Quick updates

53 little moves with major punch!

Bright, fun finds for your kitchen

Makeovers with paint
Give it a new color, love it forever!
(This is a flea market rescue!)

Cut clutter fast
The secret’s on page 42

GORGEOUS FLOWERS!
Pretty colors, sweet smells, & butterflies

Great looks for less
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Sabrina Soto
what's your housecleaning IQ?

Take our quick quiz to test your stain smarts and dust-busting know-how.

1. Lemon juice will remove scuff marks from walls.
   - **TRUE**

2. To get a ball-point pen stain out of a sofa, spritz it with hair spray.
   - **FALSE**
3. You just dropped French fries on the couch! To get the grease out, pat the stain with a clean cloth and club soda.
   - TRUE  - FALSE

4. Sticking a bag of charcoal in your basement can get rid of a musty smell.
   - TRUE  - FALSE

5. You can clean your plastic shower curtain in the washing machine.
   - TRUE  - FALSE

6. Always load spoons and forks faceup in the dishwasher.
   - TRUE  - FALSE

7. Chrome fixtures show more fingerprints than brass ones.
   - TRUE  - FALSE

8. For streak-free windows, clean with newspapers instead of paper towels.
   - TRUE  - FALSE

9. Dusting? A microfiber cloth is more effective than a feather duster.
   - TRUE  - FALSE

10. It's fine to clean your laminate floors with all-purpose cleaner.
    - TRUE  - FALSE

11. Dust mites can bite you.
    - TRUE  - FALSE

12. The best way to keep your wool rug looking new is with a rented steam cleaner.
    - TRUE  - FALSE

13. To make silver sparkle, polish it with salt and baking powder.
    - TRUE  - FALSE

14. When an air freshener claims to kill 99% of bacteria, it means it also kills 99% of germs.
    - TRUE  - FALSE

15. The miracle chemical in a self-cleaning oven cycle is Borax.
    - TRUE  - FALSE

16. If you don't have specially formulated granite cleaner, the next best way to clean granite counters is with glass cleaner.
    - TRUE  - FALSE
1. FALSE. "You need some abrasion to get scuffs off of painted walls," says Cara Bondi, a senior chemist for Seventh Generation. Make a paste of baking soda and water and scrub with a damp sponge.

2. FALSE. The ingredient in hair spray that dissolves ink is alcohol, but today's formulas don't contain as much alcohol as they used to. Plus, alcohol can be harsh on upholstery fabrics, says Donna Smalin Kuper, author of Cleaning Plain & Simple. It's best to call a pro upholstery cleaner.

3. FALSE. "Your best bet is cornstarch or talcum powder, which absorbs oils and grease," says Bondi. Let it sit for a few minutes, vacuum it up, then rub a few drops of dish soap into the stain. After a minute, blot with a damp cloth.

4. TRUE. Charcoal works by absorbing bad odors. Just make sure the bag says "100% natural." Charcoal with mesquite or easy-light additives, which can become toxic, shouldn't be left in a poorly ventilated basement, says Bondi.

5. TRUE. "Most shower curtains can be cleaned in cold water in your washing machine on the gentle cycle," says Debra Johnson, a Merry Maids spokesperson. "Stick it in with some towels, which will help rub off soap scum and slime."

6. FALSE. It depends on the position of your utensil basket, says Bondi. In most machines, it's on the bottom rack—so loading forks and spoons upside down gets them closer to the sprayers and detergent. If your silverware basket is on the door, load utensils faceup for better cleaning.

7. TRUE. "Chrome objects, like faucets, are extremely susceptible to spotting and streaking," says Bondi. Brass stays shiny and fingerprint-free longer, though it is more prone to corrosion and discoloration from standing water.

8. FALSE. "Newspapers work, just not as well," says Johnson. "A good glass cleaner and microfiber cloth or lint-free paper towel will leave fewer streaks."

9. TRUE. The truth is, feather dusters don't actually clean dust—they just swipe it off the surface, and it resettles elsewhere. "But microfiber cloths have tiny fibers that absorb dust and lock it away," says Bondi.

10. FALSE. All-purpose cleaners' ingredients and concentrations vary, and many can damage laminate, says Len Daubler, a Shaw Floors product support manager. The best way to clean laminate floors is to regularly sweep, dust, or vacuum them with the hard floor attachment. Then use a Terry-cloth mop and a cleaner made for laminate floors.

11. FALSE. Dust mites don't bite us—they feed on dead skin cells we shed, says Smalin Kuper. "But they're an allergen, so they can make you sniffly." To limit them, wash linens, dust, and vacuum weekly.

12. FALSE. "Rental steam cleaners can leave water spots on wool rugs," says Smalin Kuper. It's safer to hire an expert, whose powerful gear works better—it soaks up much more water than an at-home steamer, so it won't leave stains.

13. TRUE. You can polish a lot of silver at once by lining a pan with aluminum foil, then spreading the pieces on top and covering them with hot water mixed with one tablespoon each of salt and baking powder, says Bondi. Cover the pan with foil, let it sit overnight, then rinse each item in hot water.

14. FALSE. Bacteria is a type of germ, but germs also include organisms like viruses and fungi (such as mold). An air freshener whose label says it kills 99% of bacteria isn't getting rid of all the nasty stuff. Look for a product that is also labeled an EPA-certified disinfectant, which will destroy more types of germs.

15. FALSE. The self-cleaning cycle may emit a chemical-like odor, but it doesn't actually use any chemicals—just very high heat (like 900°F) to melt off grime.

16. FALSE. Glass cleaners can be too acidic or alkaline for granite, and can etch the surface. That's why pros recommend cleaners specially formulated for natural stone. If you don't have any, try a mixture of water and a little dishwashing liquid.

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**HOW MANY DID YOU GET RIGHT?**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>13–16</th>
<th>7–12</th>
<th>1–6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant! You could be the next HGTV De-Stain Star.</td>
<td>Very impressive! Your home is in the clear.</td>
<td>Time to come clean and brush up on the basics.</td>
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