



CLEANING

Kitchen sponge smells mildewy

■ **SOLUTION:** **Fill an old spice shaker with baking soda, then sprinkle on enough to cover the scrubber after each use.** Store the spice container near the sink for easy access after every dishwashing session. The baking soda neutralizes the acidic remnants embedded in the sponge that are causing the offensive smells.

ORGANIZATION

Nightstand is cluttered

■ **SOLUTION:** **Hang a small fabric cosmetic bag on a Command hook attached to the side of the furniture.** Then, neatly zip everything that normally crowds the top (chargers, remote controls, hand cream, lip balm, pens, glasses) inside. This leaves the top of your nightstand clutter-free except for a lamp and book, making the room look instantly more organized and serene so it's easier to drift off. This simple hack not only tides up your nightstand but also speeds up your bedtime routine—no more hunting for your must-haves! Bonus: The bag protects your essentials from dust and accidental spills and makes cleaning easier since you can move everything at once.



CLEANING

Throw blankets shedding fuzz

■ **SOLUTION:** **Toss them in the dryer with a damp washcloth and a few ice cubes for 5 minutes.** The steam helps release loose surface fibers and the washcloth catches the fuzz, so blankets shed less afterward. **Bonus:** In the next wash, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of white vinegar to the rinse cycle. The pantry staple helps tighten and smooth the fibers so fewer become loose in the first place, reducing shedding over time.

COOKING

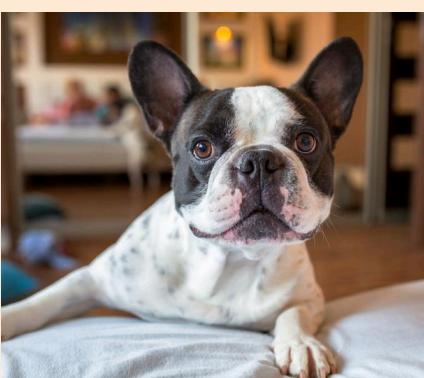
Hard-to-peel squash

■ **SOLUTION:** **Poke a few holes in the veggie with a fork, then wrap in a dish towel and microwave for 3 minutes.** Let cool slightly, then peel, cut and cook as usual. No more wrestling with a tough, slippery squash! This trick works for butternut and acorn squash, as par-cooking the vegetable will soften the skin, so it's easy to remove. Not only does this method save you time, but it also reduces the risk of cuts.

PETS

Pet has a runny nose

■ **SOLUTION:** **Steep 1 tsp. of dried sage in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of boiling water for 10 minutes, then strain and let cool before pouring over her wet food.** The antiseptic, astringent herb will work to fight the infection and clear up post-nasal drip. (Some veterinarians advise giving a dose of 2 Tbs. for every 10 pounds of body weight, repeated once a day for up to two days, but check with yours first.)



3 WAYS TO REPURPOSE FLOWERS



PRO TIPS

Lora
McLaughlin
Peterson

Lifestyle expert and television host who shares how to live a fabulous life for less. Find everyday home, kitchen and life hacks on her site LORAfied.com.

Potpourri

Crumble dry flower petals into a bowl, add 1 tsp. of baking soda (it helps absorb odors) and a few drops of essential oil like lemon or lavender. Place the bowl in closets or bathrooms to keep them smelling fresh.

Gift wrap

Scatter dried petals between two sheets of parchment paper and gently iron them flat (set the iron heat to low). Let cool, then tape or glue the flowers to kraft paper for a one-of-a-kind gift that's sure to delight.

Body scrub

Crush dried flower petals and mix with enough sugar and coconut oil to form a soft scrub. The flower petals add gentle exfoliation—and a pretty scent—leaving you with smooth, sweet-smelling skin.