye, and try to remain level-headed and as emotionless as possible,” says Haber. If you refuse to engage, the bully will soon lose steam—and maybe even some confidence.

2: Shrug It Off. Some adult bullying takes the form of simple (but mean and hurtful) exclusion—from groups, events, or cliques. Often, the bully will make it a point to let you know that you’re being excluded, just to hurt or embarrass you. In those cases, “a simple ‘whatever’ often works well.”

3: Be Direct. If possible, deal with the bully head-on. If your next-door neighbor consistently parks in your driveway, “ask him, calmly, to please not do it again,” says Haber. Often, the shock and embarrassment of being confronted will end the problem.
4: Seek Outside Help. What if the office bully is your boss? What if the neighbor has a history of violence? “You may need to speak to someone in human resources, or to the police,” says Haber, and make sure your complaint is kept confidential. “If your boss or another co-worker is a bully, and there’s no human resources department, you may have to try more than one tactic.” Unfortunately, there are no laws protecting citizens against mind games, so if all else fails, you’ll either have to bite the bullet “or look for another job.”

...Tell Him You’re Just Not That Into Him

Like many dating axioms, those fateful words first were uttered on Sex and the City. We asked Susan Mahler, LCSW, a private-practice and sex therapist in Larchmont, what to do when you’re just not that into him.

1: Wield Body Language. That creepy guy from across the bar won’t stop looking at you. Mahler advises avoiding eye contact and possibly move to another spot at the bar, since “some people don’t pick up on subtleties.”

2: Say It Out Loud. If you don’t like the person on the other end of that free drink, be direct and forceful with your words. “You could say, ‘Thank you for the offer, but I am here with my friend for the night,’ or ‘I’m not really interested in meeting anyone right now,’” says Mahler. And if your direct approach doesn’t work, enlist the help of that trusty bartender.

3: Screen Your Calls. Don’t egg on a would-be suitor by repeatedly telling him to not call you. “It’s the engagement that keeps them interested,” says Mahler. “Don’t answer if you have caller ID, and, if not, hang up immediately if you hear his voice.”

4: Go Public. Nowadays, everyone knows when you are single, in an open relationship, or in a mutually exclusive relationship. (Thanks, Facebook.) On the bright side, you can turn to the Internet for that extra reinforcement in announcing your intentions. Newly single after a break-up? “Remove the ‘in a relationship’ part of your Facebook right away because that sends another message to the person that it is really over,” says Mahler. “This can be seen as the final step.”

...Say No

We asked Richard DioGuardi, a professor at Iona College and a White Plains-based psychologist whose practice offers training in assertiveness skills, to clue us in on how to say “no”—and convey “no”—once and for all.

1: Take a Stand—Literally. “Lift your head up, keep your shoulders back, make direct eye contact, speak calmly,” DioGuardi says. If your body language—slouchy posture, shifty eyes, fidgeting—says “maybe,” people are “more likely to believe your body language and press harder to get their needs met.”

2: Don’t Apologize. “It suggests that you owe a debt to the person,” DioGuardi says, and this weakens your position.
3: Be Sure. “If you're indecisive, don’t answer right away. It’s okay to ask for some time to think about it,” says DioGuardi. Communicating uncertainty “invites others to push for a ‘yes.’”

4: Don’t Make Excuses. “It’s not that you can’t do what’s asked; it’s that you choose not to,” says DioGuardi, who cautions that, by offering excuses, you’re giving the favor-seeker an invitation to remove the obstacles that are “keeping” you from saying “yes.”
...Be a Cool Parent

We searched for cool parenting “experts” who’d be willing to share their tips. We even interviewed a few. Then we realized some of the coolest parents we know—if we do say so ourselves—are right here, on our editorial staff. And when we’re not editing, we’re deep in the trenches—parenting. Happily (all right, reluctantly), we’re going to share our cool-parenting primer. (Hint: there’s a common thread in all of the tips).

1: Don’t Sing in the Car. Or anywhere else. Ever. Under any circumstances. Same goes for dancing—just don’t do it.

2: Learn the Lingo—but Don’t Use It Yourself. It’s cool if you know that when your son says his favorite rapper has a “nice grill,” he’s not talking about a barbecue. It’s not cool if you invite his friends over to play video games at your “crib.” Remember: there’s a fine line between really cool and really embarrassing!

3: Act Like a Tree—and Leave. Newsflash: once your child is past the “Mommy & Me” stage, he does not want you hanging out with him and his friends.

4: Don’t Friend Your Teen on Facebook. The last thing your teen wants his friends to see is a “like”—or, God forbid, a comment—from you!

5: Don’t Be Yourself. Wanna be cool in your kid’s eyes? Make an effort not to stand out in a crowd.

6: Be God-like. You know, omniscient, loving, forgiving—and most of all, invisible!

...Be a Kid Again

Do the stresses of today’s society make you long to recapture your halcyon childhood? Us too. Short of finding the Fountain of Youth, here’s what you can do to feel like a kid again.

1: Eat Like a Kid. Remember, you are what you eat. To regress to your youth, we suggest starting with any kid’s favorite part of the meal: dessert. Try homemade “Twinkie” desserts at Provisions Cafe and Bake Shop in Pelham (914-738-6622), the Ring Ding-inspired cakes at Plates in Larchmont (914-834-1244), or peanut-butter-and-jelly cupcakes from the Flour & Sun Bakery in Pleasantville (914-495-3232). If you insist on eating dinner first, you can’t go wrong with mac ‘n’ cheese. And, since kids don’t care about truffle oil, skip Umami’s famous creation for the gooier three-cheese variety at Comfort in Hastings-on-Hudson (914-478-0666).
2: Play Like a Kid. There’s no reason age should prevent you from enjoying your favorite playground games. Gather your posse and sign up for Big League Kickball (bigleaguekickball.com). The co-ed league is open to anyone 18 or over, and has divisions in Yonkers, Valhalla, Purchase, and Stamford, Connecticut. If you’re more of a lone wolf than a team player, there’s no age limit on the laser tag at FUNFUZION in New Roc City (914-637-7575).

3: Relax Like a Kid. As a youngster, there was only one thing that could relax you into a peaceful slumber: story time. Remember the pleasures of being read to aloud with the author events at the Hudson Valley Writers’ Center (914-332-5953), which often hosts local authors and poets, and Spoken Interludes (914-307-1683), where just-published authors read from new and upcoming works over dinner and (adult) drinks.

4: Dress Like a Kid. When you were a kid, you lived in your OshKosh B’Gosh overalls. Lucky for your inner child, designers have been sending one-piece outfits down the runway at their shows. You can buy your own jumpsuit by Theory ($215) or Marc by Marc Jacobs ($298) at Neiman Marcus in White Plains (914-428-2000; neimanmarcus.com). For men, hark back to the days of skinned knees with ripped 7 For All Mankind ‘Flynt’ Bootcut Jeans ($225) at Nordstrom, also in The Westchester (914-946-1122; nordstrom.com).

...Become a Pop Star

Do you see yourself as a Billy Ray Cyrus type, managing your progeny to fame and fortune as teen pop stars? Take your budding Taylor Swifts and Jonas Brothers to the Random Farms Kids Theater's annual “Are You a Pop Star?” event in Elmsford to see if they really have the chops. On the first day of the two-day workshop, performers work with Cari Cole, founder/director of Cari Cole Voice & Music Co. in Manhattan, which offers vocal training, artist development, and record production. Participants return the next day and, backed by a live band, perform for a panel of judges from the music biz. The chosen winners get a one-song record contract with Cole. We asked for tips on nailing that big audition.

1: Start Early. “Kids should start writing their own songs at eleven and twelve years old,” says Cole. “It takes years to put a project together well.”

2: Hone Your Instrument. “In musical theater, they tell you to belt out songs to prepare for the stage,” says Cole. “There’s tons of vibrato in musical-theater singing—it’s overdone. In pop it’s not overdone, it’s almost underdone.”

3: Don’t Imitate. “We encourage the kids to find their unique sound and stay true to themselves, using their favorite singers only as inspiration,” says Anya Wallach, producer and founder of the Random Farms Kids Theater.

4: Stage Presence Counts. Says Wallach, “You have to interpret the words of the song so that they mean something to you, and not just stand there frozen like a robot.”
5: Dress the Part. “Be creative with your clothing,” says Cole. “It’s part of your artistry.”

“Are You a Pop Star?” takes place every fall. To find out more, call (914) 740-1010 or visit randomfarms.com. If you’re interested in vocal coaching with Cari Cole, call (212) 532-0828 or visit caricolevoicestudios.com.
...Get Your Dog to Stop Barking

Dogs have lots of reasons for barking: boredom, stress, separation anxiety, the need for attention, or even just because they like to hear themselves bark, according to Karen Reilly, a certified pet dog trainer at the Port Chester Obedience Training Club in White Plains. “The key to success here is for the owner to find out why the dog is barking,” she says. “A lot of dogs are under-exercised; people think if their yard is fenced in, the dog is getting enough exercise just by chasing squirrels. He’s not.” Making sure your dog gets enough exercise is the first step—and often that alone will stop problem barking, she says. If not, the dog needs to have immediate and regular consequences for undesirable behavior. “For example, if he barks when outside, tell him ‘enough’ or ‘quiet.’ If he still barks, bring him inside. If you are consistent, he will learn that barking leads to less outdoor time.” The same process works for other forms of problem barking. If your dog barks when people come to the door, tell him to stop—every time—or he goes in the crate, or back room for a time-out. Cause and effect: it works like a charm, but consistency is key. What about shock or scent aversion collars that are on the market to stop dogs from barking? “They work,” Reilly says, “but don’t address the problem of why a dog is barking. And some dogs learn to turn their head to avoid the scent or otherwise fool the system.”

...Make Your Cat Stop Clawing the Furniture

Cat therapist Carole Wilbourn (thecattherapist.com), author of The Complete Guide to Understanding and Caring for Your Cat, says, “Be consistent.” That is, reprimand your cat when he scratches your $5,000 sofa and reward when he scratches the stuff you bought for him to scratch instead: a scratching post made of sisal, a scratchy welcome mat, or a piece of wood. To entice your cat, spread catnip on the scratching item and praise, praise, praise. Cats need to scratch (“To exercise their claws and trim their nails,” Wilbourn says), so stopping the behavior altogether is not an option. Instead, Wilbourn recommends a two-part approach. First, make the place you don’t want scratched unwelcome. “Cover it up tightly—you can try something smooth and shiny, like tinfoil or plastic wrap, or adhesive paper.” If your cat scratches anyway: give a “sharp no” or use a spray bottle to shpritz the cat with water.
...Park for Free in White Plains

You don’t have to pay to park in White Plains. Not if you park on Level 4 or Level 6 of the nine-level City Center Garage. Yes, there are pay stations (75 cents/hour), so you should pay. And if you don’t, you risk getting a summons (from $2 to $15). But based on our scofflaw (ahem) friends’ personal, albeit unscientific, experience, you likely won’t. The reason? Levels 4 and 6 don’t directly connect to a destination and thus are less busy. As a result, the parking enforcement intensity isn’t as high. As you can see from the chart below, the levels that directly connect to a destination (as opposed to those on which an escalator or elevator is necessary to exit) tend to be most desirable by shoppers/moviegoers and therefore the busiest (and given the most attention by parking enforcement).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Directly Connects To</th>
<th>Parking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not painted</td>
<td>New York Sports Club</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Light Green</td>
<td>Movie Theater</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Nordstrom Rack</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Street Access</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though L1 and 2 are escalator/elevator floors like 4 and 6, they are moderately busy (likely via spillover from L2 and G, where spaces fill up quickest) and thus receive decent attention from parking enforcement.

Our law-flouting friends report that if you keep your stay to under an hour, you usually won’t get a ticket on L 4 and 6. The longer you stay, however, the better your chance of getting a ticket.

If you’re using the Metro-North station in the evening, save money by parking in the public lot on Barker Avenue next to the Porsche dealership instead of the station ($6). After 5 pm, there’s no parking attendant until early the next morning, so there’s no charge. It’s only a minute walk to the station depot.

...Talk Your Way Out of a Ticket

Be polite and admit you were wrong, advises New York State Police Investigator Joseph Becerra. “Don’t argue that you weren’t speeding when you’re caught doing ninety-five. Acting contrite goes a long way,” Becerra says, although he admits he once let a guy go who handed him a Monopoly Get Out of Jail Free card.
...Survive a Nuclear Disaster

Advice from Westchester County’s Office of Emergency Management Director Anthony Sutton:

1. **Have a pre-packed “go bag” of essentials ready to take at a moment’s notice.** The go bag (water-resistant; a nylon backpack works great) should include at least a three-day supply of clothing, cash (in small denominations), needed medications, energy or granola bars, and bottled water, plus copies of vital records (including prescriptions), a flashlight, battery-operated radio, extra batteries, small first-aid kit, and card of contact information for loved ones. Keep your go bag in your trunk, or at work.

2. **Store at least a gallon of water per day, per person, in your basement.** “We say that you should plan to take care of yourselves for five to seven days before ‘the troops come over the hill.’”

3. **Buy a battery-operated radio (especially one that can also be self-powered by cranking).** Or buy a tone-alert radio (available at Radio Shack and online), which exclusively transmits broadcasts from the Emergency Alert System, as well as weather-related emergency messages from the National Weather Service.

4. **Have potassium iodide in your medicine cabinet.** Consuming it can protect your thyroid gland from absorbing the radioactive iodide released in a reactor meltdown. Potassium iodide, however, offers no protection from radiation emanating from nuclear weapons.

...Fight a Parking Ticket

Is there anything worse than racing back to your car only to find the parking attendant placing a ticket on your windshield? Yes, and that’s getting a ticket you don’t deserve. Here’s how to fight back—and, often, win.

**Step 1: Figure out why you got the ticket.** If you parked illegally, didn’t bother to feed the meter, or ignored the huge sign saying “Don’t park between the hours of 6 am and 8 am,” you don’t have a prayer. Man up and pay the fine.

**Step 2: Build your case.** If you have a legitimate reason to contest a parking ticket, write a letter to the town court explaining politely why you believe the ticket was in error. For example, if you have paid the meter and it suddenly flashes “fail,” be aware that some towns randomly “reset” the meters during the day, effectively clearing them and leaving you open to a ticket. To back up your claim, just snap a picture of the failed meter on your cell when it happens to accompany your letter. Other meters run fast. If you pay for an hour but get a ticket at the 45-minute mark, ask nearby storeowners if your particular meter has a bad reputation; their testaments will add credibility to your claim. Sometimes piles of snow obscure parking regulation signs—you can’t know to pay if you can’t see the sign, meter, or pay station.

**Step 3: Have a back-up plan.** It’s a good idea to go ahead and pay the fine, but note on your check that you are paying in protest. In my experience, the check has been returned with a letter rescinding the ticket (hold onto this, just in case!), but if your appeal fails, you don’t want to be liable for late fees on top of the fine.
...Do Everything Else

Wanna learn how to do something we haven’t already covered? No problem. Let your mouse do the work by clicking on the appropriate story or video at one of these websites, which feature an ever-increasing library of their own-produced how-to guides, running from the solemn (“How to buy life insurance”) to the frivolous (“How to ask out a flight attendant”).

**Howcast.com**
This site was founded by vets from both Google and YouTube.

**Soyouwanna.com**
Learn how to speak with an Irish accent or conduct a seance.

**Wonderhowto.com**
Currently, this site offers a quarter-million of its own how-to guides.

**Wikihow.com**
This site writes and tweaks its guides by harnessing the same collective-knowledge power as Wikipedia.