

## The John Tesh Blog

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### Want a simpler life? Easy-peasy.

I like [Real Simple](#). Can you guess why? They plunk down these fantastic ways to simplify our lives- as a rule! Good stuff, huh? So here are 14 shortcuts to everyday life:

#### Run Errands

“Plan the order of your stops in a clockwise direction,” advises Susan Hamersky, owner of the Los Angeles–based errand company California Concierge. “That way, you avoid all the time-consuming left turns.” Also, schedule your errands so you can drop things off on your way out and pick them up on your way home, says Dan McMackin, a spokesman for UPS and a former driver. Keep a cooler in your car for perishables, too. Then a stop at the market doesn’t have to be immediately followed by a run home to the refrigerator, says Julie Hagenmaier, founder and CEO of My Girl Friday, an errand company in Cincinnati.

#### Dry Your Tears

“I stick my head in the freezer for a couple of seconds after I cut onions,” says Todd Ginsberg, a chef at Manhattan's Alain Ducasse Restaurant, at the Essex House. Cold air stops the tears and reduces redness and puffiness by constricting blood vessels, explains ophthalmologist Marguerite B. McDonald, a professor at the Tulane University School of Medicine, in New Orleans. If you’re not in the kitchen, try dabbing—not rubbing—away the wetness. Then use an over-the-counter eye whitener to get the red out, or disguise it with blue eyeliner. “Draw a line on the inner lower rims of your eyes,” McDonald says. “Blue will make your eyes look whiter.”



#### Keep a Journal

If the last entry in your diary is a cryptic scribble from 2003, stop writing and start printing—e-mails, that is. Since you’re probably already summarizing your life in e-mails to your friends and family, print them out and paste them on the pages of a blank notebook, suggests Oriah Mountain Dreamer, author of *What We Ache For: Creativity and the Unfolding of Your Soul*. “It’s like my yoga teacher once said about working out: ‘All you need to do is stretch for five minutes a day,’” Mountain Dreamer says. “Of course, once you get going, it feels so good, you’ll wind up doing more.”

#### Turn Day Wear Into Evening Wear

Work is over, and you're ready for cocktails. Transform your office self for a night out with these tools.

- **An extra pair of earrings.** Always have two pairs—one small and one dangly. You can also attach clip-on earrings to your pumps.
- **A lightweight shawl.** "It's an easy new focal point for your outfit," says fashion consultant Leah Feldon, author of *Does This Make Me Look Fat?: The Definitive Rules for Dressing Thin for Every Height, Size, and Shape*.
- **A fancy pair of pumps.** Or a pair of strappy sandals.
- **Black eyeliner.** For a smoky look, line your outer rims close to the lash lines, then smudge with a cotton swab, says New York City makeup artist Mally Roncal.
- **A peachy cream blush.** "The color will uplift your cheeks and eyelids," says New York City makeup artist Lea Siegel.
- **Guys:** If work doesn't require a suit or jacket, keep one in your car. That's pretty simple.

#### Get Cut Flowers to Bloom

First try cutting the stems at an angle, then placing the bouquet in warm water. If that doesn’t work, use a blow-dryer with a diffuser to simulate the sunshine’s warmth, says Denis Chandler, the owner of Bloomsberry Flowers, in Wilmington, Delaware.



#### Speak a Foreign Language

¿No habla español? No problem. You don't need to complete a six-month course of elementary Spanish to make your way in Madrid. “Get a little pocket language book, and instead of attempting to learn the language, learn a few key phrases,” says Harold Jenkins, a Chicago-based travel agent and a frequent traveler. Elizabeth Lunney, cofounder of New York City's ABC Language Exchange, recommends Berlitz Phrasebooks because they’re “easy to navigate, come in many languages, and help with pronunciation.” Don George, global-travel editor for *Lonely Planet*, says the following words and phrases are the most useful:

Hello  
 Good-bye  
 Yes  
 No  
 Please  
 Thank you  
 Excuse me  
 Sorry  
 Do you speak English?  
 I don't understand.  
 How much?  
 I would like...  
 Where is...?  
 Train station  
 Bathroom



#### Get Your Daily Vitamins

Try a bowl of Total, says David Grotto, a registered dietitian in Evanston, Illinois, and a spokesman for the American Dietetic Association. The cereal is fortified with 100 percent of the daily value of 12 vitamins and minerals. Drink the milk, too—it will add even more vitamins, including those it washes off the cereal, Grotto says.

#### Buy Clothes Without Trying Them On

You have good reasons to avoid the dressing room—long lines and fluorescent lighting among them—so skip it altogether by sizing yourself up first at home, says designer Cynthia Rowley. Note how your favorite clothes look when you hold them to your body, and recall that when you're shopping. If the fabric of a pair of jeans or a skirt doesn't exactly meet the edge of your waistline when you hold it up, it won't fit correctly, Feldon says. And the next time you're in a hurry at the department store, remember this measurement trick from Rowley: The distance from the side of your neck to the tip of your fingers

(on an outstretched arm) is about the same length as your inseam.

### **Cool Your Mouth After Spicy Food**

When the innocent-looking red thing you swallowed with your kung pao chicken turns out to be a pepper with 350,000 Scoville units (in layman's terms: Ouch!), your first impulse is to reach for a glass of water. Don't. "That just spreads the heat around," says Shawn Theriot, a quality-assurance manager and food technologist for McIlhenny Company, the maker of Tabasco Sauce. Instead, "eat a lot of bread or rice," says Chuck Subra, chef at LaCôte Brasserie, in New Orleans, home of notoriously spicy Cajun food. Or try dairy products, like milk, sour cream, ice cream, yogurt, butter, or cheese—the softer the better, says Theriot.

### **Thaw Meat**

Whatever you do, don't zap it in the microwave, says Evan Lobel, owner of Lobel's butcher shop, in New York City. "It cooks the meat from the inside out, which removes moisture, retains the freezer aftertaste, and leaves your meat gritty." Instead, he suggests, wrap your cuts in small, resealable packages before you freeze them—one steak, two lamb chops. Then, when dinner is just a couple of hours away and you haven't had time to thaw the main course in the refrigerator, soak it (bag and all) in cold water for about two hours. "Warm water is bad," Lobel warns, "because the outside of the meat gets too warm and the inside won't thaw"—not to mention that food-borne illnesses can breed that way.



### **Feed and Water Plants**

Cut your watering time by as much as half by adding Osmocote (\$12.75 for 3 pounds, [growersupply.com](http://growersupply.com)) and Soil Moist (\$15 for 1 pound, [acehotline.com](http://acehotline.com)) to the soil when you pot your plants, says Amanda Welch, owner of Gardenista, a gardening company based in Trevilians, Virginia. Osmocote, a slow-release fertilizer, feeds plants with each watering, while Soil Moist, a water-retaining polymer, maintains moisture. Both products are available at garden centers. As a final touch, Welch suggests you pick up some hardwood mulch at the garden center and top your pots with it. It will hold in moisture and finish the look, she says.

### **Get to Know Someone**

The quickest way to foster a bond with someone new is to keep your mouth shut, says Joan Lloyd, a Milwaukee consultant who teaches clients how to interview prospective employees. "Reflective listening- where you summarize what they say- is also very important," adds Denise Winston, a professional matchmaker in New York City. A quick Internet search on your new friend will help you steer the conversation toward his areas of interest, says Adele Testani, cofounder of the speed-dating agency HurryDate.



John

Email John: [johnsblog@teshmedia.com](mailto:johnsblog@teshmedia.com)

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