

THE CHEAPSKATES

JOURNAL

Bright ideas to save you money



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THE CHEAPSKATES JOURNAL - BRIGHT IDEAS TO SAVE YOU MONEY

December 2015

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The Cheapskates Club -

Showing you how to live life debt
free, cashed up and laughing!

If you want to win the Battle of the
Bills and are serious about saving
money, and living life debt free,
cashed up and laughing then this is
the place to be.

The Cheapskates Journal

Brought to you by: The Cheapskates Club
info@cheapskates.com.au

Dec 2015

From Cath's Desk

Hello Cheapskaters,

Merry Christmas!

We will be spending Christmas Day together as a family, with Grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins joining us for lunch, afternoon tea and probably a very late dinner. And we'll be joyful, laughing, happy, full of love and peaceful in a rowdy family get-together kind of way.

And I say that with hopes and prayers that you too will have a blessed, safe Christmas season, full of joy, laughter, happiness, love and peace.

HAPPY CHEAPSKATING,
Cath

Feature Article

Welcome to the new Cheapskates Club Website

Welcome to the new Cheapskates Club website.

It's been a long, long time coming and a lot of hard work. Thomas tried to calculate the hours we've all put into getting this website up and running, making sure we've caught everything from the old site before it disappears forever. He gave up at around 11,760! And yes, that's solid hours working on just moving stuff over, building new pages, checking links, stressing about moving the member database (oops I mean testing before moving), building and refining new tools, copying images, uploading data and a whole lot of other things we've been working on solidly for the last 9 weeks.

It's done now. Just a few final steps to quadruple check everything has shifted as it

should have and we'll be well and truly established in our new home.

Like any move to a new home, there are a few things that are different about our new home.

The first is your log in. If you're reading this then you've seen that the Member Login box is located at the top right hand side of the website homepage.

Click on the member log in and a green box appears. Here you enter your email address (and it must be the one on record for you) and your password. You can also choose at this point to stay logged in (don't do this if other people use your computer). You can also update your profile, check your membership details and find your membership expiry date by clicking on My Profile. Or you can choose to log out.

When you log in you'll be taken to the Member Centre homepage and that black member log in disappears. In its place you'll see your name and a log out link.

This page is not visible unless you are logged in. It also has direct links to all your Member Centre tools, or you'll find the major tools in the menu on the left hand side of your page.

I'll be adding lots of new tools and features over the next couple of months. There are so many I'm "drip feeding" them so you don't get overwhelmed so keep logging in regularly to find them.

The design has been streamlined, after hearing from Cheapskaters about what they'd like to see. That was a bit of an effort because there is a lot of information that had to be reorganised into more user-friendly chunks

I suggest everyone go and have another look at the Getting Started page, even if you're a long-time Cheapskater. A little reminder/refresher will help you find your way around our new home.

And as with all new homes, we'll be renovating and remodelling to get things just right. It's hard to do this on a test site, so don't be surprised if you log in and you see something new or something else has been rearranged. Hopefully the tweaks won't take too long and if you have a suggestion please let me know.

We'll have a "website warming" party in January to officially launch our new home, so check the forum for details, I'll be posting them as soon as they are finalised.

A Thoughtful Moment

My First Christmas Adventure with Grandma Story

I remember my first Christmas adventure with Grandma. I was just a kid.

I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," she jeered. "Even dummies know that!"

My Grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her "world-famous" cinnamon buns. I knew they were world-famous, because Grandma said so. It had to be true.

Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me. "No Santa Claus?" she snorted...."Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumour has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad!! Now, put on your coat, and let's go."

"Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second world-famous cinnamon bun. "Where" turned out to be

Kerby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days. "Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kerby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping.

For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for.

I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbours, the kids at school, and the people who went to my church.

I was just about thought out, when I suddenly thought of Bobby Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's grade-two class. Bobby Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out to recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note, telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobby Decker didn't have a cough; he didn't have a good coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobby Decker a coat!

I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that.

"Is this a Christmas present for someone?" the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down. "Yes, ma'am," I replied shyly. "It's for Bobby."

The nice lady smiled at me, as I told her about how Bobby really needed a good winter coat. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag, smiled again, and wished me a Merry Christmas.

That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat (a little tag fell out of the coat, and Grandma tucked it in her Bible) in Christmas paper and ribbons and wrote, "To Bobby, From Santa Claus" on it.

Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobby Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially, one of Santa's helpers.

Grandma parked down the street from Bobby's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right, Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going."

I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his door and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma.

Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally it did, and there stood Bobby.

Fifty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my Grandma, in Bobby Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumours about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were -- ridiculous. Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team.

I still have the Bible, with the coat tag tucked inside: \$19.95.

Anonymous

Ready to Double your Income?

Doubling your income might sound like a far-fetched dream, but it doesn't have to be. People tend to put a price on themselves. It's common to think, "I'm worth \$40,000 a year." But

everyone actually has infinite worth. You can't just go out and buy someone exactly like you. You are priceless.

The truth is that it's the way you spend your time that determines your income, not your capabilities. A brain surgeon moonlighting as a garbage collector makes garbage collector wages during that time. He doesn't make brain surgeon wages.

Use this process to double your income:

SET A GOAL

*The best possibility for success always starts with a goal.

*Your goal should be specific, measurable, and achievable.

*Review it every morning and evening as you are lying in bed.

CREATE MORE VALUE

*Brainstorm how you can provide the most value to others.

*What you provide might not be that valuable to one person, but if you can deliver it to a lot of people, the total value is very high.

*Being the best isn't necessary. Your mechanic, lawyer, doctor, and lawn care provider probably aren't the best in their respective fields, but they still get your money on a regular basis.

CONSIDER HIGHER EDUCATION

*For example, the median nursing salary is now over \$70,000 and the schooling only takes about two years. Explore your options.

NEVER GIVE UP

*Have you ever noticed that some of the most successful people you know aren't uniquely intelligent or talented? But if you really look,

you'll likely find that they're incredibly tenacious. They simply never give up.

*Remind yourself that it's impossible to fail if you keep adjusting your approach and never give up.

Doubling your income is simply a matter of doubling your value to the marketplace. Set a goal and find a way to deliver more value. If you're truly committed, you'll be successful. How much could your life change for the better if your income doubled?

MOO Lime and Mint Foot Soak

December is a busy month. I spend a lot of time on my feet, mostly standing in the kitchen cooking and baking, and they get hot, tired and achy. At the end of a long, hot day all I want to do is get off them and cool them down, so I use this foot soak.

This foot soak is just beautiful. So simple to make and so nice to use. It's refreshing and cooling, and revitalises those tired tootsies for just a few cents.

It makes a lovely gift too, packaged in either a cellophane bag or a pretty jar. I found lovely jars at my local op shop for just 30 cents each, I've seen some pretty jars in \$2 shops, recycled salsa jars are good to use for this project too.

If you do decide to make the foot soak for a gift, don't forget to include the instructions on a pretty label.

Lime and Mint Foot Soak

You will need:

2 cups Epsom salts

1 cup bicarb soda

4 - 5 drops lime essential oil

4 -5 drops peppermint essential oil

Step 1. Combine the Epsom salts and bicarb soda. I do this with a whisk to make sure they are well combined.

Step 2. Whisk in the essential oils. Add them all at once and then whisk like crazy so the mixture doesn't fizz. If you don't have a whisk a fork will do the job.

Step 3. Pour into clean jars. Add your label, the instructions and a jar topper if you want to.

Instructions:

To use add 1/2 cup Lime and Mint Foot Soak to a basin of warm water.

Add your feet.

Sit back and relax

Quick Christmas Decorating Ideas

Decorating for Christmas doesn't have to cost a lot of money. You don't even need to spend money if you use things you already have and use a little imagination.

Something as simple as rearranging the furniture and adding some flowers in a big vase (or a bucket covered in wrapping paper) can add a festive feel to a room.

Here are some other simple ideas I've used over the years to bring Christmas cheer to our home.

Fill a 600ml (pint) sized mason jar (or a tall, straight sided jam jar) with small candy canes. Sit a tea light in the centre, it will add a welcome glow to a dark corner or look pretty on a Christmas dinner table.

Decorate church or pillar candles with gold or silver thumbtacks in pretty designs. You could add stars or Christmas trees, spirals, stripes, swirls, hearts or other pretty designs

Build a truffle tree (I think this idea is by far my family's favourite Christmas decoration) by pushing toothpicks through the centre of wrapped truffles to stick them to a styro foam tree shape. You can leave the truffles in their papers or take them out. The gold Ferrero Rochers look lovely, as do the white Raffaellos. Go modern and use red, blue and silver Lindt balls to make your truffle tree. I buy Lindt balls in bulk from Sweet As - I paid \$19.95 for a kilo box a few weeks ago. Sit your tree on the coffee table and offer a truffle to visitors or use it as a centrepiece on your Christmas dinner table.

Wrapping paper isn't just for presents. Choose your favourite Christmas print and tack it to kitchen cupboard doors or the back of a dresser or china cabinet for a quick facelift. Cut the paper to size and use small dabs of blu-tac to stick it to the doors. After Christmas you can take the paper down without damaging the doors.

Add some bling to pinecones to liven them up. Just waster down some glue, dip the pinecones in the glue then in glitter. You can do the whole pine cone or just half. You can use gold glitter for a traditional look of coloured glitter to match your decorating theme.

Turn your cushions into presents by wrapping them in wide ribbon and sticking a big, fluffy bow in the centre.

Use all that Christmas paper you bought last year by turning it into old fashioned paper chains. Use them do decorate the Christmas tree instead of tinsel or hang them in swags across the windows.

A Christmas Ready Fridge

While many of us are focused on baking and cooking and presents and shopping and decorating for Christmas right now, we may overlook something just as important. That something is the fridge, that big white box that sits in the kitchen and helps to keep the goodies we are lovingly cooking and baking safe for us to eat.

But while we are so busy, we sometimes forget the fact that mould and bacteria can accumulate if we are not careful to periodically clean out our fridges.

Something as simple as spilled food or a piece of food that has fallen behind a drawer can wreak havoc on the health of a fridge and can cause the food around it to go bad, which can be costly to replace, and can also wreak havoc on our health.

And that Cheapskaters is why it is so important to degunk the fridge.

Get Ready to Purge

A good rule of thumb is that if a food that was cooked and left over and has not been consumed within three to four days it should be composted.

Start out by cleaning out the food in your fridge and decide whether or not it is safe to keep. If it is past the expiration date, take no chances and toss it. If a fruit or vegetable is more than a week old, and isn't mouldy or soft or black then it can be grated and frozen for winter soups and stews or added to the stock pot. If it is soft, mouldy or has black spots don't take any chances and compost it. It can be costly to pay doctor bills and time out from work by eating something that is past its freshness.

Remove all drawers and trays from the fridge. A little tip, try to strategically place them on a table top exactly the way you took them out. This way, when it is time to put them back together, you will not be scratching your head.

Good Old Soap and Water

Once you have determined what to keep and what to toss, get a cooler filled with ice to temporarily house what you will be keeping. In the alternative, if you have another fridge, put the food in there until you are ready to restock.

With an empty canvas, you can now begin to wash down your fridge. The oldest and safest, as well as most effective method is using the hottest water that is safe for you. Mixing some dish detergent and hot water in a bucket will do wonders.

Using a cloth soaked in the soapy mixture, begin to wipe down the inside of the fridge. My hand knitted dishcloths are great for this. Or you can use paper towel if you prefer. By using paper towels, you are not spreading bacteria, but eliminating it. Soak drawers in a solution of hot soapy water as you are washing down the inside of the fridge.

For tougher stuck on gunk, use a toothbrush or soft scrubbing brush such as those used for laundry. Get in between the cracks with the edge of a toothbrush that is flexible and wipe down with paper towels, soap and water.

Once the inside is clean, take some paper towels to dry it up as well. This will avoid mildew from forming. Placing an open box of bicarb soda at the back of the top shelf will also help to keep the fridge odour free going forward.

Bring out the vacuum

Once the inside is all cleaned out, do not forget to take off the removable plate on the bottom of your fridge. You can soak it in the tub in hot, hot water and dishwashing detergent, while

you run the long hose nozzle of your vacuum cleaner underneath that area to shift any dust or crumbs or pens or buttons or toothpicks or straws that may have strayed under there (I found all those things under my fridge this week).

Wipe over the top and sides with a damp cloth.

Use a soft toothbrush to clean the seals, then wipe them over with a damp cloth.

If you can move the fridge easily vacuum the back, especially the coils if they're not covered. Dust will cause the fridge to heat up and therefore work harder, using more power and upping that electricity bill you're trying to get down...

With these tips, you can de-gunk your fridge and keep it running smoothly inside and out and have it in tip-top shape for your Christmas goodies.

On the Menu

Quick and Easy Mexican Meals

This time of year meals need to be quick and easy. A little flavour helps, as well as being cheap (this is the most expensive time of year after all - unless of course you're a Cheapskater).

We like Mexican food and I just love these two recipes.

They meet all my criteria:

- quick
- easy
- tasty
- cheap

- and they freeze beautifully so I can make a double or triple batch and build my stash of freezer meals.

Beef'n'Bean Burritos

Ingredients:

500g mince

1 can black beans

1 can diced tomatoes

1 avocado*

1 jar salsa (or 200ml of your favourite homemade salsa)

8 tortillas

Method:

Brown mince. Drain. Drain black beans and add to mince with diced tomatoes. Simmer 10 minutes. While the meat is cooking peel and dice the avocado. Lay the tortillas out. Divide the meat mixture evenly between them. Sprinkle a little diced avocado over each tortilla. Drizzle with salsa. Wrap up like a burrito. Serve with lime and coriander or Spanish rice on the side.

Notes:

The avocado is optional - I don't like avocado so I leave it out (and they don't figure in my grocery budget either).

Use a jar of salsa, the Aldi salsa is lovely, or make your own to suit your taste.

I often use Mountain Bread instead of tortillas in this recipe - ordered online it is cheaper per packet than tortillas.

Black Bean and Corn Enchiladas

Ingredients:

1 cup vegetable stock*

1 can tomato soup

2 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp garlic powder

1 tsp dried onion

1 tsp salt and

1 tsp pepper

1 can black beans, drained and rinsed

2 cups frozen corn, thawed and drained

120g can diced green chillies, drained*

1 tsp ground cumin

1-½ cups grated cheese, divided

12 corn tortillas, warmed

Method:

In a medium saucepan, whisk together the stock, tomato sauce, ground cumin, garlic powder, dried onion and salt and pepper, making a red enchilada sauce. Bring to bubbling, then remove from heat. In a mixing bowl, mash the black beans with a potato masher or fork. Mix in the corn and green chillies. Stir in the ground cumin and salt. Last, add 1 cup of the grated cheese and combine well.

Warm the corn tortillas by wrapping them in a dish towel or paper towels and microwaving for 45 seconds to 1 minute.

Spread 1 cup of the enchilada sauce in the base of an oiled lasagne dish. Divide the bean mixture evenly between the warmed tortillas, roll up and place seam side down, nestled tightly together, in the pan. Pour another 1 cup of red enchilada sauce over the top of the enchiladas and then sprinkle the remaining cheese on top. Bake in a 180 degree Celsius oven for 20 to 25 minutes, or until cheese has melted on top.

Notes:

*You can use chicken stock if you don't have any vegetable stock made. Alternatively use a vegetable stock cube in 1 cup of water.

*Use more or less chillies to suit your taste - we prefer about half a can of chillies in this recipe.

*This dish can be frozen for up to 12 months. Freeze before baking. Thaw in the fridge for at least 24 hours before baking.

Quotes of Note

You are not only responsible for what you say, but also for what you do not say.

~~Martin Luther~~

~~~~~

We rise by lifting others.

~~Robert Ingersoll~~

~~~~~

No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

~~Aesop~~

~~~~~

What you allow is what will continue.

~~Unknown~~

~~~~~

This a wonderful day.

I've never seen this one before.

~~ Maya Angelou~~

~~~~~

Love does not consist of gazing at each other,

but in looking outward together in the same direction.

~~Antoine de Saint-Exupery~~

~~~~~

Your hand touching mine.

This is how galaxies collide.

~~Sanober Khan~~

~~~~~

Beginnings are usually scary and endings are usually sad,

but it's everything in between that makes it all worth living.

~~Sandra Bullock in "Hope Floats"~~

~~~~~

Sometimes the things we can't change, end up changing us instead.

~~Unknown~~

~~~~~

And you ask "what if I fall?"

Oh but my darling what if you fly?

~~Erin Hanson~~

## Cheapskates Tip Store

### MOO Caramel Ice-cream

Approximate \$ Savings: \$5

This recipe is a variation of Cath's MOO Ice-cream recipe which uses 600ml of cream and 1 tin of condensed milk. Instead of the condensed milk, use 1 tin of CARAMEL condensed milk (make your own in the slow cooker, so easy, or use Top'n'Fill, which is quite expensive at the supermarket). When you have whipped the cream and added the tin of caramel (which is thicker than condensed milk so is quicker to whip), add in extra decadence by flaking one or several Flake chocolate bars mixed through. Freeze as usual for even more delicious inexpensive ice-cream!

Contributed by Vanessa Reynold

### Decorating with Wrapping Paper

Just wanted to show the first of the paintings decorated for Christmas.

The large ones throughout the house are now half finished and look so good even now.

Brilliant idea and for me it has the decorating well underway without the usual flat surfaces involved - no dusting involved with having to move this or that to one side - that will follow but this is like redecorating for next to nothing. Yay!

Contributed by Carol Ryan

### Beat the Heat, Cover your Skylight

Approximate \$ Savings: \$100 annually

A timely tip given the heatwave we are experiencing in Sydney this week. Last summer it dawned on me the amount of light and also heat which entered my living area through a skylight. My skylight is the type that is flat to the ceiling with a clear plastic type Perspex cover. I measured it up and had some thick white cardboard/signboard offcuts in the garage. I cut it to size, stuck four Velcro dots in the corners and stuck it over the skylight. The Velcro makes it removable and because it is white it is unnoticeable against the white ceiling. So in preparation for this week's heatwave I simply stuck it back on over the skylight. Makes a huge difference and reduces the reliance on air conditioning. Cost me nothing because I already had the materials to hand, but you can purchase the signboard from Masters and Officeworks for under \$10.

Contributed by Sara Law

### Salt Saver

Salt in a salt shaker can get moist and gluten and then won't come out the holes in the top when you shake it. By placing a few grains of rice in the bottom of the salt shaker first, then your table salt on top (I use home brand salt) you will never have soggy moist salt again. You won't have to throw it away.

Contributed by Adele Ranger

### Cash Strapped

Approximate \$ Savings: \$79 a night on.....

We recently decided not to continue on with our Boarder (See Top Tip 19/07/2013). Have discovered another less intrusive way of

keeping the cash flow without losing our bedroom every night of the week. I've put our 5th bedroom up for grabs on Airbnb - it's International, it's very well monitored, it's financially secure and it's fun. We have International Guests staying only the one night once a week or more if the opportunity arises. We have fewer concerns as guests are only here for a night. They have breakfast in which they can help themselves or I'll put together, have a shower and are generally gone by 10.00am the next morning. No money changes hands it is all done through the website and everyone is on their best behaviour. Great for the kids and wonderful company for house-bound hubby. See KISMET (Geelong) on Airbnb if you want to find out more.

Contributed by Melinda Rau-Wig

## Christmas Present Savings

Approximate \$ Savings: \$500

Hi everyone! About 2 ago we decided to have a KK present giving system for myself hubby and 4 adult children and partners. I used to be so stressed out over Christmas trying to buy them all something around \$150.00 each . Now we all agreed limit of \$50 max for each person. This has to be for adult or older children only those with an income can participate. We put everyone's names into a hat and draw their names out around September. We all have our selected person to buy for. It's great! One adult to buy for, so much less stress and a saving for me of at least \$500!! I do still buy separately for the little grandchildren and a couple of little nephews and nieces . So everyone gets a present and everyone saves money and most of all stress and time.

Contributed by Marissa Tanti

## Christmas Doesn't Have to Be Expensive if You Shop Smart

Approximate \$ Savings: \$100+

Christmas time is always very expensive in our home, not only Christmas but we have three birthdays in December and two in January. I have purchased the larger items (what they have asked for) within each child's and hubby's budget. The rest of the little items, teachers' presents and other friend's gifts I have purchased from the Salvos and Lifeline. Not only have I grabbed some great second hand items, that are brand new never used, I have also got all the teachers brand new gifts for under \$5. When you have a few teachers this is a great saving. The girls were all asking for makeup kits/packs. When I priced these at the shops I was stunned that they wanted up to \$40-\$50 a set. I found the exact same makeup kit (not in a pretty basket) but still brand new in nice packaging at the Salvos for only \$8 each. They also had perfume accessories that smell just like Britney Spears collection just to name one for only \$9.95 for a whole kit of fragrance, and other bathroom items. I was able to choose different colours and fragrances for all my girls. No more matching for the twins. Yeah. My friends and children will never know that most of their gifts are pre loved and I am doing a great thing for my bank balance as well as the environment. I can't wait to see them unwrap their gifts and see their happy faces all at a fraction of the price

Contributed by Kathie Palmer

## Smoothie Chunks at the Ready

As I like to have a smoothie each day, I buy a couple of punnets of strawberries, wash them, cut them in half and freeze in airtight containers in freezer. Also when bananas get a bit over ripe, I cut them into smaller pieces and freeze. So when I need frozen fruit for smoothies I have

what I need in the freezer ready to go. This stops any wastage of bananas and berries.

Contributed by Pam Ward

## Two Simple Ways to Create a Christmas Newsletter

1. We are working on a Newsletter at work and there are some great templates for doing your own from home. You can include photos, headings, write stories, have a feature article and the likes. Great for emailing to all the relatives OR posting out instead of Xmas cards. Free templates are available off the MS website and emailing is virtually free.

2. Blog. Currently we keep our friends and family informed of our camping travels by doing a blog for each adventure we have. I email the link to everyone and let them know I've added another adventure for them to read. I can email my new blog straight to the site and add pictures later if I wish. Starting a blog costs virtually nothing.

For both these ideas, you need access to the Internet to either email or post photos to your blog. The rest is free and can be done at home for next to nothing. Don't have a computer? Why not loan one at your local library? This is usually free but you will have to book a time with the librarian, and most also have internet access which may have a small fee. Internet cafes are now popular and relatively cheap to use if you can design things at home or at the library.

Contributed by Tracey Lyons

## Save on Steamer Cleaners

Approximate \$ Savings: \$30.00 plus

Recently I was cleaning my stovetop, baked on brown grunge was a real headache, all around the gas burners. A friend of mine suggested buying a steamer to get it off, cheapest \$30.00. On an impulse I boiled the kettle, wiped down the area with detergent and then poured the literally boiling water onto the brown grunge. I left it there for a minute or two for the water to cool, then wiped it up. The brown grunge came with it, and I now have a sparkling stovetop. If it's really stubborn this may have to be repeated several times. I'm not going to bother with a steam cleaner, they seem to encourage mould, and you spend all your time adjusting them so you don't burn yourself and refilling the water container, and I saved myself a minimum of \$30.00.

Contributed by Elizabeth Oldfield

### Hand Care

As an avid cook my hands often show the damage. Here are three simple and easy steps for hand care in the kitchen:

One: to revitalise tired and damaged hands place 1/2 teaspoon oil in one palm, add a 1/4 teaspoon of salt. Wring your hands together for a minute or so massaging the oil and salt in and around your hands. Rinse with warm water - your hands will feel so soft, smooth and nourished.

Two: for stained hands rub them with the squeezed lemon rind before it goes in the bin.

Three: to remove smells from your hands after cooking rub your wet hands on the stainless steel of your sink.

Contributed by Evelyn Chapman

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