

XCentric Ideas

**Think
outside
the box!**

Ideas from the Internet : www.realsimple.com
Front page photo my own

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Vanity Tray

Repurpose an old frame for a vanity tray that's pretty as a picture. Place a piece of colored paper or fabric inside as a finishing touch.



Sewing Kit

Tuck a few needles, pins and thread into a matchbox for an instant sewing kit.



Photo in a Vase

(Note: This idea works only with straight-sided vases, not ones that taper.)

Measure the inside height of the vase, wrap a string around it to determine the circumference. This will tell you the size of the piece of paper you'll need.

Cut the paper a bit longer than the string so there's overlap, roll it into a tube, slide it into the vase to confirm that you have a perfect fit. Take paper out, attach the photo (or photos) with acid-free double-sided tape.

Slide paper back into the vase & use a little piece of regular tape on the inside to secure the paper where the edges overlap.



Planter as Table

Bring your planter inside when the season is over, top it with a piece of glass, and enlist it at winter gatherings to hold cocktails or light up a dark corner



Box Set

Endless piles of bills and statements lying all over?

Try stashing those documents you refer to only rarely in a set of nesting boxes, which, stacked from largest to smallest, form a serviceable side table.

Choose boxes that fit in with your décor.



Book Side table

Large art books that rarely get cracked or have done their time on the coffee table can be put to work next to a low couch or chair.

Stacked from largest to smallest, they provide a sturdy base. The varied colorful and graphic spines create their own spontaneous artwork.

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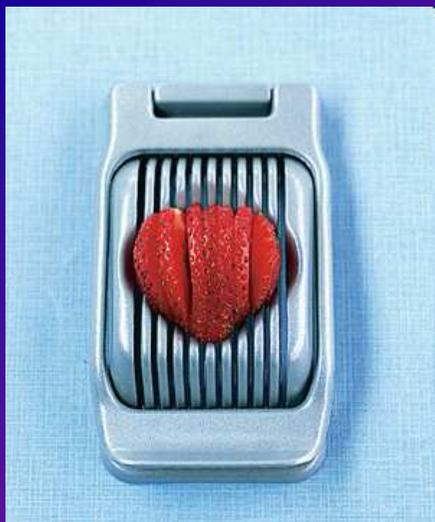
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Egg-Slicer

Use your egg-slicer for strawberries as well as mushrooms.

Easy, no fuss.



Tidy Bags

Forget unruly plastic bags that seemingly regenerate under your sink.

An empty tissue box keeps them neatly corralled and ready for use.



Corn Threads

A toothbrush's bristles lift away stray threads of silk from fresh ears of corn quickly and efficiently.

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Mouse Cover

Save a countertop with an old mouse pad turned trivet.

(Make sure it has a non-plastic coating.)



Tomato Bottle

Decorate dishes like a professional. Run an empty plastic ketchup bottle through the dishwasher, then fill it with your favourite sauce or condiment.

Drizzle some rosemary-scented olive oil across a bowl of white bean soup, a squiggle of fudge or raspberry sauce around the rim of a dessert plate. (If calligraphy is not your strong suit, practice on a paper plate or stick to abstract designs.)



Rolling Solution

No rolling pin for your pastry? Wine bottle at hand.

Sandwich your pastry between sheets of plastic wrap or wax paper to prevent sticking. Press down firmly on the bottle with one hand; grip the neck and steer with your other.

(If you chill the dough to firm it up, do so briefly - slightly firm dough is easiest to control.)

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Bucket Table

Creating a place for backyard guests to rest their cocktails.

Top a bucket with a tray for an instant side table for your lawn chairs.



My drink

A clever way to keep straight whose drink is whose:

Mark each glass with removable window decals.

Courtesy of reader Linda Winterhoff of Williamsburg, Virginia



Lolly Stirrer

Give cocktails extra pop with lollipops in complementary colors subbed in for stirrers.

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Candle-Lighter

If you don't have extra-long matches on hand, try a piece of spaghetti.



Toothpick Marker

Marking a roll of clear packing tape. After each use, place a toothpick under the loose end. The next time you have something to seal, pick up where you left off.



Moist Paint Brush

A supermarket bag, tightly secured with a rubber band, will keep a brush (or roller) moist for a day or two in between painting sessions: the end of dried-out bristles.

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Camera Safe

A hard plastic soap case is the perfect size to protect a camera stashed in a carry-on bag.

Courtesy of reader Amy Deml of Little Falls, Minnesota



Toilet Paper Holder

Instead of showing off flowers, store your toilet paper rolls in it.

Decorative and handy.



Hair elastic Solution

Stop searching high and low for hair clips and elastics: Store them tidily on an empty toilet paper tube.

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