

Everyday Cheapskate: Color-code your household move

by *Mary_Hunt*

I have so much admiration for families who are required to move often and who do it with such ease. Harold and I have moved only three times since we were married, in 1970. Just in case we ever move again, you can be sure I'll keep today's first great reader tip handy.

MOVING BOX LABELS. When you are preparing to move and packing your boxes, buy a pack of colored permanent markers. Assign one marker color to each room, and label the boxes with the appropriate marker. This makes unloading the truck into the proper rooms a breeze! -- Elaine G., North Carolina

SOFTENING BUTTER. Instead of using the microwave to soften butter (and running the risk of liquefying it), I just grate the butter using my favorite hand grater. I don't have to worry about remembering to get butter out ahead of time. -- Avery D., e-mail

HERB FRAGRANCE. Sometimes the fresh basil plants growing in my garden and on the deck produce more basil than I can use in recipes. I found that dropping a few freshly cut sprigs into the garbage can or grinding up a bit in the garbage disposer creates the fresh, clean scent of herbs. You also can use mint, rosemary or any other herb you have in abundance. -- Mary J., e-mail

SMOKE MARKS. I had smoke markings on the exhaust hood above my stove. The only stuff I could find to take off the so-called smoke damage was a bottle of hand sanitizer. I rubbed on some gel and wiped it away, and the smoke marks were gone. -- Tiffany, British Columbia

HOMEMADE LUNCHES. My kids think that prepackaged Oscar Mayer Lunchables are cool, but I don't buy them because they are too expensive and have too many preservatives. My daughter now takes our homemade pizza version to school. In little half-cup containers, we pack pizza sauce, water crackers and shredded mozzarella. I stick in a small butter spoon, and she's all set. -- Jennifer H., e-mail

LAUNDRY FIX. If you forget clothes in the washing machine for so long that they have a funky odor, run the wash cycle again. This time, add some white vinegar to the machine, along with your detergent. It will help take the smell out of the clothes and works great if you don't like to use chlorine bleach. -- Desiree, New York

ORGANIZED SPICES. To keep from overlooking spices in my pantry and accidentally buying ones I don't need, I keep all spices in alphabetical order. I always know if I need to buy more of a certain spice. -- Mary O., Texas

CUTTING FRUIT. I cut large fruits and vegetables -- such as pineapples, melons and winter squash -- on an

old jellyroll pan (a sheet pan with sides). It catches the juice and seeds and is easy to clean up afterward, preventing a mess on my kitchen counter. -- Victoria F., Illinois

Would you like to send a tip to Mary? You can e-mail her at mary@everydaycheapskate.com, or write to Everyday Cheapskate, P.O. Box 2135, Paramount, CA 90723. Mary Hunt is the founder of DebtProofLiving.com and author of 17 books, including "Debt-Proof Living" and "Tiptionary 2."

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