

## L2 Smart Life

Have you ever wondered what cola can do? Most people just take a sip and enjoy this cold, sweet beverage. However, cola is not just a drink. Under the right circumstances, this ordinary item will perform magic—it can remove rust. You don't believe it? In fact, many household objects can be a great help to us in our daily lives, as long as we know how to use them.

On the surface, cola seems to be the same as any other beverage. Most of the ingredients in this type of soda are common: water, sugar, and flavorings. Yet, cola contains a special ingredient—acid. This is why cola can help with the rust problems. Find a rusty object, soak it in cola, and leave it overnight. Then, the acid in the soda will eat away at the rust and make it easy to wipe away the next morning.

Sugar cubes, another common item, can perform magic as well. If you put a few cubes into a container of cookies, the cookies will stay fresh and crisp. Why is that? The sugar can absorb the natural moisture in the air, so it is able to prevent the cookies from going soft. Just throw a few sugar cubes into your cookie jar, and your cookies will last a lot longer.

Then, how about bad refrigerator odors? Do you know how to get rid of them? Believe it or not, used tea bags can do the trick. It seems that a used tea bag is good for nothing, but in fact, it is the perfect thing for this job. If you collect some used tea bags and put them in the refrigerator, they will absorb any bad odors in the refrigerator. This trick doesn't even cost you a penny!

Science is not only for laboratories. It is alive and in use all around you. Learning about the "magic" in common things around your house can be fun. With some basic scientific knowledge, you will know how to get the most out of your household objects. Then, next time you have a problem, you'll know what to do!

#### L4 Fast Food or Fatty food

These days, fast food is very popular worldwide, and many people like it very much. However, according to a study, people who eat fast food more than twice a week gain weight more easily than those who eat it less than once a week. Another study shows that children who start eating fatty food at an early age are more likely to become unhealthy.

Here is a real example of how eating fast food can damage one's health. In 2003, an American filmmaker, Morgan Spurlock, did an interesting but shocking experiment. To find out how fast food would affect a person's health, Spurlock ate three meals a day at McDonald's for 30 days. After drinking milkshakes and eating hamburgers and French fries for a month, he found that he had gained around 11 kilograms. He also began to suffer liver damage and terrible mood swings. Later, Spurlock made his eating experience into a movie which was called *Super Size Me*. Since more and more people in Asia are eating fast food, *Super Size Me* is a film that Asians should see.

Though all the big names in the fast-food industry McDonald's, KFC, Burger King are from the United States, more Asians now eat at these restaurants than Americans. There is an important reason why fast food is so popular in Asia. Many Asians today are busy with school and work, so they rarely eat at home. They choose to eat fast food because it can easily replace homemade meals. However, unlike most Asian food, food in places like McDonald's has a lot more salt and fat. As a result, more and more Asians are getting fat. In Taiwan, at least 30 percent of children eat fast food once a week, and over 25 percent of children are overweight.

Is there any way to stop this trend toward eating fatty food? Some customers have complained that fast food makes them fat. They think that they should be warned about the health risks of fast food. These complaints might force fast-food restaurants to make some changes to their menus. In fact, many fast-food restaurants now list calorie counts on their menus. They even offer salads and fresh fruit in order to attract more customers. Maybe it's time for everyone to cut down on fatty food and start having a healthy diet.

## L6 A LOHAS Life

A student is preparing for school in the morning. She washes her face with a natural cleanser and dries her face with an organic cotton towel. For breakfast, she eats an organic egg and some fresh fruit. This breakfast will give her the energy she needs to ride her bike to school. After finishing her breakfast, she puts the chopsticks and spoon that she will need at lunch into her school bag. Then, she makes sure all the lights in her home are off, and she starts her ride to school. What the student does is an example of LOHAS. The term “LOHAS” stands for “Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability.” In the beginning, it simply meant the marketplace for goods that focused on the environment, people’s health, and sustainable living. Gradually, it has become a term describing a healthy and eco-friendly lifestyle.

LOHAS helps to protect the environment. Meanwhile, it makes people healthier. LOHAS followers try to take care of the earth by thinking carefully about the food they eat, the things they buy, the energy they use, and so on. For instance, they eat organic vegetables because these vegetables are not grown with agricultural chemicals that may pollute the water and soil. They take the stairs rather than the elevators so that they can save more electricity. Because of this new trend, more and more companies are now offering LOHAS goods. Moreover, people leading a LOHAS lifestyle are now thought to be cool.

Living a LOHAS lifestyle is not difficult, and we can all become eco-friendly people by acting on the following suggestions. We can walk or take a bus instead of riding a scooter. We can reuse and recycle plastic bottles. Using both sides of paper for printing or copying is also a good idea. In addition, we can use fewer tissues by carrying a handkerchief with us. When shopping, we can bring our own shopping bags instead of using the paper or plastic bags from the stores.

Small changes in our habits can make a big difference to the earth. So, what are you waiting for? Become a LOHAS follower—this will benefit not only ourselves, but also the planet that we live on.

## L7 It's Well Made in Taiwan

In the years that followed World War II, many people believed that Taiwan was nothing more than a small island in the Pacific Ocean. Many people also believed that Taiwan had no real influence on the rest of the world. In the past, when people thought of Taiwan, the first thing that came to mind was cheap products. The words "Made in Taiwan" on products, for instance, usually gave the impression that these goods would be of poor quality. Now, however, things are very different. Today, it is considered that Taiwan produces many high-quality products, such as saxophones and bicycles.

Believe it or not, many of the world's saxophones are actually made in Houli, a small town in central Taiwan. It all began after World War II, when a young Houli resident, Zhang Lian-chang, received a damaged saxophone and repaired it. While Zhang was repairing the saxophone, he had an idea—he wanted to make his own saxophone. After many failures, he was finally able to manufacture this musical instrument. Then, he opened a saxophone factory. Zhang shared his knowledge with other Houli residents, who then opened their own saxophone factories. Shortly after this, Houli became famous for producing the best saxophones in the world. Today, more than 30,000 saxophones are produced in Houli every year. In fact, each factory there makes about 300 saxophones every month.

Taiwan also makes some of the most popular bicycles in the world. Giant was founded in 1972 by King Liu. At first, Giant mostly manufactured products for overseas companies. In 1986, however, it lost its biggest customer. As a result, Liu decided to make his own brand of bicycle. Thanks to great design work and careful attention to detail, Giant became a success. In 2001, Giant, which is based in Taichung, was named by Forbes as one of the best companies in the world. In the years that followed, some of its products were even named "Bike of the Year." In Shanghai, China, Giant is said to be the most stolen brand of bicycle.

Taiwan is a small island. However, it is making a big impact on the world with its innovative manufacturers and high-quality products.