

# HOUSEHOLD HINTS

by  
*Freda Hudson*

of the  
Yamaska Literacy Council



*illustrated by*  
*Beth Hudson*

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ISBN: 1-895539-33-1

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The Reading Council for Literacy Advance in Montreal  
3449 University St.  
Montreal, Quebec  
H3A 2A8

This book is a joint project of the following Laubach Literacy of Canada-Quebec Councils:

Chateauguay, Gaspesie, Laurentian, Quebec City, RECLAIM, South Shore, St. Francis, Western Quebec, and Yamaska

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## About This Book

Lemon and sock stew?  
Tea-bag eyes?  
Hangover helpers?  
Toothpaste on an oak table?  
Freezing egg whites?  
Salt on suds?  
Upside-down cottage cheese?  
Onion on a bee sting?  
Vegetable oil for the car?

What do all these things have in common?

They can all be found in this book of helpful hints. You can keep the book on hand to use when you need it. Or you can read through it for information. Then you can avoid burnt pans, slimy lettuce leaves, solid nail polish, frozen car locks... And you'll always have egg whites on hand, hamburgers ready on time, fluffy omelets, perfect gravy, stainless steel, white whites, a perfumed bathroom, no frozen windshields, smooth skin, shiny hair, deep sleep, and a lot more!

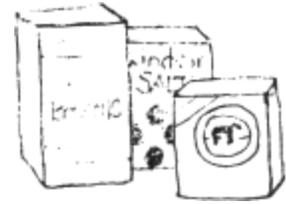
## Useful Things to Keep in the House

### **Cornstarch, talcum powder**

Buy at the drug store or grocery.

### **Rubbing alcohol**

Buy at the drug store or paint store.



### **Ammonia, baking soda, borax, detergents, washing soda, white vinegar**

Buy at the grocery.

Ammonia can be used as a mild bleach. Buy plain household ammonia. Always pre-test before using ammonia. Do not use on silk or wool. Do not get ammonia on your skin or eyes.

### **Linseed oil, turpentine**

Buy at the paint store.

### **Chlorine bleach**

Buy at the grocery or drug store.

Chlorine bleach can be a help in removing stains. It is a strong bleach. Use carefully. Do not use on silk or wool. For colours use very little in full washing machine.

**REMEMBER TO KEEP DANGEROUS THINGS OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN.**

## In the Kitchen

### FOOD

#### **To ripen green bananas or green tomatoes**

Wrap the bananas in a wet dish towel. Place them in a paper bag.

#### **To ripen avocados**

Bury them in a bowl of flour.

#### **To get ketchup out of the bottle**

Push a drinking straw to the bottom of the bottle. The ketchup will flow more easily.

#### **Eggs**

To check the freshness of eggs

Put the egg in a pan of cool salted water. If it sinks to the bottom, it is fresh. If it floats, it is old.

Throw the old egg away!

Brown and white shelled eggs are the same quality!

When eggs are stuck to the carton

Wet the carton. The eggs will come out more easily.

To keep egg yolks fresh

Cover them with cold water and put them in the refrigerator. They will keep fresh for several days.

Freezing egg whites

Egg whites can be kept frozen up to one year. Freeze them in an ice cube tray. Seven or eight egg whites equal one cup. You can refreeze defrosted egg whites.

#### **Wilted vegetables?**

If fresh vegetables are wilted, pick off the brown edges. Sprinkle them with cold water. Wrap them in a towel. Put in the refrigerator for an hour.

#### **Brown sugar hard as a rock?**

Soften by putting a slice of soft bread in the package. Close tightly. In a couple of hours the brown sugar will be soft again. A slice of fresh apple works well too.

#### **Soggy potato chips, cereal or crackers?**

If potato chips lose their crispness, place them under the broiler for a few moments. Do not brown them.

Put soggy cereal and crackers on a cookie sheet. Heat for a few minutes in the oven.



Crackers can be kept crisp in hot and humid weather. Wrap them tightly and keep them in the refrigerator.

### **Bread**

To defrost frozen bread and rolls

Place in a brown paper bag. Put in the oven at 325 degrees for 5 minutes. They will thaw completely.

Put a stick of celery in your bread bag to keep the bread fresh longer.

If bread has dried out, wrap it in a damp towel. Place it in the refrigerator for 24 hours. Remove the towel and heat the bread in a low oven for a few minutes.

### **Cheese**

To keep cheese from drying out

Wrap the cheese in a cloth dampened with vinegar.

Cottage cheese

Store the carton upside down. It will keep longer.

### **Fish**

Thaw fish in milk. The milk draws out the frozen taste.

Or try soaking fish in vinegar and water before cooking



You can remove the fishy smell from your hands with vinegar and water. Or with salt and water.

### **Garlic cloves**

You can keep garlic cloves in the freezer.

When ready to use, peel and chop before thawing.

Or you can store garlic cloves in a bottle of cooking oil. When the garlic is all finished, you can use the oil for salad dressing.

### **Crystallized honey?**

If honey turns to sugar, place the jar in a pot of very hot water.

### **Lemons**

Store whole lemons in a jar of water in the refrigerator.

Cover a lemon with hot water for fifteen minutes before squeezing. You will get almost twice the amount of juice.



After a lemon has been squeezed, wrap the rind. Put it in the freezer. Grate it when a recipe calls for lemon rind.

### **Lettuce and Celery**

Put in paper bags before storing in the refrigerator. Do not remove the outside leaves until ready to use.

### **Onions**

Wrap each one in foil. The onions will stay firm longer.

When an onion has been cut in half, rub the leftover half with butter. It will keep fresh longer.

### **Potatoes**

If you have peeled too many, cover them with cold water. Add a few drops of vinegar. Put them in the refrigerator. They will last for 3 or 4 days.

### **No corkscrew for wine bottle?**

Run hot water on the neck of the bottle. Heat expands the glass. The cork will pop out.

## **COOKING**

### **To soften butter**

Grate butter to soften it quickly.

### **To measure sticky liquids**

Oil the measuring cup with cooking oil. Rinse in hot water. Honey or other liquids will not stick.

### **To peel onions without tears!**

Cut the root end of the onion off LAST. Or freeze or refrigerate before chopping. Or peel under cold running water.

### **To remove fat**

To remove fat from soup or stew

Wrap ice cubes in cheese cloth or paper towel. Skim the wrapped cubes over the top of the soup or stew. Or put a few lettuce leaves in the pot. The fat will cling to them. Then remove.

When broiling meat on a rack

Place a piece of bread in the bottom of the pan. This will soak up the fat.

### **Deep fry**

Add one tablespoon of vinegar to the fat. The food will not absorb too much fat. The food will not taste greasy.

### **Pan frying**

Always heat the pan before adding butter or oil. This will stop food sticking to the pan - even eggs. Sprinkle a little salt into the frying pan.

This will help stop spattering.

**Meat loaf sticking to the pan?**

Place a slice of bacon on the bottom of the pan. The meat loaf will not stick.

**Muffins sticking to the pan?**

Place the hot pan on a wet towel.

**To prevent boil-overs**

Add a lump of butter or cooking oil to the water. Rice, noodles or spaghetti will not boil over. They will not stick together.

**Double boiler**

Always place a jar lid or marbles in the bottom part of your double boiler. The rattling sound will tell you if the water has boiled away.

**Hamburgers in a hurry!**

Poke a hole in their centres. The hamburgers will cook more quickly.

**Shrinking sausages?**

Boil them for a few minutes before frying. Or roll them lightly in flour before frying. Then they won't shrink.

**Cutting sticky foods**

Put some flour in a paper bag. Place the sticky food inside. Shake until all the pieces are coated with flour. Or dip the knife in hot water while cutting.

**Nuts**

To shell Brazil nuts

Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Or freeze. Then crack and shell.

To shell walnuts

Soak overnight in salt water. Crack gently.

**Eggs**

To hard-boil eggs

Put eggs in pan. Cover them with cold water. Pour in some vinegar or salt. This will stop eggs from oozing out if the shell cracks. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat. Let eggs sit in covered pan for 15 minutes. Cool with cold water. To find out if the egg is hard-boiled, spin it. If it spins round and round, it is done. If it wobbles and will not spin, cook it more.

For fluffier omelets

Add a pinch of cornstarch before beating.

**Too salty?**

If you have put too much salt in soup or stew, add cut raw potatoes. Throw out the potatoes when they have cooked.

Another way to take the salt out of soup and stew  
Add a teaspoon each of cider vinegar and sugar. Or -- just add sugar.

**Too sweet?**

Add salt. If it is a main dish or a vegetable, add a teaspoon of cider vinegar.

**Thin gravy?**

Mix water and flour or cornstarch into a smooth paste. Add slowly, stirring all the time. Bring to a boil. Or try instant potato flakes instead of flour.

**Greasy gravy?**

Add a small amount of baking soda.

**Bacon**

To stop bacon from curling, dip the strips in cold water before frying.  
Prick the bacon with fork while it is frying. It will lie flat.

**Left-over baked potato**

To rebake, dip it in water and bake in the oven at 350 degrees for 20 minutes.

**DISHES, POTS AND PANS**

**Washing dishes**

Save money by using a cheap brand of dishwashing detergent. But add a few tablespoons of vinegar to the dishwashing water. The vinegar will cut the grease. It will leave the dishes sparkling clean.

**Glassware**

Never put a thin glass in hot water bottom side first. It will crack. It will be safe if it is slipped in edgewise.

When one glass is stuck inside another, do not force them apart. Fill the top one with cold water. Dip the lower one in hot water. They will come apart without breaking.

**Coffee or tea stains on your fine china?**

Rub the stain with a damp cloth dipped in baking soda. This works well for cigarette burns too.

**Food stuck to a casserole dish?**

Fill the dish with boiling water and add two tablespoons of baking soda or salt. Let it soak for a while.

**Burnt pans?**

Sprinkle burnt pots with baking soda. Add just enough water to moisten. Let stand for a few hours. The burnt portion should lift right out of the pan.

### **Grater**

Before using the grater, rub salad oil on it.

Use a fine brush to brush lemon rind, cheese, onion (or whatever you grated) out of the grater before washing it.



### **Meat grinder**

Before washing, run a piece of bread through it. This helps to remove any meat that might be still there.

### **Rusty tin pie pans?**

Remove rust by dipping raw potato in cleaning powder. Rub the pie pan with the potato.

## **OVEN, REFRIGERATOR, SINK, WINDOWS**

### **Oven**

If food spills over, sprinkle the oven with salt right away. When the oven is cool, brush off the burnt food. Wipe with a damp sponge.

#### A cheap oven cleaner

Set oven on warm for about 20 minutes. Then turn off. Place a small dish of full strength ammonia on the top shelf. Put a large pan of boiling water on the bottom shelf. Let it set overnight. In the morning, open the oven and let it air for a while. Then wash off with soap and water.

### **Refrigerator**

Place a small open box of baking soda in the refrigerator. It will help to take away any odours. Replace every two months.

Or pour a little vanilla on a piece of cotton. Place in the refrigerator. This will help take away odours.

### **Sinks**

For a sparkling white sink

Place paper towels on the bottom. Pour bleach over the towels. Let set for half an hour.

For stainless steel sinks

Rub with lighter fluid if rust spots appear. When the rust spots disappear, wipe with your regular kitchen cleaner.

### **Drains**

If the drain is clogged with grease, pour a cup of salt and a cup of baking soda into the drain. Follow with a kettle of boiling water.

Do not put coffee grounds down the drain. They clog if they get mixed with grease.

### **Windows**

Add half a cup of vinegar to a pail of water. Wash. Dry with crumpled newspaper.

# Laundry and Cleaning

## LAUNDRY, STAIN-REMOVING

### Ring around the collar?

Brush hair shampoo into the shirt collar before washing. An old toothbrush can be used. Or make a paste of vinegar and baking soda. Rub in and wash as usual.



### Wool

Hand-wash woollens in lukewarm water. Add a capful of cream hair rinse in the last rinse water. Or add a few drops of glycerine to the rinse water.

### Sweater shrunk?

Try this. Add some good shampoo to cool water and soak the wool in it. This might soften the wool. Then you can try to reshape it.

### Fabric softener

Put a few capfuls of fabric softener into a small bowl of water. Soak a washcloth in it. Ring it out. Put it into the dryer with the wet clothes.

### To help your dryer

Throw a dry towel in with your wet laundry.

### Too many suds?

Sprinkle with salt. The suds will disappear.

### For really clean clothes

Add a half cup of household ammonia to the wash water.

### To get white socks white again

Boil them in water with a slice of lemon added.

### Alcohol stains

Soak fresh stains in cold water. Add a few tablespoons of glycerine. Rinse with white vinegar and water.

### Fresh blood stains

Stretch the stained spot over a bowl. Pour very hot water from as high as possible. This also works for fruit stains. Be careful not to scald yourself!

### Ballpoint ink

Apply hairspray. Rub with a clean dry cloth. Or try rubbing alcohol on the spot. Then wash.

**Tar**

Rub the tar spot with kerosene. Then wash with detergent. Test colour first.

**Red wine**

Sprinkle with lots of salt right away. Dunk in cold water and rub the stain. Then wash. Or try pouring soda water on the stain.

**Candle wax or crayon**

Place between paper towels or brown paper. A brown paper bag will do. Press with a warm iron.

To stop candles from dripping  
Put in the freezer until you need them.

**Grease spots**

Dampen the spot and put cornstarch or talcum powder on it. This will form a paste. Allow to dry, then brush with a soft cloth to remove. This will also work on an old grease spot.

**To remove water spots from an oak table**

Rub on a glob of toothpaste. Let it stand. Then take a fine kitchen scrub pad and rub with the grain. Rub gently.

**CARPET CARE****Spills**

Try to stop a spill from turning into a stain. Blot up as much as you can. Scrape up any solids and blot with lots of clean towels. Begin at the outer edge and blot toward the centre.

**To remove glue**

Loosen the glue with a cloth soaked in vinegar.

**To remove fresh stains**

Pour plain club soda on the spot. Let it set for a few seconds and sponge up well. If you have no club soda, try vinegar and water.

**To remove older stains**

Mix two tablespoons of detergent, three tablespoons of vinegar and one quart of warm water. Work into the stain and blot as dry as possible. (Tide is the best stain remover for stubborn spots.) Mix detergent with warm water. Brush the suds into stain with a soft brush. Brush up and down and across. Blot. This may need to be repeated.

Or try shaving cream. Foam is a good spot remover. Wash up with water.

**To brighten your carpet**

Sprinkle salt on the carpet. Let stand for an hour. Then vacuum.

## In the Bathroom

### To clean a very stained bathtub

Make a paste using peroxide and cream of tartar. Scrub with a small brush. Rinse.

For light stains  
Rub with cut lemon.

For dark stains or rust  
Rub with a paste of borax and lemon juice.



### Shower curtains

To wash shower curtains

Fill the washing machine with warm water. Add two large bath towels. Add half a cup each of detergent and baking soda. Run through the entire wash cycle. Add one cup of vinegar to the rinse water. Do not spin dry. Do not wash vinegar out. Hang in the shower right away. Wrinkles will disappear when the curtain is dry. This will not work without the bath towels.

To prevent mildew  
Soak the shower curtains in salt water before hanging.

### To remove mildew from small areas

Wash the area with baking soda.

### Glass shower doors

Rub with a sponge dipped in white vinegar.

### Dripping tap?

To save energy, fix it as soon as possible. But until then, if the drip is keeping you awake, wrap a cloth around the tap. Or tie a string to the tap, long enough to reach the drain. The water will run down the string quietly and let you sleep.

### For a sweet smell in the bathroom

Dab a little perfume on a light bulb. When the light is on, the heat warms the perfume.

# Beauty Hints

## Skin care

Wash your face. While it is still wet, rub in a tiny bit of petroleum jelly (Vaseline). Keep wetting the face until the jelly is spread evenly. Keep adding water a little at a time. The greasy feeling will soon go.



## Dead skin

Miracle Whip salad dressing removes dead skin. Rub a small amount into the skin and let it soak in for a few minutes. While still moist, start rubbing the area. This is good for feet, elbows, knees and face. Do not use mayonnaise!

## To remove make-up

Try lard or shortening. Whip or mash with a fork. Apply and wipe off with tissue.

## Eye care

### Eye cream

Before going to bed, apply castor oil around your eyes. Make sure it is odourless. .

### For tired eyes

Place fresh cold cucumbers on your eyelids. This helps to get rid of redness or puffiness. Cold, wet tea bags also help.

## Hair care

### Hair conditioner

Use mayonnaise for dry hair. Rub half a cup of mayonnaise on dry unwashed hair. Cover with a plastic shower cap. Wait for 15 minutes.

Rinse a few times. Then shampoo.

### Final rinse

#### Blondes

Rinse hair with water containing a few tablespoons of lemon juice.

#### Brunettes and redheads

Rinse hair with water containing several tablespoons of apple cider vinegar.

Also, try rinsing with coffee. Do not rinse out.

### Cleaning hairbrushes and combs

Spray foaming bathroom cleaner on your hairbrushes and combs. Let set and then rinse.



## Nail polish

Nail polish is easy to apply if stored in the refrigerator. This also prevents frosted nail polish from separating. If, however, your nail polish has hardened, put the bottle in a pan of boiling water. The polish should be as good as new.

To make the nail polish bottle easy to open, rub petroleum jelly inside the cover and on the grooves of the bottle.

For fast drying nails

Paint your nails and stick your hands in the freezer.

**Perfume**

The smell of perfume stays longer on oily skin. So before applying the perfume, rub a very thin layer of Vaseline on your skin.

# Medical Hints

## **Brittle bones?**

If your bones are weak, they break more easily.

To avoid this, exercise. Walking is a good way to exercise the bones. Make sure you have enough calcium in your diet. Add powdered non-fat dry milk to soups and casseroles. Red salmon, sardines, nuts and tofu are high in calcium. When making soup with soup bones, add a little vinegar. This helps to remove the calcium from the soup bone.

Get enough Vitamin D. Milk, salmon, sardines and tuna are high in Vitamin D. Don't smoke! Limit coffee to two or three cups a day. Don't eat too much meat. Cut down on salt.

## **Hangover?**

Here are some things you can do.

Drink lots of fruit juice. Eat crackers and honey. Take a mild pain reliever. Drink broth made from bouillon cubes. Or homemade soup broth. Drink lots of water. Drink two cups of coffee. Eat a light meal. Do not eat fats or fried foods.

## **Leg cramps?**

These often happen in the middle of the night.

If cramps in the calf wake you up, rub up from the ankle towards the heart. Loosen the covers. Wear roomy pyjamas. Sleep on your side with knees bent upward. You may need more calcium. Check with your doctor.

## **Minor burns or scalds**

Flush the burn with lots of cold water. Do this for 15 or 20 minutes. Or until the burning pain stops. Do NOT use ice or ice water.

## **Night blindness?**

Do you have trouble driving at night?

Have your eyes tested. Your doctor may suggest glasses for night driving. Make sure your diet includes Vitamin A. Do not wear sunglasses at dusk. Drive more carefully. Keep your headlights on low beam in fog. Look at the right side of the road. This way you avoid the glare of on-coming headlights.

## **Snoring**

Do not sleep on your back. Do not drink alcohol before going to bed. Stop smoking. If you're fat, slim down. Do not take sleeping pills. Use a small pillow - or no pillow at all.

## **Stings**

If stung by a bee, wasp, hornet or yellow jacket, act fast.

For a bee sting

Put a slice of onion on the spot. This will open the sting. The stinger can be taken out.

If you have no onion, try scraping the stinger out. Do not squeeze!

For all stings

Wash the spot with soap and water. Place an ice cube over the sting. [Heat can also help. Take a hair dryer and aim it at the sting.] Household ammonia helps.

Make a paste of baking soda and water and put it on the sting. If nothing else is handy, use mud. Mix a little clay soil and water. Cover with a cloth and leave it on until the mud dries. Or use aspirin --wet the sting then rub an aspirin tablet into it.

Try not to get stung by wearing light colours. Don't use too much perfume or after-shave. Bees will think you are a flower!

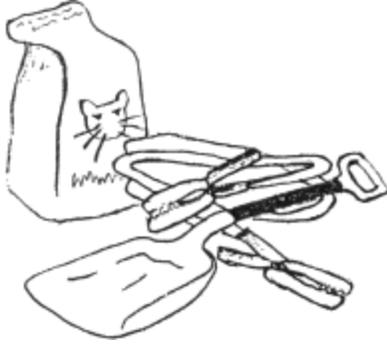
### **Varicose veins**

Varicose veins are weak veins. Here are some things that you can do to ease the pain.

Lift your feet. Raise your legs above hip level when they are aching. Wear support hose. Wear sensible shoes. Watch your weight! Wear loose clothing. Don't smoke! Walk.

If your veins are really bad, buy a pair of elastic stockings. Specially fitted knee stockings can relieve the ache. Get measured and buy good quality. It pays in the end.

## Auto Hints



### CAR CARE

#### **To clean windshields, headlights, chrome and enamel**

Wipe with a damp sponge sprinkled with baking soda.



#### **To remove bumper stickers**

Use nail polish remover or lighter fluid. Gently scrape with a razor blade or knife.

#### **To remove rust spots**

Scrub the rust spots with a piece of crumpled foil. Or use fine steel wool. Or use a soap-filled steel wool pad.

#### **To remove tar**

Soak tar spots with raw linseed oil. Leave until soft. Then wipe off with a soft oily cloth.

#### **Scratches**

Use a matching colour crayon and work into the scratch.

#### **To prevent doors and trunk from freezing**

Wipe or spray the rubber gaskets with a coating of vegetable oil. The oil will keep out the water. It will not hurt the gaskets. It is good to do this before having the car washed in the winter.

#### **To open a frozen lock**

Heat the key with a cigarette lighter or match. Turn very gently. Trouble starting the car on cold mornings? Use your hair dryer to blow hot air on the carburetor before you call the garage!

#### **To stop windshield freeze-ups when parked outdoors**

Put the rubber floor mats over the windshield. Hold them in place with windshield wipers.

## BAD WEATHER DRIVING

Carry a bag of sand or a bag of kitty litter. This can be spread under the wheels if you get stuck on ice.

If you get stuck and you have none of the above, take the rubber mats from your car. Place them in front of the rear wheels. You might make it!

Also carry the following items:

Shovel

Flashers

Windshield scraper

Booster cables

Tow chain

Spray or coat the shovel with oil to shovel wet snow. The snow will not stick on the shovel.

A complete storm kit includes the above items and those listed below:

Foil-wrapped matches

Candles

Compass

Road maps

Fire extinguisher

Pocket knife

First-aid kit

Axe

Facial tissues

Paper towels

Extra warm clothing