

**"Your Neighborhood Appliance Specialists"**



## Are you Addicted to the Internet?

The average Internet user is online for 68 hours a month, which works out to about 2 1/4 hours per day. But what about those who spend 38 hours a week or more online?

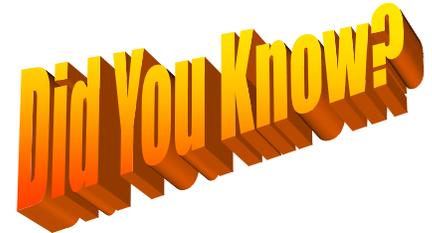
The draw of the Internet isn't just the massive amounts of information available at the click of a mouse, but also the interactions with people. Those who spend the most time on the Net are talking to others in chat rooms and on forums, playing Multiplayer Online Dungeons (MODs) and Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) like World of Warcraft (WoW) -- investing inordinate amounts of time in virtual worlds.

All of the excess time spent online can lead to exhaustion and even Internet dependency. It's estimated that about 5-10 % of Internet users exhibit addiction-like behavior related to the Net, according to a study by Dr. Kimberly Young, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, Bradford. This is on par with addictions to alcohol and gambling. Internet dependents exhibit symptoms much like other addictions such as depression, nervousness and withdrawal from everyday activities according to Dr. Young's findings.

Here are some suggestions to maintain a good balance between online and offline time.

- Schedule your personal and your work Internet use. Make sure you separate the two, so you're aware of how much you're using the Internet for entertainment and surfing.
- Set a daily goal for your personal Internet use. Mark off the hours as you use them up -- and if you go over, turn off the computer.

FOR MORE SUGGESTIONS...TURN TO PAGE 3!



- The Declaration of Independence was written on hemp (marijuana) paper.
- The dot over the letter i is called a 'tittle'.
- Susan Lucci is the daughter of Phyllis Diller.
- 40% of McDonalds' profits come from the sales of Happy Meals.
- 315 entries in Webster's 1996 Dictionary were misspelled
- Ketchup was sold in the 1830s as medicine.
- Warren Beatty and Shirley MacLaine are siblings.
- Because metal was scarce, the Oscars given out during World War II were made of wood.
- A tiny amount of liquor on a scorpion will make it instantly go mad and sting itself to death.
- Leonardo DaVinci invented scissors. Also, it took him 10 years to paint Mona Lisa's lips.
- There are no clocks in Las Vegas gambling casinos.

**SAVE SOME  
BUCKS AT  
THE TANK!**

Before you fill up your tank, check the following websites that may save you some money on gasoline:



[www.gasbuddy.com](http://www.gasbuddy.com)  
[www.gaspricewatch.com](http://www.gaspricewatch.com)  
[www.fuelcostcalculator.com](http://www.fuelcostcalculator.com)  
[www.altfuelprices.com](http://www.altfuelprices.com)



## All About ... Laundry Chores (Do your Kids Help?)



**DRINK  
UP!**

You've heard about them. The 7-year-old that does all the laundry, from the sorting to the folding, while some moms struggle to get their 17-year-old to pour the correct amount of detergent in the washer.

"Expecting your child to jump in and take over laundry when he's a teenager will be much more difficult if he's never been expected to help in the past," said Emily Brown, child development consultant.

Here are some general laundry chores with Brown's opinion on when most children can handle the various aspects. We can't promise your baby will be able to wash their own burp cloths (bummer), but your 6-year-old may be capable of more than you think.

### **SORTING...**

According to Brown, tykes as young as 18-months-old begin to recognize colors. Sorting the laundry and pointing out the different colors reinforces their knowledge of colors. Between the ages of 3 and 4, grouping items together becomes a known concept and children can start matching pairs of socks together, sorting out all the washcloths from the larger towels, or even sorting out mommy's clothes from their own. A 4-year-old can also help in categorizing dark colors, lights and whites.

### **LOADING...**

Around their second birthday, children's motor skills will kick-start. "As a child nears 24 months, he or she can help pour or squirt the detergent into the washer," says Brown, "Most kids find this to be very fun!" Around ages 3 and 4, many kids can take clothes and put them in a frontloading washer. Brown says this is a good time for parents to cultivate an environment of teamwork since kids this age have a strong desire to cooperate with adults.

### **FOLDING...**

Between the ages of 3 and 7, children can begin to help put their clean laundry away. A neat and orderly closet can help a child determine what goes where. "Also at this age, kids can follow simple directions, such as go upstairs and get the empty hangers for me," said Brown who adds the hangers should be within the child's reach. After your son or daughter reaches the ripe old age of 7, independence in tasks can be expected, especially if the child has "helped" all along through the above mentioned skills.

If the child has never really helped out, expecting them to do things such as sort or put away clothes is not a realistic goal. "They will need to be shown what the expectations are when given the instructions 'put these away'," said Brown. This is when having the child help alongside you from a young age starts paying off. By the time your little one reaches the tween and teen years, he or she should see the value of teamwork and giving them a little incentive to help with the laundry could boost their motivation.

**We've all heard the claim: Having a glass or two of water before meals can help you eat less. Is that just conventional wisdom or scientific fact? You decide.**

Researchers at Virginia Tech conducted a study in which 48 adults aged 55-75 were divided into two groups. One group drank two cups of water before each meal and the other group drank nothing.

All participants ate similar, low-calorie diets. After 12-weeks, the water drinkers had lost about 15.5 pounds compared to 11 pounds for the non-water drinkers. This suggests the simple strategy works because dieters feel fuller and thus eat less food.

**WARNING:** It is possible to drink too much water, resulting in a rare but serious condition called water intoxication. Medical suggestions are for about 9 cups of beverage fluid per day for women and otherwise healthy men drink about 13 cups. Since some medical conditions may require restricted water intake, consult your doctor about the amount you should be drinking each day.

***Life is too short for negative drama and petty things. So... laugh insanely, love truly and forgive quickly!***

## GEO QUIZ CORNER



**Q.** Which hemisphere is the coolest; Northern or Southern? And why?

**A.** The Southern Hemisphere is coolest with an average temperature of 56° F compared with the Northern Hemisphere average of 59°F.

In addition to being cooler, the Southern Hemisphere also has less temperature fluctuations with warmer winters and cooler summers. A major reason is land versus ocean in each hemisphere. Land heats and cools faster than water and the Northern Hemisphere has 2/3 of the world's land while 80% of the Southern Hemisphere is ocean water.

Check out a globe! Cool!

## Spring will Be Back! Be Prepared!



Since you just pulled up your garden or took your last trip to the local farmer's market, it is hard to believe that spring will be here again before you know it. Don't be caught off guard! Use these winter months to get prepared for next year.

### *Save those Ashes!*

If you burn wood logs (or you have a neighbor that does), don't forget the gardening advantages of scattering cool ashes over your garden area or compost pile (don't overdue it!). The ashes will add potassium, lime and other nutrients, but can also raise your soil's pH so scatter and sprinkle wisely.

Try a small scoop on each new 2 to 3-inch layer of compost or sprinkle lightly across your garden area.

### *January is National Mail Order Gardening Month*

According to a recent issue of *This Old House* magazine, planting time is still a few months away but some garden favorites like heirloom tomatoes and other specialized and unique seeds are grown in limited supplies and sell out fast.

If you have your heart set on a certain variety, order the seeds now – they'll be at your doorstep when the weather is right for planting.

## More Suggestions on How to Curb your OnLine Addictions...

(Continued from page 1)...

- Find real-life hobbies and activities you enjoy away from the computer. If you're involved in art, sports, music or social activities, you're less likely to spend lots of time on the Internet.
- Take frequent breaks to rest your eyes, move around and stretch. Sitting for long, uninterrupted periods of time in front of a computer hurts your eyes, arms and back.
- Evaluate how your Internet use is fitting in with your life. If you find it's interfering with meals, relationships, your job or school work, it's time to pull in the reins and get offline.
- If you find it difficult to regulate your time on the Internet by yourself, find a friend or trusted counselor to hold you accountable. You can buy a device called a *SnoopStick*, which allows the holder to see what you're doing on your computer at any time. There is also software that can limit your time and activities on your computer.



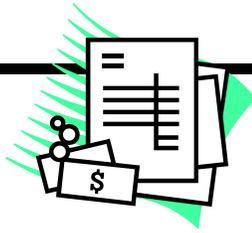
Seek help if you find that you're spending excessive amounts of time online, feel nervous or anxious when you're not online, see your relationships suffer, or if your Internet use is interfering with work, school or everyday life.

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## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT... Non-Financial Identity Theft

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While financial identity theft gets the most media attention, identity thieves exploit your personal information in other ways.



Medical identity thieves use your identity and insurance information to get medical care. Medical identity theft is particularly dangerous because there is a risk of inaccurate medical information entering your medical files, resulting in inappropriate medical treatment.

You can catch medical identity theft in its early stages by paying close attention to the 'explanation of benefits' forms or 'EOBs' sent to you by your insurance company. Better yet, register on your insurance company's website so you can monitor insurance claims online.

Another type of identity theft is criminal identity theft, in which a criminal gives law enforcement your personal information and you get saddled with a criminal record. This is a more difficult type of identity theft to track and remedy, though some states now issue "passports" that identity-theft victims can present to law enforcement if detained.

*WISHING YOU AND YOURS A SAFE AND  
HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!*

## Weather Forecasting



...Getting  
Worse?

Dr. Jack Hayes, the head meteorologist with the National Weather Service says forecasters aren't doing too badly and that we have short memories!

He says that in 1970, we had one and 2-day forecasts. Today, 4-day forecasts are as good as the old, 2-day ones. Ten years ago, we could give six minutes of warning before a tornado. Now, we average 13 minutes. The breakthrough occurred in part when we understood the *el nino* and *la nina* weather patterns. When we're in a strong *el nino* or *la nina*, our extended forecasts are much more accurate.

With Mother Nature seemingly bringing us more severe weather with often catastrophic results, let's give the weatherman a break if he misses an April shower.