



REDBOOK

Sometimes crowdsourcing only raises more questions—but our experts always have answers! Send your toughies to redbook@hearst.com, or tag **#AskREDBOOK** on social media.

Q What's a quick, cheap way to make my living room look more summery?

—Rosemarie Bellisio, Baltimore



“When it starts getting warm, I do a pillow swap in my living room by slipping some bright cases over my existing cushions. It's the easiest way to give the room a cheery face-lift. I love the options from Zara Home—they always have colorful, fun designs, plus they're inexpensive enough that I can pull a switch every season!” —Virginia VanZanten, home editor



Clockwise from top left: plain linen pillow cover, \$19.90, floral-print linen throw pillow cover, \$35.90, plaid bamboo pillow cover, \$35.90; all zarahome.com.

Q I'm considering hiring a financial planner, but I'd hate to pay someone to do what I've been doing for the past 20 years. Is this a worthwhile investment, or can I D.I.Y. it?

—Carol Berry, Milwaukee

“Hiring a financial planner is like hiring a personal trainer. Sure, you can work out on your own, but a trainer gives you that extra kick to get you in shape. Instead of turning over *everything* to a planner (pricey!), try meeting with someone certified as a financial planner—a CFP—once or twice to walk you through projects that require more work. That might be refinancing your home or optimizing your investments. This will keep your costs down, and you can always check back in with your adviser if you want to make sure you're doing things right—just like you would with a trainer.” —Nicole Lapin, Team Red columnist



Q I always order either a fruity cocktail or a glass of white wine. Which is a better choice in terms of calories?

—Christina Jedra, Boston

“Tracking your calorie intake is way easier with wine as opposed to cocktails, where they can pour in juices and syrups without your being the wiser. The average five-ounce glass of wine has 120 calories, but if you're yearning for a cocktail, my cheat to get the same count is ordering a shot of fruity vodka (not the sugary kind!) with club soda, ice, and a touch of juice—my favorite combo is raspberry vodka with a splash of pineapple.” —Lisa Lillien, Hungry Girl columnist



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