



Pop the Cork

Cork isn't just for wine bottles anymore. This green material is, well, popping up all over the place, from wall coverings that are durable and soundproof to stylish flooring that's easy on your feet. Plus, cork is naturally antimicrobial and insect-repellent, and it doesn't absorb dust. Harvested from the bark of the cork oak, the material is eco-friendly and renewable. So, save a tree and look to cork the next time you're considering what to do with that outdated parquet kitchen floor.



Fix or Replace?

A recent issue of *Consumer Reports* offered a timeline to determine when to say "adios" to old appliances that aren't operating properly. The magazine took into account age, typical repair and replacement costs, and improvements made in newer models.

Here are the ages when it's more sensible to replace an appliance than to fix it:

- Six years: dishwashers, over-the-range microwaves, and top-freezer refrigerators
- Seven years: clothes dryers and top-loader washers
- Eight years: Bottom-freezer and side-by-side refrigerators, electric or gas ranges, electric wall ovens and front-loader washers



* DID YOU KNOW

The optimal temperature of the water in your dishwasher should be 130 degrees F or higher. Any lower and it's more difficult to remove grease and food. Lower temperatures can also result in spotting, filming and improper drying



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