



# Simply Spring

The Nurturing Place Newsletter

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## Treat Yourself

Your skin care product could be dangerous to your health. Some scientists estimate that as much as 60% of what we apply on our skin winds up in our bloodstream. You deserve to use natural, live, unadulterated ingredients on your skin. Go to [www.thenurturingplace.com](http://www.thenurturingplace.com) to find the products right for you—inside and out.

## Home

With winter drear behind us, we can open the doors, turn our faces to the sun, simplify and renew our homes, our bodies and souls. Notice that as the clutter rises, so does the stress level. Can't find your keys? Stress. Too many clothes crammed into the closet? Stress. Can't stop glancing at the pile of papers and bills on the desk? Stress. Mary Ellen Pinkham said that spring cleaning is "renewal for your home and domestic therapy for your spirit."

Dr. Lark at <http://www.drlark.com> suggests starting with the kitchen, since this is the gathering place for many families. Clear the table of clutter and replace with tablecloths and candles. As for the rest of the house, put away all things that mean winter and won't be used for a while: holiday décor, snow gear and extra blankets.

When embarking on a cleaning spree, start with two empty bags in hand, as big or as small as you can handle, and tell yourself that the job isn't done until you've filled the bags completely, one with trash and one with items that can be donated or given away.

Clothing clutter is probably one of the most challenging. "What if I need it someday?" "It was such a bargain!" Next time you're tempted to spend an afternoon at TJ Maxx, go shopping in your own closet instead. Moving from left to right, top to bottom, try on every piece of clothing you haven't worn in the last three months.

"The keepers must fit, be in style and not need major alterations or repairs," says Baron, founder of Streamliners Inc., an organizing company in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania. Getting rid of clothing you've spent money on will be easier if you give it to a worthy organization (a battered women's shelter, a teen mom's home or a career integration center for women returning to work). Tell yourself you're shopping for yourself and a friend. Add more graciousness to your giving by cleaning, ironing and repairing any items you don't keep for yourself.



## Food

### Soy Safety

Talk to your doctor about the safety of eating large amounts of soy if you:

- have or have had breast cancer
- are at very high risk for breast cancer
- have a personal or family history of kidney stones
- are pregnant or nursing

Versatile and healthy, soy has been the object of recent scientific debate because of the large concentrations of plant chemicals called isoflavones, which fall into the phytoestrogen category. Isoflavones can have the same affect as estrogens in women's bodies. The debate seems to be: "Do phytoestrogens protect women from tumors because they lower estrogen levels in women or do they actually stimulate the growth of estrogen-dependent tumors in certain cases.?" While the jury is still out for some life stages and certain health risks, the benefits of soy most often outweigh any risk.

Soy is a complete plant protein, so it has all the amino acids your body needs. But unlike animal proteins, it has no saturated fat or cholesterol. Many soy products, like tofu and soy milk, are fortified with calcium and vitamin D. As with any food, your best bet is to eat soy in moderation with a varied diet. Consuming between 30 and 40 milligrams a day is the recommendation for "moderation in all things". Keep in mind that soy specialty products like protein drink mixes and meal replacement bars may be pumped up with extra isoflavones. So read the labels. Try one variation of soy at a time until you go back for seconds. The soy section at your grocer may be a bit daunting, though. Here's a guide to different types of soy and how to use it

*Edamame*, found in the freezer section, are the immature seeds of the soy plant. Microwave edamame, shelled or not, for 2 minutes. Eat like popcorn. ½ cup contains 8 grams of protein.

*Miso*: Salty paste made from fermented soybeans, for flavoring in soups, dressings, and sauces.

*Soy nuts*: High-protein, peanut-like snack. Blend with soybean oil to make soy butter to go with jelly on sandwiches.

*Tempeh*: Cooked soybeans shaped into a loaf. Great meat substitute. ½ block of this packs 21 grams of protein.

*Tofu*: Coagulated soy milk. Often comes in white bricks, but can be soft as well for yogurts and dressings. Either treat the hard tofu like a piece of meat, grilling it on the stovetop or baking it in the oven, or fool your family with one of the fake meat items like "hamburger" or "chicken" patties. One Boca burger contains 13 grams of protein.



## Soul Soothing

Soothe your soul with my favorite series of poetry books by Roger Housden. The books are titled:

- *Ten Poems to Change Your Life*
- *Ten Poems to Set you Free*
- *Ten Poems to Open Your Heart*

Each compilation contains poetry from ten inspiring poets followed by thoughtful commentary from Housden. Any one of the poems, indeed, any one of Housden's reflections, can open, gladden or pierce your heart. So put down your textbook, your professional journal or even that juicy novel and experience the "soul food" of great poetry.

## Finances

Spring clean your wallet by maximizing your money potential. Joining a warehouse club like *Costco* or *Sam's Club* can be 20 to 50 percent cheaper for bulk items. But leave the produce to your local grocer which will have better deals in this area.

Go to [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov) and click on "Your Home." This site will ask you several questions about your home and assess whether you are using energy as efficiently as possible. If not, it will provide tips for renovations.

If you have a gym membership, estimate the number of visits you made to the gym this past year. Divide that by your annual membership cost and find out if it would be cheaper to go on a pay-per-use basis.

## Self

Think of all the lists and E-mails you scribble each day. Sure, these tasks have direct motivations--so you don't forget what to buy at the store and you remember to tell Aunt Rose what to bring to Thursday's potluck. But writing things down also helps us categorize, unload, and connect. Lack of time and fear of "being read" are common reasons people give for not keeping a journal. But really, a journal doesn't have to be covered in locks and lace, tempting anyone that comes upon it to pry it open and devour its contents. A journal can be as simple as a mini spiral-bound notebook that can fit into a purse. And there are no rights or wrongs regarding what to put in it. Contents can range anywhere from feelings to an exercise log to goal lists.

Research shows that journaling helps us feel better--mentally and physically. Students who wrote about painful events for 20 minutes, four days in a row, boosted their immune function and reduced their number of doctor visits. Writing about negative emotions defuses their power to harm and helps us learn to cope better in the future, says Joshua Smyth of North Dakota State University.

**Make a *Worry Book*.** Draw a line down the page and on one side, put your worries. On the other, write what you have done or can do to solve the problems that are causing these worries.

**Make a *Gratitude Book*.** Simply write down a few things per day for which you are grateful.

--Journaling ideas excerpted from *Real Simple* magazine.