

FAMILY

Time at home, not time wasted

Vacuum slowly to clean more

Dear Heloise: My husband will help with housework, but he does such a sloppy job. I appreciate the work he does around the house, but I keep reminding him to vacuum slowly. Our new vacuum has better suction than the old one, but still, you miss a lot of pet hair, human hair and skin cells if you don't take your time. So please let your readers know, vacuuming at a slower pace gets up much more dirt. — *Vivian in Wisconsin*



Hints from Heloise

Realistic resolutions

Dear Heloise: We're four months into the new year, and I've already fallen off the path to my goals for this year! How can I get back to the things I swore I'd do? — *Chad in Florida*

Chad, first let me ask, are your goals realistic, or so over the top that they aren't attainable? Did you promise to lose 20 pounds or 80 pounds? Did you give yourself time-lines, such as, "I'll get my office organized by (insert a date)?" Remember, a dream without a goal is just a wish.

Are you tracking your progress? You should, and then reward yourself when you reach that goal. If you want to lose weight, reward yourself with a new pair of shoes, not a hot fudge sundae.

Keep at it. Keep working toward your goals. Practice self-discipline, be patient with yourself, and remember that when you stray from your path you only cheat yourself. Good luck. — *Heloise*

CDC handwashing guidelines

Dear Readers: Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself from contracting the coronavirus (COVID-19) and help prevent the spread of this deadly virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided the following steps for proper handwashing:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds — for a timer, sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel, or air dry them.

Proper hygiene has taken on a whole new meaning these days. Stay well. — *Heloise*

Sticky situation

Dear Heloise: While packing boxes I got glue from the tape all over my newly painted nails. It wouldn't wash off, so I tried mayonnaise, because awhile back I read in your column that mayonnaise can remove gum from hair. So I figured if it could do that, I would give it a try on my nails. Sure enough, it worked like a charm! — *Judy in Iowa*

Sharpening eyeliners

Dear Readers: Before you sharpen your eyeliner pencil, put it in the freezer for 30 minutes or so. This should make it easier to sharpen with no mess. — *Heloise*

Scalding milk

Dear Heloise: I inherited my grandmother's old cookbook with so many wonderful recipes and her notes in the margins. However, some of the recipes call for "scalded" milk, and I really have no idea what that means or how to do it. Why scald milk? — *Joan in Alaska*

Joan, scalding milk means to heat the milk to just below the boiling point, or 180 degrees, then cool it to 110 degrees before adding it with the other ingredients. But since milk is now pasteurized, you don't have to scald it.

Scalding was originally done to kill bacteria and an enzyme that prevented the thickening process in recipes. It also helped to dissolve yeast and melt butter in bread recipes. — *Heloise*

Send a money-saving or timesaving hint to Heloise, P.O. Box 795001, San Antonio, TX 78279-5001, or you can fax it to 1-210-HELOISE or email it to Heloise@Heloise.com. I can't answer your letter personally but will use the best hints received in my column.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." So begins what I believe is one of the most well-written chapters in all of literature. In "A Tale of Two Cities," Charles Dickens was writing about the stark contrasts during the time period of the French Revolution, a time that brought both despair and joy. I wonder if someday we might look back at this extended time we've had at home during the coronavirus pandemic in a similar way. This time has brought despair to many — uncertainty, furloughed or lost jobs, sickness and death. But it's



Angie Hyche

also been a time of joy — more time with family, lighter schedules, time to reflect on our priorities, and good people rising to the call of the needs around them.

This prolonged time at home has had many consequences. While some rejoice at the additional time, others sadly resign themselves to hours of boredom. Some may be able to point to a list of projects they finally had time to accomplish, while others will celebrate having binged on all of the episodes of "Friends." Again. Deciding how to spend the extra time isn't a moral dilemma. There is no productivity police force. Trust me, if there was, I'd be the police chief. There is certainly value in relaxation. However, if you are anxious to accomplish a long procrastinated home project, this is a golden opportunity. Here are a few suggestions of home projects that are often ignored because of a lack of time. If by the time this article is printed the social distancing restrictions have been loosened and your schedule has gotten busier, you can use these same suggestions for any free blocks of time.

DECLUTTER ANYWHERE

If you're a regular reader of my column, you knew I'd have to at least mention this, didn't you? What's driving you crazy right now? What area in your home do you look at, sigh, and just walk away because it's a disaster. That's probably where you need to start. If nothing comes to mind immediately, just pick a room, a closet, or even a single drawer, and get rid of anything you don't use and love. If you find something that belongs in a different part of the house, take it there. If you have time, pull everything out, get rid of the clutter, sort the remaining items into categories, and put them back grouped into categories. Even if you only spend 15 minutes a day doing this, you'll make a lot of progress! Since the days are warmer, it's a great time to declutter the garage. Attics and basements are also great candidates for decluttering while you have a lot of time. Donation centers aren't really encouraging donations right now during the pandemic, so just queue them up somewhere until you can take them. But give yourself some kind of reminder so you don't forget about these donations until next May.

MAKE SMALL HOME REPAIRS

At any given time, there are a handful of these annoying tasks that we tend to put off. I'm talking about things like a running toilet, holes in window screens, painting touch-ups, sealing your deck, or fixing a ceiling stain. The list of possibilities is long. Pretend you're a potential buyer looking at your home. Walk around every room, starting at the front door. Ask every family member what needs to be fixed, and you may get more suggestions than you would imagine. Make a list of all of these issues and a plan for how and when they'll get accomplished, and then just work on them one at a time. While it may not be the most fun pastime, you'll be glad you got these



PHOTO BY ANGIE HYCHE

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tasks done. And should you decide to move soon, you'll have fewer items on your to-do list.

ORGANIZE YOUR PRINTED PHOTOS

This is one of the most procrastinated tasks of all. Here's the usual scenario in my clients' homes: multiple containers of photos with no idea how or when they will ever get around to putting them in order. Or maybe they have some vague plan to organize them when they retire, or while they're recovering from a surgery that they might have many years in the future or when they're trapped at home during a snowstorm or when the children leave for college (and now the "children" have children of their own) or "someday." You get the idea.

I've got news for you. You finally have the time now! Here's a very simple plan to get you started:

- **Get all your photos into one location.**
- **Figure out your end goal.** If you could wave a magic wand and have the photo organizing completed, what would it look like?
- **Pick a box and get started with an ABC sort.** This makes great binge watching work by the way!

The A photos are the best of the best, the photos that you would mourn if they were lost. This pile should be the smallest of the three when you finish the box.

The B photos are good photos. You can't quite let them go, but they aren't necessarily the ones you'd choose to frame or put in a scrapbook.

The C photos are photos you don't really

need. C photos include doubles, blurry photos, photos of people you don't even remember, photos of a zoo animal, mediocre photos of a place that you could find with a quick Google search. This pile should be the largest pile by far.

— **Plan to have your A photos (and maybe some of the B photos) scanned as soon as possible before they get damaged.** Keep your A and B photos (store them separately from each other until you have finished the sorting). Throw away your C photos.

— **Keep going with this process box by box.** When you're finished with the sorting, start working on your end goal with the A and B photos.

If you've got a goal that's beyond your ability or motivation to accomplish, don't be afraid to ask for help! There might be someone in your network of friends who's working on the same task, and you can help each other. If your goal involves decluttering or organizing of any kind, Shipshape Solutions is now offering virtual organizing services. Rates are 50% off through May 15. With our expertise and your work, you'll be able to make any area of your home shipshape.

I hope you've found these suggestions helpful and that you're able to get a few things accomplished. Stay safe and healthy!

Angie Hyche is a professional organizer and owner of Shipshape Solutions and the author of "Unholy Mess: What the Bible Says about Clutter" (coming soon!). Email her at angie@shipshape.solutions.

Stay-at-home haircuts are the next frightening stage of pandemic

By LORI BORGMAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE (TNS)

Now that panic buying of toilet paper and hand sanitizer is subsiding, people are moving on to the next phase of panic buying — hair clippers. Sales are moving at a fast clip.

Hair dye is also a hot seller. COVID gray is an official color. Home barbers and hairstylists are sprouting everywhere. I am among them. I'm even contemplating a salon name. My two top contenders are "It'll Grow" and "Oops!"

A neighbor cut her husband's hair with kitchen scissors and a comb. She started the cut two weeks ago and still hasn't finished. Every time she sees a spot she missed she tells him to sit still and cuts a little more.

His complaint is that he has

no hair on top. The man hasn't had hair on top for five years, but now he has someone to blame.

I used to cut our son's hair when he was little. The key is to start with the trimmers on the long setting, then move to progressively shorter and shorter settings to cover your mistakes.

As an adult, our son asked why he is bald in all the old family photos. I told him his hair was late coming in — age 14 is normal for some kids.

He and his wife have their own set of clippers. In an online family get-together, their two boys displayed fresh haircuts. The sides of their heads were shaved with a strip of longer hair on top.

Then our son took off his ball cap displaying the same cut. I offered them use of the "It'll

Grow" name for their home hair salon.

Our son-in-law saw the haircuts and thought why not? He's working from home and wouldn't be seeing anybody soon.

His wife revved up their clippers, rendered him nearly hairless on both sides, leaving a thick bushy strip of hair on top running down the back of his head. He looks like a bald guy wearing a squirrel on top of his head.

A handsome bald guy wearing a squirrel on his head, but nonetheless.

A few days later, he received notice about an online conference call. Higher ups at the company he works for wanted to check in with different division managers. He was invited to video chat — with the CEO.

He adjusted the computer camera so the top of his head was out of view. The CEO probably thought he was super eager about the call.

I mentioned to the husband that his hair is getting long and that I could fix that for him. He flashed on the haircuts I used to give our son and recoiled at the suggestion.

A few days later I looked over at him and gasped.

"Cut your own hair?"
"Yeah. It didn't go so well."
"Don't worry. It'll grow."
"Not at my age it won't."
Oops!

Lori Borgman is a columnist, author and speaker. Her new book, "What Happens at Grandma's Stays at Grandma's" is now available. Email her at lori@loriborgman.com.