

How to TRANSFORM Your...

Want to **spruce up your living room**, **shake up your style**, and **whip up a fantastic dinner** tonight? Here's how to make it happen—in way less time than you think.

LIVING ROOM

Whatever your level of expertise, Elaine Griffin, author of Design Rules: The Insider's Guide to Becoming Your Own Decorator, has ideas for transforming any space.

1 STRETCH YOUR SNAPSHOTS.

For a piece of art worthy of your wall, snap a pic with the smartphone app Instagram. Then use Instacanvas, a service that prints your photo on stretched canvas and delivers it to your door. (From \$32; instacanvas.as)

2 WALLPAPER YOUR FURNITURE.

A vibrant pattern, from sites like designyourwall.com, can breathe new life into an aging cabinet or plain end table.

- Lightly sand the surface. (For cabinet doors, unhinge them and remove knobs.)

Apply two coats of an oil-based primer, waiting an hour between coats.

- Cut wallpaper to size using a straightedge blade. Paint on a thin layer of Mod Podge and apply the wallpaper, flattening any air bubbles. Wait 24 hours before applying a coat of acrylic sealant.

3 STENCIL A WALL.

Painting a pattern requires patience, but the result can change the whole room. Consider Cutting Edge Stencils for all-in-one shopping.

- Wipe down the wall with a damp cloth (to make sure it's dust-free), and apply painter's tape to the adjoining walls, trim, and ceiling.

- Using a 36-inch level, line up your stencil. Starting at the wall's center, affix the pattern with painter's tape.

- Pour paint onto a paper plate. Dip the paint roller, and run it over the stencil.

- Remove the stencil and repeat across the wall. Use a stencil brush to fill in any details, if necessary.



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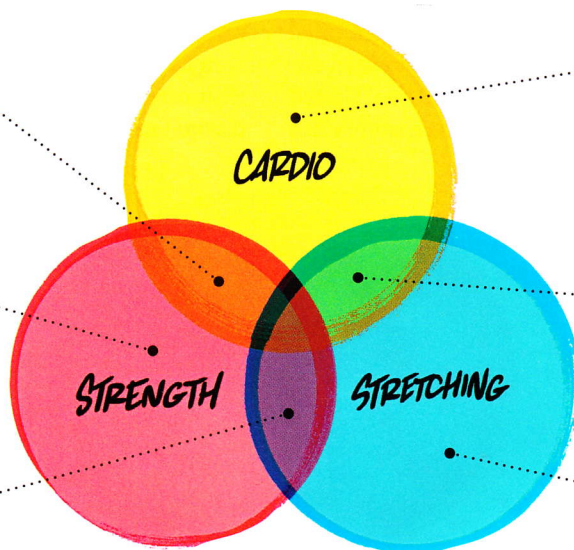
HOME WORKOUT

Good news for hard bodies and homebodies alike: With the fitness DVD industry growing by about 11 percent a year, there have never been more ways to work out in your living room.

Jillian Michaels: Kickbox FastFix
The Queen of Lean and former *Biggest Loser* trainer delivers a blend of fast-paced kicks, jabs, and dumbbell exercises.

Jane Fonda Prime Time: Trim Tone & Flex
If the thought of trying fitness fads like P90X induces dread, take heart: The home-workout doyenne has launched a series for the rest of us. Leg warmers optional.

Ballet Beautiful
Mary Helen Bowers, a former New York City Ballet dancer who trained Natalie Portman for *Black Swan*, invites those seeking the toned, elongated muscles of a dancer to step up to the barre.



Dancing with the Stars Cardio Dance for Weight Loss
One small pleasure of the samba, salsa, and swing routines on this quick-paced DVD, inspired by the ABC show, is dancing your heart out without a national audience.

Exhale: Core Fusion Cardio Pure Intensity
Downward dog meets mountain climbers (thigh-quaking knee pumps) in the first cardio DVD of this popular series based on yoga and other flexibility-focused disciplines.

Tara Stiles: This Is Yoga
The unconventional yogi, who counts Deepak Chopra as a devotee, shot this accessible, encyclopedic series on Malibu beaches and Los Angeles rooftops.

WEEKNIGHT DINNERS

TED ALLEN—host of the Food Network's *Chopped* and author of *In My Kitchen*—transforms weeknight meals in the simplest way possible: by adding or swapping a single ingredient.

Roast Chicken

"Serve it with **CHIMICHURRI**, the Argentine condiment that's made from herbs, garlic, oil, and vinegar. I add roasted jalapeños and red wine to mine for extra punch, and I use it on steak, too."



Burgers

"Add diced **PORTOBELLO OR CREMINI MUSHROOMS**. They bring a great flavor to the meat, and the moisture they add is especially helpful if you're making turkey burgers, which tend to be dry."



Mac and Cheese

"Try using **GRUYÈRE**—it's a wonderful melting cheese with a nutty flavor. I also mix in a few spoonfuls of **DIJON MUSTARD** and top with bread crumbs and fresh Parmesan before baking. That's the best part."



Meatloaf

"Instead of glazing the meat with the traditional ketchup before or after baking, warm up a good **SALSA WITH CHIPOTLE** and slather on top, which will add a fresher, smokier taste to the dish."



Pork Chops

"**GIARDINIERA**, the spicy pickled veggies you buy in jars, are great with pork. Brown a few chops on the stove, then pour a jar of giardiniera into the pan, liquid and all, and simmer. Cook until medium, ten to 15 minutes."



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STYLE

Break out of a fashion funk with these simple but inspired swaps.

THE RUT

LAYERED NECKLACES



KHAKI TRENCH



JEANS



BALLET FLATS



SHEATH DRESS



THE REDO



STATEMENT NECKLACE

Add oomph to your look with a single accessory that packs a big punch. (Necklace, Kate Spade New York)



LEATHER-DETAIL TRENCH

Modern leather panels give the weekday staple a dose of downtown cool. (Trench, Cynthia Steffe)



COLORLED CORDS

Available in delicious shades from pomegranate to mustard to mint, bright corduroys are versatile weekend basics. (Corduroy pants, Boden)



LOAFERS

This season's menswear-inspired flats look sophisticated but feel as comfy as slippers. (Loafers, Qupid)



PENCIL SKIRT AND KNIT TOP

Contrast a slim skirt with a bright knit top to flatter your curves like a sheath. (Sweater, J.Crew. Skirt, Talbots)

MOVIE NIGHT

Flip the script on your usual viewing options.

JYBE

Instead of scrolling through endless on-demand movie listings on your TV, download this free app to receive film recommendations on your phone. Select from among two dozen genres and Jybe will provide customized suggestions, complete with movie trailers. Pick your flick on Netflix or Amazon, then share your choice with friends via text, Twitter, Facebook, or e-mail.

1001 MOVIES YOU MUST SEE BEFORE YOU DIE

With a new version due out next month, this classic coffee-table book, compiled by critic Steven Jay Schneider, features screen gems dating back to the silent era, all listed chronologically. Also included: reviews by writers and film professors from across the globe, helpful plot summaries, cast listings, and amusing behind-the-scenes factoids.



CHICKFLIX.NET

Don't let the name fool you. The three female bloggers (Mainstream Chick, Adventurous Chick, and Arty Chick) behind this popular site offer a fun, fresh perspective on blockbusters, indie fare, and more. Search their archived reviews to find DVD-worthy titles.

TOP OF THE POPS

PRE-POPPED

Put an ordinary bag of pre-popped corn in the microwave and it may ignite. Put in a bag of Popcorn Indiana's Warm Your Corn and 60 seconds later you'll have a heap of toasty, buttery heaven. (popcornindiana.com)

MICROWAVE

We can't decide which we like better: Quinn Popcorn's inventive flavors (Parmesan & Rosemary, Lemon & Sea Salt, Vermont

Maple & Sea Salt) or the fact that its organic popcorn comes in a compostable bag. (quinnpopcorn.com)

AIR-POPPED

An addictive blend of brown sugar, garlic, onion, pepper, and sea salt from the mineral-rich waters off the coast of Mendocino, the Seasoning "Sand" made by Mendocino Sea Salt and Seasoning Company adds a pop of sweet savoriness. (mendoseasoning.com)

Sea *CHANGE*

A young restaurateur gives sushi an eco-friendly makeover. Grab your chopsticks!

← GREAT →
Transformations

2

IN THE PAST FEW DECADES, overfishing—coupled with climate change and pollution—has crushed our oceans' delicate ecosystems. In 2010 the United Nations estimated that 85 percent of the world's fish

were overexploited or being fished at maximum levels. Which raises the question: What's a sushi lover to do?

She could start by heading to Portland, Oregon, where Kristofor Lofgren, 30, is pioneering a guilt-free way to indulge in omega-3s. At Lofgren's acclaimed restaurant, Bamboo Sushi, you won't find overfished sushi-roll staples like bluefin tuna or unagi—but you might find sustainably caught Tasmanian ocean trout, horse mackerel, or even cod sperm. An inventive "Bamboo charcuterie plate" features "blood sausage" made from local Pacific albacore tuna. Lofgren's meticulous sourcing from only healthy populations has earned his restaurant the first Marine Stewardship Council

certification in the United States.

In his view, sustainability is more than a gimmick. "Fish caught with care, in a more artisanal fashion"—e.g., using low-tech traditional methods like rods or a small net—"taste better," he says.

"In a massive net, all the fish are struggling and stressed-out," conditions that raise the fishes' cortisol levels, which can make their meat tougher. Lofgren's hope is to lure customers with his sushi, then hook them through education. To that end, he's offering a whole shark on the menu—for adoption (the price: a \$4,000 minimum donation to the University of Miami's marine conservation program, after which the restaurant will fly you to Florida to personally tag your toothy pet). "Being sustainable doesn't just mean sticking to seafood that's caught ethically and not overfished," Lofgren says. "Our goal is to turn our customers into ambassadors."

—COURTNEY RUBIN



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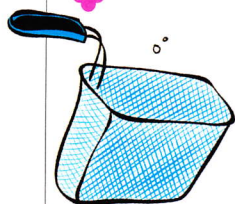
MEMORY

Science writer *Gretchen Reynolds* offers three easy methods for upgrading your powers of recall.

1 HOLD THE GREASE.

Fatty diets have been regularly linked to poorer brain function. According to a study published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, rats eating a diet loaded with saturated fat

performed much worse on memory tests than other rats. If you find it impossible to cut out pizza and potato chips entirely, there's still hope: Scientists recently have found that resveratrol, a substance abundant in red wine, improved animals' recall, even if they ate a high-fat diet.



2 THINK WHILE YOU SWEAT.

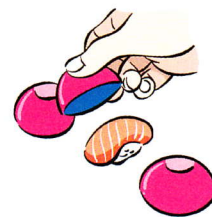
A Union College study suggests that you can amplify the cognitive benefits of exercise by using your head during a workout. Participants played an "exergame," in which they rode a bike

equipped with a virtual reality display that showed them navigating a 3-D landscape. After three months, the exergamers fared better on tests involving short-term memory than a control group that rode a traditional stationary bike.



3 DON'T FORGET YOUR OMEGA-3s.

In research published earlier this year, aging mice fed kibble enriched with



omega-3 fatty acids had less inflammation in their brains and showed an improvement in memory power after two months compared with animals that continued to eat their usual feed. Skip the kibble and head to a sushi counter with sustainable seafood options instead: Salmon and seaweed are loaded with omega-3s.

← GREAT →
Transformations

GREENER Pastures

America's most notorious landfill is reborn as a wilderness almost three times the size of Central Park.

6

IN A LETTER TO HIS SISTER dated 1843, Henry David Thoreau described Staten Island as being “like a garden.” Just five miles across the bay from Manhattan, the island was known for its lush green meadows and tidal wetlands, home to eagles, herons, osprey, and other abundant wildlife.

Then in 1948, 2,741 acres of the Fresh Kills marshlands (*kill* is Old Dutch for “stream”) were designated a landfill. Seven years later, Fresh Kills was the largest residential trash repository in the world—and the name *Staten Island* less synonymous with bucolic meadows than with an epic stench.

But now Thoreau’s “garden” is making a comeback—as Freshkills Park. In 2008 construction began on a 30-year master plan that calls

for nature trails, a bird observatory, and canoeing. The city is also harvesting natural gas from the buried waste and using it to heat 22,000 homes (the waste is “capped” with an impermeable cover to prevent fumes from escaping). This summer the park’s first completed section, a playground, is scheduled to open to the public; a pedestrian loop and the Owl Hollow Fields—which include soccer fields, lawns, and a LEED-certified rest area—will follow this fall. Red foxes and deer have already recolonized the upland forests, and park administrator Eloise Hirsh sees goldfinches on her way to work—evidence that “the land is healing itself,” she says. “By turning this into something really beautiful, we want to help people be more thoughtful about what they throw out.” —**BONNIE TSUI**

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Finances

Six small steps to a money makeover.

ALEXA VON TOBEL,
founder of the personal
finance Web site learnvest.com

► **DO THIS NOW:** Electronic bills are great—unless they’re lost in a crowded in-box. Set up a separate e-mail account (e.g., alexabills@gmail.com) to keep your e-bills orderly.

► **DO THIS SOON:** Step back and look at the big picture. Fifty percent of your take-home pay should be allocated for essentials, 20 percent should go toward savings and debt, and 30 percent can cover everything else.



MICHELLE SINGLETARY,
“The Color of Money”
columnist for The
Washington Post

► **DO THIS NOW:** Challenge yourself with a 21-day financial fast, during which you eliminate all spending except for the bare essentials. Halting unnecessary purchases forces you to reflect on how much you consume.

► **DO THIS SOON:** Keep a spending journal for 30 days. A month’s worth of data makes it easier to see where you can cut back.

MARY CARACCIOLI, host of
We Owe What? on the Live Well Network

► **DO THIS NOW:** Stop delaying your savings! So many women say they haven’t done enough research to enroll in a 401(k) plan, but it’s far better to act now and tweak your allocations later than to delay building any security at all.

► **DO THIS SOON:** Pick one intimidating financial situation—whether it’s saving for a house or getting rid of your debt—and meet with a financial adviser. You can find one through the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (nfcc.org). A single session can put you on the right path.



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Toughest Relationships

Rev. Ed Bacon, author of the new book *8 Habits of Love: Open Your Heart, Open Your Mind*, offers tips to deal with the people who drive you nuts.

1 START WITH STILLNESS.

Before engaging with a difficult person, spend a few minutes trying to adopt a more receptive frame of mind. Go for a stroll, meditate, or breathe deeply to center yourself—you'll be less likely to blow up. If tempers do flare once you start talking, take a short break to regain perspective before approaching your nemesis again.



2 GIVE AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE.

Do the unexpected and give your foe a gift: your undivided attention. Ask her open-ended questions; she'll feel heard and more inclined to consider what you have to say. Plus, research has shown that offering even a small act of kindness can boost oxytocin levels, meaning you'll likely feel better about your relationship for that reason alone.

3 LET IT GO.

Holding a grudge won't make a person change her behavior—you don't have that much power over someone else. To move on, repeat this mantra: "Her actions take up too much real estate in my brain. If I move them out, I can live freely."

MANNERS

*We all know shouting into a cell phone in a restaurant can draw as many stares as a mouse running through the dining room, but what about the transgressions we may be oblivious to? **HENRY ALFORD**, author of *Would It Kill You to Stop Doing That? A Modern Guide to Manners*, offers his tips for restoring civility in the age of constant connectivity.*

DON'T ANSWER a telephone call with an e-mail. Or an e-mail with a text message. Or a text with a Facebook message. In the communication hierarchy, you generally want to match the level of intimacy or move up the hierarchy—a move down can look like you're avoiding the person.

DO ASK, before you post pictures from a party, whether anyone minds having them on Facebook. If someone is social-media-shy, save any photos of her for your non-Facebook albums.

DON'T TEXT at the movie theater, no matter how strong the urge to LOL. If you're perpetually rattled by the glowing phone screens of others texting during movies, do bring a tiny penlight to shine on them. It's more discreet than shushing but still delivers a wallop of social shame.

DO EMBRACE the 2.0 version of thank-you notes: Text or e-mail a digital snapshot of you enjoying the present to the gift giver. Because nothing says thank you like photographic evidence.

DON'T RESPOND to a long, thoughtful e-mail merely with "Thx." "Thx" will not make people look kindly on you—in their eyes you'll always be more Charlie Sheen than Tom Hx. **Q**

