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THE MEN'S HEALTH BOOK OF

USEFUL STUFF

LEARN TO PLAY, WORK, JOKE,
AND SKATE BY LIKE A MAN

It's great to know how to charm a snake or escape an avalanche, but that information will come in handy...well, probably never. What a real survival guide is for is to help real guys—like you—get by in the everyday world, where mistakes can live on as embarrassing stories, told over and over every time you and your buddies get together for a beer. What follows is your guide on how to look like Superman—if he had a life like yours.

Career Smarts

► **HOW TO GET A LOT OF WORK DONE.** Take an hour to organize the paper on your desk into three piles. The “this-will-make-a-big-difference-today” pile is the first. Pile 2 is “some-fool-wants-me-to-do-this” and the 3rd is “I-don't-think-so.” Congratulations. You've just figured out where your efforts should go.

► **BEST WAY TO DEAL WITH A BULLYING BOSS.** If your relationship has really gone south, record any meetings with the bully. Don't be shy—put the tape recorder right in the middle of the table.

► **FIX YOUR HANDSHAKE.** If you're in sales or another “meet and greet” profession, consult a manicurist once in a while.

► **HOW TO GET OFF THE PHONE.** Stand up, and end the call with a hearty “thanks for calling.”

► **OFFICE ROMANCE DOS AND DON'TS.** Do stay on the level. You two should be lateral on the organization chart, and ideally in separate departments. A sexual harassment claim can cost you your job and your reputation. Don't flirt in the workplace.

► **POWER UP YOUR VOICE.** Practice “humming” to get a deeper, richer tone. At the office, use “um-hum.” Use it instead of “ah,” “uh,” “like,” and “you know.”

► **SQUEEZE AWAY STRESS.** Keep a tennis ball in your drawer. Let the tension build up in your hand and the rest of your body, then release. This increases relaxation.

► **DRY UP SWEATY PALMS.** Coat your palms with a roll-on or spray antiperspirant that contains aluminum chloride. Just wipe off the excess before you venture out.

► **PACK WITHOUT WRINKLES.** You'll show up looking crisp and unrumpled.

Stretch a pair of pants across an open suitcase.

Lay a shirt on top of the pants with one sleeve flapping into the top of the case, the other over the front edge.

Flip the top of the pants onto the top of the shirt, fold the shirtsleeves in, and fold the pants legs over.

► **JUMPSTART YOUR CAREER.** Arrive at the office 45 minutes early and stay 15 minutes late. Use the 45 to knock one big thing off your daily agenda, and the 15 to plan out tomorrow. It's 1 extra hour a day, 5 hours a week—and if you keep it up, nearly 1 extra month of work a year.

► **THE SCOOP ON KEEPING RECORDS**—the financial kind.

Toss most bills as soon as you pay them. But if they're business related, stow them for 7 years—that's how long the IRS keeps records.

Hold on to tax returns for at least 7 years, unless they're tied to your business. In that case, keep them forever.

Keep earnings statements forever—just in case Uncle Sam has a different idea of how long you've worked, come retirement.

► **ENOUGH WITH THE BIG WORDS.** People who use big words when smaller ones will do sound less intelligent. So if you find yourself searching for a bigger word to replace a small one, stop. Your 50-cent words add up to a whole lot of nothing.

► **UNCLUTTER YOUR JOB.** Take a page from pork-barrel politics and lump the task you want done along with one that's already assigned. “Since you'll be at the Xerox machine, will you copy these?” Use “will you” instead of “can you”—the first is a

powerful request, the second pathetic.

➤ **NEVER PUT THESE ON YOUR RESUMÉ.**

Your job search is doomed if you use any of these:

“References available on request.”

“Career objective.” If you must, put it in your cover letter. “I want to gain experience in this business” is too vague; “I want to earn \$40,000 as a midlevel assistant in marketing” is too limiting.

A casual e-mail address. An address like KeggerDude@hotmail.com leaves a bad impression.

An Internet link. Who are you, the President?

Weird fonts. Use bullets to break text up.

Your SAT scores.

Follow these leadership secrets

1. Get to know your people before the pressure's on.
2. Never be afraid to treat each person differently...
3. ... But be consistent in your expectations.

4. Earn the respect of older, more experienced people under you by selling yourself and your plan—then back up your pitch with winning results.

How to make a speech

➤ **DEADEN YOUR NERVES.** Realize that the pre-show shakes happen, no matter how long you've been speaking and no matter how much you prepare.

➤ **NAIL THE OPENING.** Open with, “I'm going to tell you a story that's never been told before.”

➤ **SUCK 'EM IN.** The worst speakers talk without engaging the audience. The solution? Tell them at the beginning that you'll be taking questions. It makes them listen.

➤ **SET IT, THEN FORGET IT.** If you know your subject, you're invincible.

➤ **JACK UP YOUR ACT.** People think they're more animated than they are. Shoot for about 10% over the top to guarantee liveliness.

➤ **GO SHORT.** If they ask for 45 minutes, say you'll do 25, and then expand if it's going well. It's better to plan short and go long than the other way around.

the engine with a degreaser. Shampoo the interior. Four hours of cleaning—2 on the outside, 1 under the hood, and 1 on the inside—can add \$400 to the selling price.

➤ **REPLACE THE TIRES.** “Two things sell a car: shine and good tires,” says Jon Zydenbos, of CarsCars.com. If your tires are worn, buy new ones. Or at least use a wheel cleaner and brush to get off the dirt. Then apply a “wet tire” spray to make them look new. Don't forget the spare. Spending \$200 on new tires can mean an extra \$400.

➤ **PUT FOUR ON THE FLOOR.** Mats, that is. Go with cloth, not rubber.

➤ **EXCHANGE YOUR FLUIDS.** A smart buyer will check under the hood. Make sure you have a recent oil-change sticker, the radiator fluid is green, and the transmission fluid is purple.

➤ **REMOVE THE DINGS.** Many dealers will give your car a smoothing for around \$200, using a paintless dent-removal system like Dent Wizard (dentwizard.com). This can net you as much as \$300.

➤ **ROUND UP YOUR MAINTENANCE RECORDS** and put them in a binder.

How to keep a mechanic honest

➤ **“LOOKS LIKE YOUR FUEL INJECTOR IS SHOT.”** It's the snake oil of auto repair. “Gasoline contains detergents to help

keep injectors clean,” says Austin Davis, who owns an auto-repair shop in Houston and runs TrustMyMechanic.com, a consumer-awareness Web site.

➤ **“TIME TO FLUSH YOUR POWER-STEERING FLUID.”** If the last time you had it flushed was less than 40,000 miles ago, don't bother. “This is a job I see overprescribed,” Davis says.

➤ **“YOU NEED NEW BRAKES...look how hard it is to spin your tires.”** “Tires always do that,” says Mike Munson, founder of Auto Repair Estimate Advisors, a mechanics' price-comparison service.

➤ **“YOU MIGHT AS WELL REPLACE THE REAR BRAKES, TOO.”** Front brakes wear two to three times faster than rear ones, since the car's weight is transferring forward during a stop. Replace them every 25,000 miles or so; rear brakes at 60,000 or more.

➤ **“YOUR NEW BRAKE PADS WON'T LAST LONG WITH WORN-OUT CALIPERS AND WARPED ROTORS.”** Calipers, which squeeze brake pads to the rotor to stop the car, can last the life of the car. But it's often easier for the mechanic to replace the calipers along with the pads. A claim that new pads won't work with old calipers is bunk, says Davis. Rotors can get warped by calipers, but a cold puddle on a hot day can do the same thing. Rotors can often be saved with a simple truing—grinding until they're even.

The Nuts and Bolts on Owning a Car

GET THE BEST DEAL ON A NEW CAR. Keep saying: “You have to do better than that.” The salesperson will start jumping through hoops to make the deal.

AVOID A SPEEDING TICKET. What *not* to do, from the point of view of a policeman.

➤ *Don't* put your hands in your jacket pockets or someplace else where he can't see them.

➤ *Don't* argue heatedly about a ticket.

➤ *Don't* reach for your ID before he asks for it.

➤ *Don't* get out of your car without being told to.

How to sell your used car

Unload your car yourself and cash in. Here's how to clean up.

➤ **WASH, WAX, REPEAT.** Wash the car's exterior a deep cleaner, then hit it with carnauba wax. Clear out the trunk. Clean

➤ **GET A BETTER HOTEL ROOM.** Ask for a bigger room that's below the eighth floor and nowhere near the elevator. Rooms near elevators can be noisy and smaller, and face other buildings. Most upgrades

Play Like a Man

happen above the eighth floor (people trade up), so better, bigger rooms often are more available on lower floors.

➤ **COOL UNDER PRESSURE.** When you are in a high-stress situation—like having

to sink a putt or free-throw—using this mental trick makes sure you don't choke: Count backward by 2s from 100 as you make your move. Choking is all about focusing too much attention on yourself.

► **TO FIND YOUR KEYS.** Eat blueberries, strawberries, and spinach. An animal study at Tufts University in Boston found that a diet rich in these foods improved short-term memory.

► **MASTER THE ART OF SMALL TALK.** Get the gorgeous woman sitting opposite you to start talking about her favorite subject: herself. Ask about her hometown, and look for connections. Remember that people love talking about themselves.

► **IMPROVE YOUR COORDINATION.** You can improve your depth perception and hand-eye coordination by playing video games. But it's better to involve body motion, too: Have a friend uncover numbered flash cards. Each number requires a different body movement (e.g., when he flashes 1, you jump left; on 2 you crouch; on 3 you jump right; and so on).

► **OUT OF SHAVING CREAM.** If you run out of shaving cream, just use soap. After all, shaving cream is just soap that's processed into a foamier form, so one really works as well as the other.

► **THE BEST PAYING SLOTS.** In casinos, stick to the slot machines that are closest to the cashier, change booths, or high-traffic areas. That's where casinos purposely put machines with higher payouts.

► **IF YOUR BIKE GETS A FLAT.** If you don't have a spare or patch kit, simply stuff the space between the tire and the rim with leaves, vines, dirty socks, trash, or whatever will give the tire some shape, then ride back. Slowly.

► **FLIP YOUR WORKOUT.** Do what you

normally do last—like your biceps and triceps—first. You'll have more strength, and when you get to the usual beginning—probably your chest—the complementary muscles will be exhausted, which will force your pecs to work harder, says Alwyn Cosgrove, C.S.C.S., a certified strength-and-conditioning specialist in Newhall, California.

► **RECONNECT.** Get together with seven buddies you haven't seen in a while. Talk about your jobs, your girlfriends, commodities pricing, whatever. Yes, that's networking. It will also pull you out of a funk. Conversations with other people are motivating when you're in a slump. A UCLA study shows that having even one close friend extended people's lives. With seven, your beer-'n'-brat nights could go on pretty much forever.

► **BUY NEW GLASSES.** Women look at a man's eyes upon first meeting, and if the frames are out of date, you'll be history. A study at Purdue University shows that women are less likely to listen to what you have to say if they're distracted by what they see.

► **NEVER SQUASH A YELLOW JACKET.** You'll break the 'jacket's venom sac, which will release a chemical that incites other bees to attack—bad news since yellow jackets can sting repeatedly.

► **WHEN MEETING A BEAR IN THE WOODS.** The proper response depends on the bear's color. Brown bears, including grizzlies, don't climb very well; they need thick low branches to support their weight. So if you are next to a tree with thin branches and think you can climb fast and high, go for it. But black bears can climb trees—branches or no branches—so don't bother climbing. Don't play

dead either—black bears eat dead things.

► **HOW TO AVOID A HANGOVER.** Drink a double virgin screwdriver. Fructose, one of the sugars in orange juice, can speed the metabolism of alcohol by as much as 25%.

► **HOW TO BREAK AT POOL.** Hit the front ball smack in the center—and keep the butt of the cue low.

► **BARBECUE LIKE A PRO.** Here's all you really need to know.

Use a chimney lighter instead of lighter fluid—the food will taste better.

Put on the BBQ sauce only in the last 10 minutes of cooking. Otherwise the sauce will get scorched.

Turn the meat only once, or it won't cook thoroughly.

Marinate for an hour. Mix the marinade ingredients well in a resealable plastic bag, drop in the chicken, seal, shake, and refrigerate. Try this marinade: 2 tablespoons bourbon, 1 teaspoon deli-style mustard, ¼ teaspoon black pepper.

► **RUN REALLY FAST.** Tom Shaw, NFL speed training coach, offers these tips.

Land on the balls of your feet and roll to the toes, keeping a 4- to 6-inch forward lean. Heels should never touch the ground and, when elevated, should be close to the butt.

“Make sure your hands come over your shoulders, and behind your hips,” says Shaw. Keep your arms bent 90 to 100 degrees, and don't clench your fists. The faster you swing your arms, the faster your legs move.

Don't reach out with your front leg prior to your foot striking the ground, says Shaw. “This lands the foot well ahead of the knee and brakes your momentum.”

► **GET HER THE PERFECT GIFT.** Any—or all?—will work for any occasion.

Dinner and tickets to the symphony.
Chocolate truffles and champagne.
Silk pajamas.
Expensive perfume—real perfume.

How to tell a joke

Before you tell the one about the guy who walked into the bar with the duck on his head, take some tips from the professionals.

► **KEEP 'EM GUESSING.** “Don't lose the element of surprise. If you say, ‘You gotta hear this one,’ it puts too much pressure on the joke. Also, people are afraid they'll fail, so they rush. Don't rush, and especially don't rush the punch line.”

—Richard Lewis

► **AVOID WORD PLAYS.** “Never tell a long joke that relies on a pun—that's weak.”

—Judy Tenuta

► **STAY CURRENT.** “Be selective in choosing figures of speech. Few things let the air out of a story quicker than using passé expressions. For example, there was a time, up to around late 1984, when it was cute to use Joan Rivers' expression ‘Can we talk?’ But you wouldn't want to use the line now.”

—Steve Allen

► **IF ALL ELSE FAILS...** “Go for the d - k joke.”

—Robin Williams

5 signs she may be cheating

► She starts going out with friends you don't know.

► She has keys on her keychain you've never seen before.

► She stops arguing with you about things you do that she can't stand.

► She starts listening to new music.

► She begins dressing differently and exercising more.

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