



little helpers

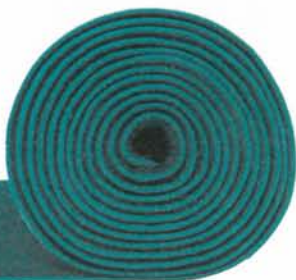
4 INGENUOUS PRODUCTS TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER

From left: A sharp, spadelike edge enables this ergonomic **ice cream scoop** to glide easily through rock-hard rocky road (no more waiting for it to soften). In three finishes. \$39 to \$49, belle-v.com. | If your smartphone often ends up buried deep in the abyss of your bag, keep it on a short leash. The 12-inch PhoneFetcher **phone leash** attaches to a purse strap and lets you summon your device with a quick yank. In three colors. \$19, phonefetcher.com. | This **kitchen multitasker** serves eight functions—funnel, citrus juicer, spice grater, egg masher, cheese grater, jar grip, egg separator, and measuring cup (*phew!*)—and takes up precious little space. Bin Akebono all-in-one kitchen-tool set, \$40, momastore.org. | Thanks to its long, flexible neck, this wind-resistant **outdoor lighter** can start a fire just about anywhere. (Yep, even in those impossible-to-reach lanterns on your porch.) In two colors. Flex Neck utility lighter, \$20, zippo.com.

(LOW) MAINTENANCE

rugs and carpets

Get them clean—and keep them that way—with these foolproof strategies.



every week

For wall-to-wall carpeting and rugs made of plant fibers (jute, sisal) or synthetic materials (polyester, polypropylene, nylon), clean with a standard vacuum, making extra passes over well-trod areas. But for wool, cotton, or silk rugs, it's better to rely on a carpet sweeper. (Try the Perfect Sweep Turbo Cordless Sweeper; \$40, bissell.com.) A sweeper is gentler than a vacuum and won't snag fibers, says Lisa Wagner, a rug specialist and the founder of the blog RugChick.com. (Whip out the regular vacuum for monthly deep cleanings.) Also important to note for wool rugs: Always vacuum under furniture and beds. "If you don't, moths or

beetles could infest the fabric," says Ruth Travis, the director of WoolSafe North America. If you can't suck up stubborn pet hair, give the rug a quick once-over with a rubber dry-cleaning sponge (\$3, menards.com). It easily picks up embedded fur.

once a year

Rotate rugs to prevent uneven wear and fading. For large, cumbersome rugs, ask a friend to help you fold the corners of the rug toward the center. Then, leaving the rug on the floor, spin the folded bundle 180 degrees and unfurl.

every one to three years

Get all rugs and carpets professionally cleaned. (Ideally, wall-to-wall carpeting should be cleaned yearly.) Otherwise built-up dirt and contaminants

can cause permanent damage to the fibers. Also, there may be allergens present that can affect your health. To tell if a rug is ready for the pro treatment, lift one edge and wipe the underside with a damp cloth. If there is visible dirt, the time has come. A cleaning typically costs \$3 to \$6 a square foot, depending on the rug's condition. Don't try to do it yourself with a rented steam cleaner. You could cause the carpet dyes to bleed or fade, and you may miss soil lodged in the pile, says Wagner.

—Christina Yeatsas



SPOT-CLEAN YOUR RUGS
To learn how to tackle stains of all sorts on all kinds of carpets, scan the rug, or go to realsimple.com/carpet.