how bad is it...
Straight answers to scratch-your-head questions.

...to use moisturizer with SPF at night?

“Although sunscreen is vital during the day, at night it acts as a barrier to nourishing your skin while you sleep,” says Annie Chiu, M.D., a dermatologist and owner of The Derm Institute in Los Angeles. The ingredients in sunscreen can prevent your skin from soaking up the nutrients it needs from moisturizer, such as anti-aging or blemish-control ingredients, explains Dr. Chiu. Sun-blocking additives can also smear on your pillowcase, potentially causing clogged pores and future breakouts. While it’s convenient to use the same lotion day and night, it’s better to pick one with at least SPF 30 during the day and an SPF-free one for bedtime.

pretty bad!

...to cut your grass really short?

“It’s the single worst thing you can do to your lawn,” says Michigan State University Department of Plant, Soil, and Microbial Sciences professor John “Trey” Rogers, Ph.D. A well-manicured lawn can be a point of pride for a homeowner, but overdoing it on the mowing—scalping, as it’s called in the lawn biz—can kill your grass and allow weeds to flourish. A quick science tutorial: Grass grows via photosynthesis, and very short blades don’t soak up as much sun. Meanwhile, short grass exposes sun-hungry weeds to the rays, causing “stress on the grass, weed growth, and the need for more watering and fertilizing,” Rogers says. While ideal lengths vary by species of grass, three inches is a good rule of (green) thumb. But don’t feel the need to break out a ruler. To avoid scalping the lawn, use your mower’s highest cutting setting at least once a week.

really bad!

...to let your cat play with a ball of yarn?

Kitty batting at a ball of yarn seems like a classic and harmless activity. But it’s actually highly dangerous and potentially fatal, warns Vicki Stevens, a senior marketing communications manager at The Humane Society of the United States. “If the cat swallows a piece of yarn, she can keep swallowing more, and it can bunch up in the intestines,” Stevens says. And if that happens, you can’t just yank it out. Pulling the string out of, ahem, either end can perforate the cat’s intestine. A veterinarian would most likely recommend taking a cat who had ingested string to an emergency clinic. So skip yarn, ribbon, and string in favor of Humane Society suggestions like Ping-Pong balls and plastic shower rings, in addition to toys made specifically for cats. But first remove small decorations like ribbons, feathers, and googly eyes, which your cat could chew off and swallow.

super bad!
...to go for a run without bringing ID?

Thinking about worst-case scenarios can be a downer, but when it comes to solo workouts, it’s best to be prepared. “Carrying your ID while you’re out running, walking, or hiking is simply the responsible thing to do,” says Jennifer Cassetta, a fitness and self-defense expert. True, having your phone can go far if you need to call for help, but if you’re unconscious and have a password lock on your phone, it won’t help someone who’s trying to identify you. Your ID is also essential because if you need to pay for a cab or buy a bottle of water but have no money, leaving your ID as collateral is less risky than leaving your phone. Cassetta recommends using a running belt to carry your driver’s license and a small amount of cash. And try to always tell a friend or family member your plans, including your expected return time.

**super bad!**

...to heat water for tea in the microwave instead of in a kettle?

Whether you use a kettle or the mug-in-the-microwave method is purely a matter of preference. The key is “to get the water hot enough so you can steep the tea to a point where you like the flavor,” says Cathy Kapica, Ph.D., the CEO of health consultancy The Awegrin Institute. Both the stove top and the microwave can heat the water enough to do so; what differs is how quickly they work. A kettle takes longer because much of the heat it creates evaporates. A microwave heats water faster, but it might take some trial and error to find the perfect nuke time (about one to two minutes, depending on your microwave’s wattage) to get the water to your desired temp. Just make sure to use a mug that’s microwave-safe if you go that route.

**not bad at all!**

...to clean windows with newspaper?

Newspapers of yore were designed to absorb heavy ink, so they also easily retained water, making them a cheap and ubiquitous cleaning tool for thrifty homemakers starting in the 1800s and continuing through the 20th century. But these days ink is lighter, so the paper stock of today’s front page isn’t as thick. This makes it less absorbent and more likely to fall apart when wet. “You can still clean with newspaper and it won’t hurt anything, but there are far better options,” says Debra Johnson, a training manager for the cleaning service Merry Maids. Her go-to combo is a microfiber cloth and glass cleaner, but in a pinch, she suggests dampening coffee filters and using them with glass cleaner: “They do a great job—they’re even better than paper towels because they don’t leave as much lint or streaking.”

**not bad at all!**

...to unfriend a friend on Facebook?

Consider your “friendship” before ending it on social media. Is your pal someone you haven’t seen since high school or a friend of a friend you barely know? Go ahead and delete. “We spend too much time worrying when this distant acquaintance probably won’t notice or care,” says Diane Gottsman, author of *Modern Etiquette for a Better Life*. But when your Facebook pal is a true friend or even a family member, it’s trickier. If all’s well in real life but you can’t stand their opinions or annoying posts, Gottsman suggests hiding them from your newsfeed. Do the same if you’re in an actual spat that’s making you reconsider your friendship. In the case of someone close who insists on tagging you in posts and photos or making inappropriate comments on your page, Gottsman advises asking them in person to stop. If that doesn’t work, go ahead and delete. “You can unfriend anyone; that’s your prerogative,” she says.

**pretty bad!**

...to go for a run without bringing ID?

Thinking about worst-case scenarios can be a downer, but when it comes to solo workouts, it’s best to be prepared. “Carrying your ID while you’re out running, walking, or hiking is simply the responsible thing to do,” says Jennifer Cassetta, a fitness and self-defense expert. True, having your phone can go far if you need to call for help, but if you’re unconscious and have a password lock on your phone, it won’t help someone who’s trying to identify you. Your ID is also essential because if you need to pay for a cab or buy a bottle of water but have no money, leaving your ID as collateral is less risky than leaving your phone. Cassetta recommends using a running belt to carry your driver’s license and a small amount of cash. And try to always tell a friend or family member your plans, including your expected return time.

**super bad!**

...to heat water for tea in the microwave instead of in a kettle?

Whether you use a kettle or the mug-in-the-microwave method is purely a matter of preference. The key is “to get the water hot enough so you can steep the tea to a point where you like the flavor,” says Cathy Kapica, Ph.D., the CEO of health consultancy The Awegrin Institute. Both the stove top and the microwave can heat the water enough to do so; what differs is how quickly they work. A kettle takes longer because much of the heat it creates evaporates. A microwave heats water faster, but it might take some trial and error to find the perfect nuke time (about one to two minutes, depending on your microwave’s wattage) to get the water to your desired temp. Just make sure to use a mug that’s microwave-safe if you go that route.

**not bad at all!**

...to clean windows with newspaper?

Newspapers of yore were designed to absorb heavy ink, so they also easily retained water, making them a cheap and ubiquitous cleaning tool for thrifty homemakers starting in the 1800s and continuing through the 20th century. But these days ink is lighter, so the paper stock of today’s front page isn’t as thick. This makes it less absorbent and more likely to fall apart when wet. “You can still clean with newspaper and it won’t hurt anything, but there are far better options,” says Debra Johnson, a training manager for the cleaning service Merry Maids. Her go-to combo is a microfiber cloth and glass cleaner, but in a pinch, she suggests dampening coffee filters and using them with glass cleaner: “They do a great job—they’re even better than paper towels because they don’t leave as much lint or streaking.”

**not bad at all!**

...to unfriend a friend on Facebook?

Consider your “friendship” before ending it on social media. Is your pal someone you haven’t seen since high school or a friend of a friend you barely know? Go ahead and delete. “We spend too much time worrying when this distant acquaintance probably won’t notice or care,” says Diane Gottsman, author of *Modern Etiquette for a Better Life*. But when your Facebook pal is a true friend or even a family member, it’s trickier. If all’s well in real life but you can’t stand their opinions or annoying posts, Gottsman suggests hiding them from your newsfeed. Do the same if you’re in an actual spat that’s making you reconsider your friendship. In the case of someone close who insists on tagging you in posts and photos or making inappropriate comments on your page, Gottsman advises asking them in person to stop. If that doesn’t work, go ahead and delete. “You can unfriend anyone; that’s your prerogative,” she says.

**pretty bad!**