

Holiday safety doesn't take a holiday

As people are running around during the holiday season, they often overlook simple safety precautions. No matter where you're decorating or what you're buying, it is important to keep safety in mind.

Here are some tips to ensure everyone has a safe holiday season:

Indoors

- Never run electrical cords through doorways or under carpets and rugs.
- Always turn off holiday lights when you leave the house unattended or when going to bed.

Outdoors

- When hanging lights outdoors, keep electrical connectors above ground, out of puddles or snow and away from metal gutters.
- Remove lights promptly after the holidays to avoid damage caused by extended exposure to harsh weather conditions.

Avoid counterfeit product

- Avoid electrical products that are missing a label from an accredited certifi-



cation organization such as CSA International.

- Look for misspellings and unclear

print on products and labels.

- Check the "look and feel" of products. Fakes are often light and flimsy. ARA



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Holiday decor that blends trend and tradition

The holidays are full of traditions, from big family gatherings down to the simple pleasures like hot cocoa. When it seems like the whole world is in a festive mood, it's easy to get excited about checking off items on your traditional holiday to-do list, especially when it comes to decorating your home.

First, consider the overall decor you want to display. By combining modern design and classic traditions of holiday decorating, your home can become memorable - inside and out.

An important, but perhaps underestimated, element of holiday decorating is lights. Everyone knows they're necessary, but not many people think outside of the box when it comes to creating a unique display. More options exist today than ever before, from brilliant white or single colors to an array of jewel tones and all shapes and sizes that can customize your decor.

In these energy-conscious times, LED lights should contend for your attention. If their reputation for casting a cold glow

has kept you at bay, it's time to think again. Now, LED lights have the warmer tone that so many people seek while still offering longer life and lower energy expenditures than traditional bulbs. Since you can find them in almost all variations offered by traditional bulbs, your decorating options are wide open.

In addition, consider these new spins on holiday decorating:

● **Pop art:**

If you're feeling bold, make your holiday decorations all about of-the-moment color and modern details. Start with an artificial white tree, which you can find at home improvement retailers like Lowe's, complete with integrated lights that you don't need to re-string every year. The snowy white branches are the perfect backdrop to make brightly colored glass bulbs and baubles really stand out. Go for colors like fuchsia, apple green, lemon yellow and turquoise. For an extra "wow" factor, add even more lights - use multicolored strands that will ▶▶▶



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▶▶▶ play on the hues of your ornaments. Make your own tree skirt from brightly colored felt, and glue on small mirrors or silver-tone charms for extra sparkle.

● **Rustic:**

Think rich woods, earth tones and, of course, splashes of brick red for this upscale-yet-casual look. Stringing your tree with white and gold lights will give it a warm glow; play on that ambience with raffia garland and ornaments made of natural materials. Hang cable-knit socks on the mantle for another touch of cozy luxury. The key to this look is that it is glowing, rather than shiny. Try wrapping gifts in brown kraft paper and adding pops of color with ribbon in colors that match your decor.

● **Winter garden:**

We all love to see plants growing in the middle of winter, and this theme is all about the beauty of living flora. It's a simple palette, but one that will impart an elegant look: creamy white, red, touches of brown and green, green, green. While your tree is a traditional spruce or fir, look for opportunities to incorporate other plant textures, like spongy moss or magnolia leaves that are shiny dark green on the top and velvety brown on the bottom. Poinsettias are a perfect complement to this look, but this year, they're going high-tech. Getting started with your holiday decorating projects is as simple as going to your local home improvement store to stock up on what you need. Then it's time to get the whole family involved with making your home look holiday-perfect - just another tradition that makes this such a fun time of year.



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Conway Scenic Railroad kicks off the Holiday Season with its annual Santa's Holiday Express beginning on Friday of Thanksgiving weekend, then running Saturdays and Sundays only through December 19th.

There will be departures to Conway at 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon from the railroad's historic station in North Conway Village, and Santa will be on board with a small surprise in his bag for each child. Joining him this year will be Puck and Elvey, two mischievous elves who will be sharing their hot chocolate and cookies with everyone on the train. They'll take your picture, too, if you ask nicely, so be sure to bring your camera!

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Take the stress out of holiday home decor

Creating the most festive home for the holidays is every hostess's goal - with red bows and twinkling lights, the aroma of cinnamon or evergreen and the classic sounds of Nat King Cole and Bing Crosby playing in the background. A festive and safe holiday atmosphere is just moments away with these helpful hints:

- **Picking the perfect evergreen:** When selecting a live Christmas tree or evergreens, inspection is key to ensure it is truly fresh cut. Touch the branches to test for moistness of the needles and inspect the tree trunk. Many trees are painted to look fresher, and this can be discovered by inspecting the tree trunk. Once at home, position the evergreens away from heat sources and keep the tree stand filled with water to prevent it from drying out.
- **A sweet-smelling atmosphere:** Aromas of cinnamon, spiced grapefruit and peppermint bring a warm, inviting environment to any holiday party or family night together at home. Creating a fra-

grant home environment safely is simple with Scentsy wickless candles, which also add holiday decor accents to your home.

- **Brightening the home:** Whether white, multi-colored or twinkling, it's important to examine Christmas lights when decorating indoors or outdoors. Check each strand for fraying wires and replace any burnt-out bulbs. Also, be careful when using ladders to hang lights and remember not to overload extension cords with too many strands.
- **Storing for next year:** To simplify next year's transformation, organize decorations and clearly label each box. Give each box a number so you know where to start the decorating process. To avoid the inevitable ball of tangled lights, wrap each strand around a rolled up magazine. This will prevent any damage to the strands. Advance preparation when transforming a home for the holidays can help make the season less stressful and more enjoyable. After all, it's the most wonderful time of the year. (ARA)





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Great 'green' Christmas gifts for all kinds of guys

We may never know why it's more difficult to shop for men. Whether they're car guys, sports fanatics or techies, coming up with just the right gift for the men in our lives can stymie even the most creative shopper, especially if you're trying to put a little "green" under the tree.

If it's the thought that counts, buying green is the way to go; and with more quality green gift options, it's never been easier. So if you want the men in your life to be a little greener, without sacrificing features, quality or style, here are some green gift ideas, categorized by types of guys:

● **The gadget guru**

Tech guys love to get their hands on every cool new gadget as soon as it hits the market. All those gadgets need power, so consider a USB-compatible solar charging device. These chargers use solar power to juice up virtually any gadget that has a USB power port. You can find ones made for cell phones, MP3 players and practically any other digital product.

● **The sharp dresser**

Is he convinced that the song "Sharp Dressed Man" was written just for him? Clean shirt, new shoes ... for the well-dressed man, green can be more than just a color. Thanks to clothing made from materials such as recycled water bottles, you'll be doing good, while making him look good. The well-known men's apparel brand, Haggar, offers chinos, cargos and dress pants made with Repreve, a recycled fiber made from recycled plastic bottles. Check them out at retailers across the country, including Macy's, JCPenney, Kohl's and Belk.

● **The outdoorsman**

Does he spend hours, days even, perfecting the landscape at the house? Hardware and home improvement stores can be a great place to find solar powered pathway lights so he can showcase his masterpiece. Or if he likes to garden, consider getting him a composting kit. If he loves to explore the great outdoors, camping gear such as backpacks that convert

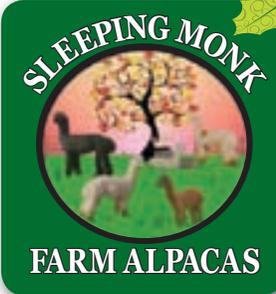
solar power into electricity, hand-cranked radios, and flashlights that power up with a few good shakes are all great options.

● **The handyman**

Sure, he's gone through the house caulking and sealing every possible crack where heat could escape, and he's replaced every incandescent bulb in the house with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). But does he yearn to do even more to conserve energy and reduce your home's carbon footprint?

Buy him his own voltage measuring device. All he has to do is plug an appliance into the device and it will display exactly how much power in kilowatt hours the appliance uses. He'll be able to tell what items in the house are the surprising power gobblers, and calculate electrical expenses down to the day if he so desires.

The Internet has made finding green gifts easier than ever. With a simple online search and a little creativity, you can find the right eco-friendly gift for practically every kind of guy on your list. (ARA)



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Ensure your holiday shopping list is complete

When you sit down to create your holiday list, you might want to add a couple of extra things to make your list complete. That way you don't need to make an emergency run to the store during the busy holiday season because your gift isn't quite ready. So what are these extras that need to be on your list?

● **Batteries** - If you're shopping for electronics or children's toys, the gift is not complete unless you provide the needed batteries. Consider giving rechargeable batteries and a charging station so your family member or friend won't have to continuously replace batteries.

● **Wrapping paper and supplies** - It's the worst-case scenario. You finish a full day of shopping in winter conditions with every single other person in town, lug all the gifts into your house, take off all your cold weather gear, go to the closet where you store the wrapping paper, and ... oh no, you have nothing for the holiday season.

Be sure to check your supplies, in-

cluding tape, ribbons, bows, scissors and gift tags early on as you're creating your shopping list.

● **Shipping materials** - Before you go shopping, add any necessary packing and shipping materials to your list. Or, plan to shop online, and have the gifts delivered directly to their final destination. You can find plenty of coupon codes for the gifts on your shopping list at Coupon-Heaven.com.

● **Gift receipts** - Make a little note at the top of your list, so you don't forget as you're looking for the shortest checkout line and trying to remember everything; including using any printable coupons you downloaded from ShoppersResource.com.

Because the holiday season is so hectic, use these shopping tips to be better prepared before you hit the stores looking for deals. And if you stay organized, you might be able to get a little free time for yourself and actually celebrate the season. (ARA)





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How to create holiday gifts that speak volumes

The holidays have everyone in search of a gift that has a "wow" factor but won't break the bank. Thanks to new print-on-demand technology, anyone can easily create and publish bookstore-quality books at a reasonable cost - even under \$20. A custom book made by you is a meaningful gift that's sure to delight your friends and family and still be budget friendly.

Samira Kordestani, a professional book designer, offers these tips to help you get started on your own masterpiece:

- Choose a publishing platform that gives you professional-quality options at a reasonable cost. Blurb.com's free BookSmart app enables anyone to design a beautiful book. Select from many book sizes, small or large, and simply drag and drop your photos into the professionally-designed layouts of your choice. Once you order your book, it takes only one week to publish and deliver it to your doorstep.
- Decide on a story or message for your book. Great books tell a story.

Whether it's an event or a themed collection of images, think about your vision for the book before you begin and then select your favorite photos to help tell your story.

- Remember that you are creating a visual experience, not just a book. Play around with design options on your first several pages. Try out different backgrounds, photo borders, and page layouts. Once you've discovered the look you like best, keep it consistent throughout your book so that each page has a connection with the next.

A few popular book ideas include:

- **Family photo book.** Photos of your family's adventures and special memories are perfect for sharing. Select your favorite family photos from 2010 and create a book that documents your year in images. The grandparents will love it.
- **Cookbook.** Most foodies dream of seeing their recipes in a cookbook. Publish your own and share it with friends and family.



- **Wedding book.** If wedding bells rang for you in 2010, creating a wedding photo book for your extended family is guaranteed to get "oohs" and "aahs."
- **Travel book.** Travel memories are fun to share and make for a colorful photo book. Whether you embarked on a road trip or jetted to an exotic locale, pick out your best vacation photos to create a stunning travel book.
- **Children's book.** Turn your artistic or written talents into something truly special for the little ones in your family.

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Seasonal decorating ideas to brighten the home

Getting a home ready for the busy holiday season and guests can leave even the most prepared planners overwhelmed. But you don't need to be. With the right inspiration and some handy tips, you can easily spread cheer from room to room.

Simple updates can change the whole look of a room. For example, a fresh coat of paint and some new throw pillows may be all you need to settle in for the season, whether you are ringing in the new year with a bash or curling up by a crackling fire.

● **Small Changes, Big Results**

Adding thoughtful but less expensive touches can make family and friends feel at home. Consider adding some festive updates like embroidered towels for the powder room, a new throw rug or painting in the entryway, or an accent wall behind the Christmas tree.

Picking your favorite color from a room and highlighting it on one wall will create a dramatic pop of color. Try a darker shade for a cozy feel or a brighter color to lift the spirits of your guests.

● **Set the Mood**

More than 80 percent of re-decorators believe interior wall colors and decor can affect mood. To ensure you get the right shade and mood with your new paint color, first prime your walls with a primer like KILZ Clean Start. If you're going from a bright color to a neutral one, a special primer, such as KILZ Premium, will hide evidence of your former bright shades.

Also, keep in mind a decor change can be done in less conventional ways, such as painting a ceiling or the back of your built-in bookcase.

● **Stay True to You**

One of the most challenging parts of decorating for the holidays is choosing a color theme. It's easy to stick to the popular seasonal colors and designs, but not all holiday decorating trends complement your personal style and home decor.

Try to find a balance between being trendy and your personal style. The decorating process will feel a lot less risky and you will be happier with the end results.



Visit www.kilzrollerreport.com for more information on the study and tips from LaPorta.

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Here are some ideas for filling those stockings for \$25 or less:

● **For Photo Lovers:** Put all those family photos to good use by creating customized photo gifts and keepsakes. You can make your own at Snapily.com, which lets you take ordinary digital images and use them to create customized notebooks, bookmarks, scrapbook pages, photo cards and more.

The cost is \$16.99 for large ones and \$9.99 for small ones.

● **For Ladies who Love Being Spoiled:** Bring the spa to her bathroom. For example, Lush Bath Bombs replace boring old bath salts to make bath time more soothing. They cost only \$3.95 to \$6.95. Learn more at lushusa.com.

● **For Men who Love Being Spoiled:** It's not only ladies who like luxuriating. A Spafinder.com gift certificate

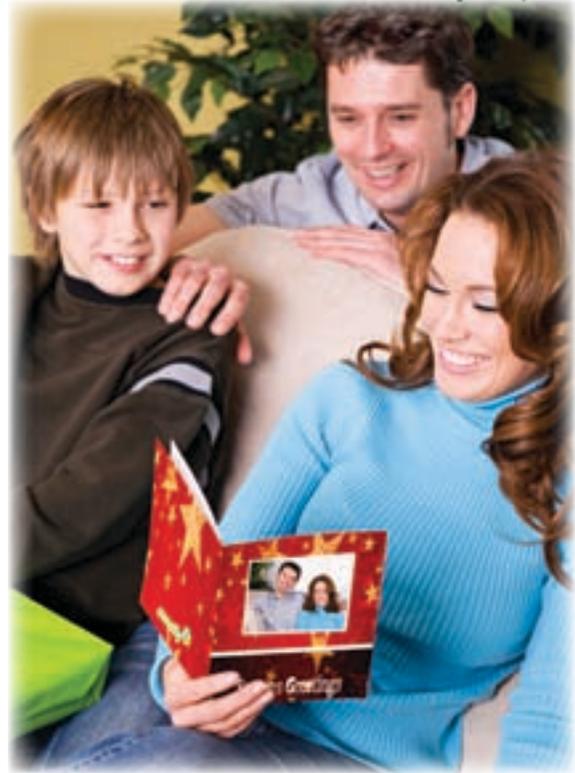
is a great way to show your man you adore him, or that maybe he's in need of some manscaping. Prices start around \$25. If you get one for yourself too, you can make a spa date!

● **For Music Lovers:** Grab an iTunes gift card online at store.apple.com. You can pick any amount - \$25 is generous.

● **For the Environmentally Conscious:** Help your do-gooder loved ones do their part for the environment with a handy market tote.

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● **For Chocolate Lovers:** Almost everyone likes chocolate. The Holiday Morsel Dozen from Fairytale Brownies is a perfect stocking stuffer and tastes the way it sounds - like a beautiful fairytale you never want to end. And even better, these babies only cost \$22.90. Learn more at brownies.com.



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● **MP3 player**

Everyone wants to take their music, videos and photos with them wherever they go, and MP3 players are perfect for on-the-fly multimedia enjoyment. New players are easy to use and come loaded with great features. The Sansa Fuze+ is compatible with most major media formats including AAC/M4A (DRM-free iTunes songs) as well as Windows, Mac and Linux operating systems. Available in red, white, black, blue and purple, the 4 and 8 gigabyte versions sell for \$79 and \$89, respectively (a 16GB version goes for \$119).

● **Fitness tracker**

She works hard, plays hard and gives every workout 100 percent. She would probably love to know exactly how much benefit she's getting from her workout. An array of palm-sized devices is available to help her track her personal fitness level. Some measure and record calories burned or miles walked. Others check and record heart rate, blood pressure, body mass index and other health indicators.

● **Solar chargers**

Who hasn't been caught with a dead battery and no charger? Virtually all our favorite gadgets, from smart phones to GPS devices, have their own charger. A solar charger offers a greener, easier solution to the lost charger dilemma. These devices are designed to use the power of the sun to power up a variety of different kinds of devices. Before you buy any charger, however, be sure it's compatible with the device she'll need to charge.

● **Universal remote**

You might remember when these



units first appeared on the scene - it was around the time that we started connecting multiple devices to our TVs. Suddenly, we had a remote control not just for the television or the VCR, but for the DVD player, surround sound system, Internet device and more. Universal remotes used to be somewhat less than universal, but advances in the technology have made it easy to find remotes that will work with multiple types of devices from a variety of manufacturers. (ARA)



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Protect your identity and money this holiday season

To protect consumers during the holiday shopping season, the experts at Capital One are offering these simple tips.

At the Mall: No matter where you shop, be careful during the hectic holiday season.

● **Streamline your wallet:** Before shopping, clean out your wallet and take only credit cards, checks and/or cash that you need.

● **Be aware of your surroundings:** Be conscious of other shoppers standing nearby when you are making purchases. Identity thieves have been known to copy credit card information or take pictures of cards on their cell phones.

● **Don't leave valuables in your car:** Your car's glove compartment isn't a secret hiding place. Wallets left in glove compartments account for thousands of credit card thefts every year.

Shopping Online: Be vigilant in cyberspace, especially when shopping on a Web site that's new to you.

● **Only use secure sites:** When you're asked to provide payment informa-

tion, the beginning of a Web site's URL address should change from http to https or https, indicating that the purchase is encrypted or secured.

● **Consider how you'll pay:** Credit cards generally are a safe option because they allow buyers to receive credit from the issuer if the product isn't delivered. Don't ever send cash or use a money-wiring service because you'll have no recourse if something goes wrong.

● **Use caution with social media:** Retailers increasingly use social media to promote deals and disseminate coupons.

● **Keep your password private:** When selecting a password for an e-commerce site, do not use commonly known information, such as family names, birthdates, or numbers from your driver's license or Social Security number.

If you are a victim of identity theft, make sure to report it immediately to one of the three credit reporting agencies -- TransUnion, Experian or Equifax -- and file a police report.



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How to give and know you're doing some good



Wouldn't it feel good this holiday season to know your contributions are really making a difference? Knowing who your donation benefits can help make the act of giving even more enriching for you and the recipient of your generosity.

● **Donate your time**

If you want to be confident your charitable giving is really making a difference, donating your time to a worthy cause is a good option.

Are you handy around the house? Contribute your time to an organization that builds or repairs homes for those in need. Perhaps you're a good cook or a deft server? Volunteer to prepare or serve meals at your local soup kitchen. Do you get along well with kids? Contact churches or homeless shelters in your area and volunteer for their child care programs.

● **Finance a micro loan**

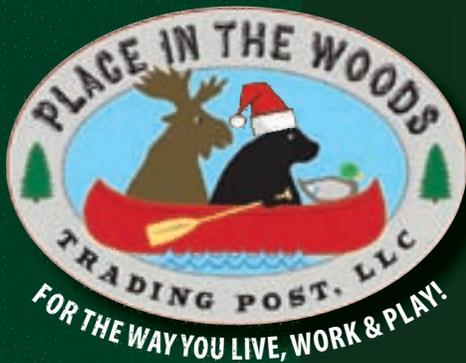
Money is often what people in need require most. Yet if you believe the old adage "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and



you feed him for a lifetime" you may feel hesitant to just hand over cash without knowing your donation will help the recipient build a better future for themselves. Funding a microfinance loan for a small business owner in a developing country is a great way to ensure your donation not only helps someone immediately, but helps create a better future as well.

Organizations like World Vision provide micro loans - ranging from \$25 to \$5,000 - to small businesses in Mexico, the Philippines, Kenya and Rwanda. Through the organization's website, www.worldvisionmicro.org, you can fund a loan - entirely or partially. What's more, you can select the entrepreneur you would like to help and designate exactly how much to loan that person. The website provides details on business owners, why each needs a loan, and how they will use the loan. After you've made a loan, you'll get reports on how your chosen entrepreneur has spent the money, how his or her business is faring and how the entrepreneur is re-investing profits.

Your loan is recorded as a tax-deductible monetary donation. When borrowers repay their loans, their funds go back into World Vision's local community bank and the money is loaned out again to help other entrepreneurs in the same community. The repayment rate for World Vision loans is nearly 99 percent. (ARA)



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Hillsboro Pride
Presents

Saturday
Dec. 4, 2010

Refreshments & Entertainment, Schedule of Events:

- 7am-10am: All You Can Eat DARE Breakfast, Masonic Lodge, Gay Ave.
- 9am-12pm: Cookie Walk, Smith Memorial Church, Main St.
- 9am-2pm: White Elephant Sale, St. Mary's Church, Church St.
- 9am-2pm: Christmas Fair, United Methodist Church, Main St.
- 9am-4pm: Christmas Tree Sales, Hillsboro Lions Club, Main St.
- 10am-3pm: Artisan's Holiday Sale, Nonni's, Central Square
- 10am-4pm: Christmas Wreath Sale, Boy Scouts, Moose Club, School St.
- 10:30am: Puppet Show, Fuller Public Library, School St.
- 12pm-1pm: Christmas Luncheon, United Methodist Church, Main St.
- 3pm-5pm: Christmas Concert, Valley Bible Chapel, Main St.
- 2pm-4pm: Free Photos w/Santa, Red Coat Realty & Travel, Moose Club, School St.
- 2pm-4pm: Girl Scouts, Kid's Crafts, Moose Club, School St.
- 5-5:30pm: Carols, Butler Park
- 5pm-6pm: Free Hot Cider, Butler Park, Main St.
- 5:30pm: Santa's Parade & Tree Lighting, Butler Park, Main St.

Attend at least (5) venues and be eligible for Dinner for Two at Tooky Mills

(Compliments of The Messenger)

Have a host initial your attendance at each venue and turn in at the Tree Lighting

Name: _____ Telephone # _____

Tips to protect your holiday purchases



If you are like most holiday shoppers, you will spend a lot on gifts this season. Indeed, the average American typically purchases around \$700 worth of presents during the holidays, according to national retail statistics. So, in addition to buying items recipients actually want, make sure to protect your sizable investments.

● **Know the Rules**

Before reaching for your wallet, investigate a retailer's refund and return policies whether you are shopping at a store or online. Read these policies carefully, as they sometimes change around the holidays and there even may be different rules when buying from a retailer online. Must you keep the original packaging to return or exchange an item? Is there a restocking fee? How much time does the recipient have to make a return?

● **Extend Protection**

When it comes to expensive gifts such as electronics, appliances, cell phones and automobiles, consider opting for extended service contracts that provide

coverage above and beyond the manufacturer's warranty. The better plans protect you from unexpected repair or replacement charges and offer extra services like 24/7 tech support to troubleshoot problems.

It's always important to review the terms and conditions of any plan. For starters, find out if the plan is transferable to the gift recipient. Is accidental damage covered? Does it include a "no lemon" policy - meaning, will it replace products that aren't able to be repaired?

● **Save and Track**

Save all receipts and request gift receipts to include with your presents. If you buy online or are having gifts shipped, keep printouts of email confirmations and Web pages containing order details. And save confirmation numbers. All this could come in handy if the recipient of your gift needs a refund or exchange.

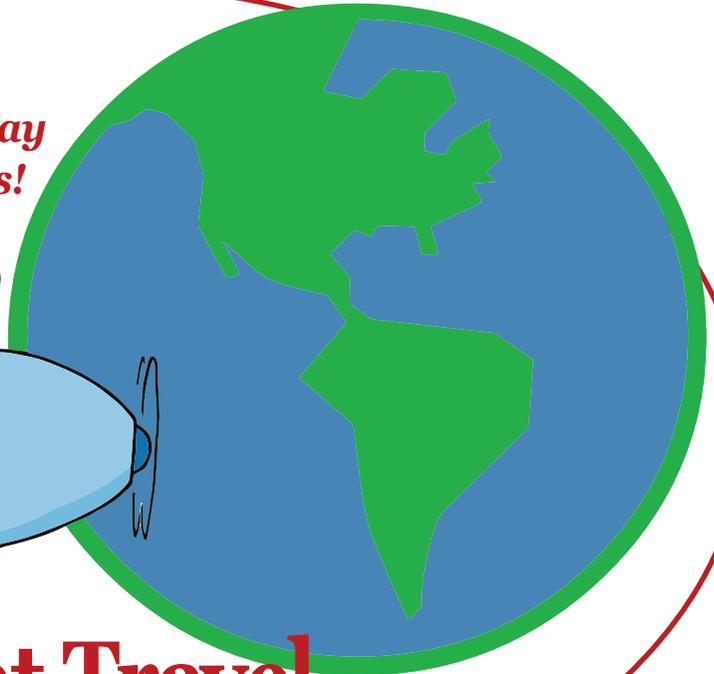
● **Choose Proper Accessories**

You've gone to all that trouble to choose a perfect gift. Don't make the mis-



take of choosing the wrong accessories. Be sure to select the right cords, cables, power packs, and chargers from the manufacturer. Holiday presents can cost a bundle, so do your best to protect them!

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