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Get Slimmer, Richer, Smarter: 40 Shortcuts

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You deserve all the gratification you can handle—and we're not just talking about sex. Steal these shortcuts to a better body, bigger paycheck, sexier style, and more. And remember, good things come to those

who wait, but great things come to those who act now.

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FAST TRICKS FOR SAVING \$\$\$

Want a better deal on a car, flea-market antique, or big-ticket clothing item? Follow these rules of negotiating:

MAKE AN AGGRESSIVELY LOW FIRST OFFER.

If you're willing to pay \$500 for an antique bureau with a \$650 price tag, begin by offering 70 percent of your real limit, or \$350. As negotiations continue, you'll have room to work your way up to your true acceptable price, rather than working your way down to it.

TAPER YOUR CONCESSIONS.

Your first "give" should be the biggest one you make (when he says \$350 is too low, offer \$425). Then follow up with increasingly smaller, reluctant concessions (if you say \$425 and he comes back with \$575, counter with \$460). The vendor will interpret your mini moves as a sign he's squeezed every possible cent out of you.

ASK FOR A LAST-MINUTE FREEBIE.

Just as you arrive at a price you both agree on, act hesitant and uncomfortable with the sale—then request something extra. ("If you throw in that jewelry box, we have a deal.") Last-minute freebie requests (speaker cables for a new stereo, an upgraded sound system in a car) work because the other person is eager to close the deal. - Jim Thomas, author of *Negotiate to Win*.

2 INSTANT CLOSET ORGANIZERS

1. GO WITH YOUR GUT.

Find the pieces in your wardrobe that you never wear, and try each one on. If it no longer fits or you don't love it, bite the bullet and donate it to the Salvation Army. Don't overthink: If your first impulse is to ditch, do it. "If you mull it over, you'll find endless justifications for holding on to the jeans you wore in college," says stylist Seneca Moss, who has dressed Molly Sims and Christina Applegate.

2. GET THE RATIO RIGHT.

"You need seven tops to every one bottom," says fashion consultant Linda Cohen. Keep only pants and skirts that fit perfectly. You can wear them repeatedly with different tops. Do hang on to more shirts and sweaters. "People notice them more, so you don't want to repeat two days in a row," says Cohen.

GET GORGEOUS OVERNIGHT

Eat these foods for immediate results

1. Spinach, broccoli, and other dark green veggies are rich in minerals and vitamin A—your antidote to dry skin and wrinkles. "One serving daily will make you gorgeous by the weekend," says Karin U. Kanzler, a naturopath and aesthetician at L.A.'s Allure Pilates Spa."

2. Olive oil, flaxseed oil, and fatty fish like salmon—all "healthy fats"—make your skin supple and glowing, says celeb facialist Sonya Dakar.

3. Drinking fresh-squeezed vegetable juice with lemon juice and cayenne pepper gives an instant rosy-cheek effect. "Vegetable juice boosts energy and the cayenne increases circulation for a healthy glow," says certified clinical nutritionist Natalia Rose.

10-MINUTE WAY TO UNEARTH YOUR PERFECT STYLE

Answer this: Which clothes do you feel most confident in? Pull them out of your closet. Then, scour old photos and pick ones in which you look great. Pull those outfits out, too. Together, these are the clothes that both [flatter your body](#) and just feel like you. Make these cuts and colors the cornerstones of your style, and shop for items that complement these key pieces. - Linda Cohen, fashion consultant

6-SECOND RULES FOR LOOKING 5 POUNDS SKINNIER

- Wear V-necks, long necklaces, low-slung belts: anything that draws the eye up and down the body. Avoid boatnecks, chokers, tightly cinched belts, and ankle-strap shoes: These create horizontal lines, which make you appear squat. It's similar to the idea that pinstriped pants make you look longer and sailor-striped tops make you look wider, says Elycia Rubin, co-author of *Frumpty to Foxy in 15 Minutes Flat*.
- Stick with matte fabrics like cotton and wool. Skip satin and other light-reflecting materials, which enhance your body size.
- Pair flesh-tone heels with all [skirts](#). Heels always make you look slimmer; a pair that matches your skin tone makes legs look like they go on for miles.
- Wear a curvy jacket. A jacket that nips in at the waist creates an hourglass figure without hugging too tightly, says Rubin. Layer over a cami that falls a few inches below it for a lean look.
- Balance full with fitted. Pairing a flowing top with loose fitting pants only makes you look heavier. Better to match a big top with narrow bottoms or a body-hugging shirt with something roomier down below.

QUICKEST TRICK TO UPGRADE YOUR LIFE

Instead of a free economy-class ticket, use your frequent-flier miles to upgrade to first class. You'll actually get a much better deal. "A typical frequent-flier mile is worth one or two cents, but if you use it to upgrade, it's worth more like eight or nine cents," says Liz Pulliam Weston, MSN money columnist and author of *Deal with Your Debt*. Plus, you'll arrive at your destination feeling like an A-lister!

SHORTCUTS TO A CITY-CHIC SPREAD

It doesn't take tons of cash or work. Three ways to give your home a fresh look in a weekend:

BUY NEW LAMPS

"Changing the lighting is the least expensive way to transform the look of a room," says Ruthie Sommers, interior designer and owner of L.A. shop Chapman Radcliff Home. You can also put existing lights on dimmers and add a few extra lamps to the room.

PAINT

A new hue on the walls makes a room look like an entirely different place. Or, paint just the ceiling (a pale color works well) or the moldings. "For moldings, choose a color two shades darker than the color of the walls in a semigloss finish for an elegant effect," says Sommers.

ADD MIRRORS

"If a room is dark, add mirrors, and place them opposite a window to reflect more natural light," says Sommers. (Reflective surfaces also create the illusion of more space.) Consider having a mirrored top made for your coffee table—it catches and disperses light in a dramatic way.

FASTEST FIX FOR TIRED SKIN

Brew a pot of chamomile tea. Squeeze the juice of two lemons into the pot and add two teaspoons of honey. Drink throughout the day. "Chamomile is soothing. It calms your system and reduces skin inflammation brought on by a late night out," says Kanzler.

INCREASE YOUR ONLINE DATING ACTION-NOW

CHOOSE YOUR SCREEN NAME CAREFULLY

"Think about how it will be perceived by men," says psychologist Lillian Glass, who works with Match.com. "Something like 'little princess' might sound cute to you but will likely be a turnoff to a lot of men."

POST A NATURAL LOOKING PHOTO

"Research finds that a super-posed, 'perfect' picture is less appealing than a snapshot of you laughing or kicking back in a casual setting," says Glass. "Natural shots indicate you don't take yourself too seriously."

BRAG INDIRECTLY

Crediting friends is a great way to broadcast your best qualities without sounding egotistical. "Instead of writing 'I'm friendly and outgoing,' say 'My friends call me a social butterfly,'" says Glass. "You get the message across in a way that sounds modest."

BE SPECIFIC

"If you're only interested in dog lovers, say so!" says Glass. You'll help guys who share your passions find you more quickly—and that sort of efficiency is one reason you're doing online dating in the first place.

BODY LANGUAGE THAT GETS YOU HIRED IN A MINUTE

When it comes to interview situations, how you present yourself to your potential new boss reveals as much about you as what you say. For starters: "Don't just plunk yourself down in a chair—wait for me to invite you to sit down," says Apprentice star Carolyn Kepcher, author of *Carolyn 101: Business Lessons From The Apprentice's Straight Shooter*. "And don't lean too far back in the chair and cross your legs as if we're old friends. We're not. And I don't want to hire a slouch." Sit up straight in your seat and lean slightly forward to express your enthusiasm.

TODAY, TAKE YOUR FIRST STEP TO GET OUT OF DEBT

"Start by prioritizing," says Pulliam Weston. "Devote any spare cash you have to paying off your [high cost] credit-card

balances. Don't worry yet about other debt, like car loans or student loans-that type of debt is cheap, so make those payments as minimal as possible to focus on the credit cards." If you can barely make the minimum payments or are borrowing from one credit card to pay off another, speak with a nonprofit credit-counseling agency (to find a reputable one, visit the National Foundation for Credit Counseling at www.nfcc.org).

HOW TO GET MORE MONEY NOW

1. Before a job interview, think of your dream salary and practice saying that number out loud in front of a mirror. "If you rehearse asking for what you want, there's less chance you'll chicken out and settle for something lower," says Thomas.
2. During the interview, delay stating your salary number. "You want to dazzle them before you talk compensation," says Thomas. If the interviewer tries to pin you down, say, "Why don't we hold off on talking about that until you decide if I'm right for the job?"
3. Make the interviewer give a number first. "Knowing their suggested salary gives you negotiating power. Otherwise, you risk your number being lower than what they had in mind," says Thomas. Once your interviewer names a number, resist the urge to accept. Always ask for more-but in a friendly manner to show you want to reach an agreement.
4. After you arrive at a salary that sounds good to you, use a technique called "nibbling" to close the deal. "This is when you tell them, 'If you throw in an extra week of vacation [or tuition reimbursement, flex time, or other perks], I think we'll have a deal.' By that point, the other side is so eager to close, they're almost guaranteed to give you the little extra," says Thomas.
5. Ask about the possibility of a "signing bonus." Employers might be able to give you money up front more easily than they can raise your salary, because bonus money often comes out of a company's recruiting budget, which is separate from its compensation budget.

3 EASY STEPS TO CHANGE YOUR IMAGE

1. CHANGE YOUR SCENT

"People judge your inner essence based on your outer scent," says Alan Hirsch, M.D., neurological director of the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago. Some of Dr. Hirsch's findings: When women wear spicy, floral perfume, men perceive them as being up to 12 pounds thinner. Grapefruit scents can make women seem six years younger. Lavender aromas have been shown to cause sexual arousal in men.

2. CHANGE YOUR VOICE

People interpret high-pitched or breathy tones as immature or unpolished. To sound more self-assured, "pretend there's a dime holding your back teeth apart," says Glass. "This lets more air into your jaw and gives your voice extra resonance, which will make your words flow better and sound more attractive."

3. CHANGE YOUR PERSONAL STATIONERY

E-mail has done away with many communication formalities. For this reason, sending old-fashioned thank you notes on upscale stationery will set you apart from the crowd-and the competition. "A handwritten note on nice stationery is a sign of regard for yourself and the person you're writing to," says Arlyn Imberman, a graphologist and executive coach. Engraving your full name ("Kristin Jane Smith") on the cards makes you seem proper, a nickname ("Kristy") is more casual, and a monogram ("KJS") conveys an elegant image. Note-card color is also important, says Los Angeles color therapist and interior designer Carol Smith.

