HeartWork organizing

10 Things That Really Work

Don't you love it when a good friend lets you in on a secret of theirs that turns out to be your favorite new thing, too?

This month, I decided to share a few of my favorite products. I find that especially as I work to make my home "greener" and more safe for my kids, I really search for better products that actually DO what they promise, and maybe even a bit more. By purchasing quality solutions, I buy less, and end up with less waste.

So here's to living more simply with things that really work.

Some of my Favorite Things

1. Got teenagers, or skin that thinks it's still teenaged? ProActive skin care has been a favorite of mine for over 10 years. It doesn't work for all skin problems, but it works for acne for everyone I've recommended it to!

2. If you know what poison ivy is, you probably know what a pain it is, too! Zanfel, the original cure for poison ivy itchies, solves the itching problem in 5 minutes and cures the rash in days. Not cheap, but worth whatever you pay for it! Remember that poison ivy oils are toxic, even when the weather turns cooler.

3. My favorite kitchen tool is my crock pot or slow-cooker. The key to easy slow cooking is the "dump & run". If the recipe calls for extra steps, like browning in a skillet, I don't use it. Great tip...you can add frozen meat directly to other ingredients in the morning, and have a great well rounded meal by the time you get home from work. Bonus... it is almost impossible to burn something in a crock pot!

4. My second favorite kitchen appliance is the George Foreman grill. Forget about the fact that it was designed to have fat run off your food. The big benefit is that you can cook smaller batches very efficiently, without turning on a big stove or oven. Chicken, grilled veggies, and grilled cheese sandwiches are my favorites.

5. Keeping fresh veggies and fruits on hand can be a challenge if you don't shop every other day. But Tupperware FridgeSmart containers can double or more the shelf life of your cargo. And unlike some popular "green bags", they are customizable for the type of item being stored. It extends my lettuce life by days, sometimes weeks, and that's a good kind of green!

6. Reusable batteries are like money in the bank! My digital camera used to suck down regular batteries like nothing. A small investment later, I always have AA juice ready to go, and they last weeks longer. I use the popular Energizer brand that you can find almost everywhere.

7. Another favorite is my battery keeper (see photo above). A simple contraption that not only corrals but also allows you to test for dead batteries, I can't live without it. It mounts or sits in a drawer. Visit my store and search for item 80031. My Dad loved it so much, I got him his own.

8. Got a dishwasher? I was in a battle with LG over my brand new "broken" dishwasher for a year and a half. When in desperation I tried Finish (formerly Electrasol) **Quantum** All in One Powerball tabs, I finally saw crystal clear glasses. The crispies on my silverware are finally gone! It is this year's miracle product, as far as I'm concerned. (I also tried the regular Finish with Powerball, but this doesn't work nearly as well.)

9. Hate to admit it, but ants are the price we pay for living in a wooded area. But I can't have them in the house! Trust me, hardware store sprays are just nasty and don't work. To kill the colony, not just the ones you see in your kitchen, you have to lay the right kind of trap. I am forever indebted to Mike McGrath of the popular WHYY radio show, "You Bet Your Garden" for sharing this ant trap with me.

10. Saving the best for last, baking soda is my new favorite. Seems we come full circle, but I have learned it is the BEST product for cleaning my awful stainless steel appliances (I can't wait for that trend to pass!). It's also great, combined with vinegar, for safely cleaning just about everything in the bathroom without toxic fumes. And, of course, it is a big player in home made play dough. You can find many recipes for this baking soda/cornstarch/water recipe online.

Next Month: Kitchen Redesign

Something New for You!

Clear Path Strategies

Have you bought books on getting organized?

Have you wished *Clean House* would visit your house?

Have you skipped entertaining because of household clutter?

This clutter support group lets you test-drive organizing services, and is affordable enough for everyone! Learn more here.

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11 For Good Measure

My favorite baby item that really works? The Ikea Children's potty. If you have kids, you get it. No parts to get yucky. Comfy. Easy to tote in your car. At just $4, it's a great buy, and economical enough for a few at your house and one for Grandma's, too!

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