How To

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General Guidelines

- Precisely explain how to accomplish a task in roughly 400 to 500 words.
- Be specific and thorough. If you are writing an article called "How to Dance the Samba," provide exclusive information that applies to the samba dance as opposed to writing general dance instructions.
- You must complete the difficulty rating, introduction, at least three steps, keywords and references field.

Rate the Difficulty of Your How to Article

Rate the difficulty of completing the task according to the following criteria:

- **Easy:** Anyone can do it.
- **Moderately Easy:** Just about anyone can do it.
- **Moderate:** Activity requires some concentration and preparation.
- **Moderately Challenging:** Activity may require multiple attempts before it is executed properly.
- **Challenging:** Activity requires a certain amount of expertise or physical fitness.

Write a Brief Introduction

Refer to the [Introduction](#) section for further clarification.

The introduction should ideally contain 25 to 100 words unless otherwise specified by the site notes for the article.

Images

- How To, Topic View and Topic View Lite articles should contain one image, which will appear with the introduction of your article.
- Some templates allow multiple images to be added; however, unless explicitly directed to add multiple images by an editor, do not upload more than one image.
- Horizontal images are preferred over vertical.
- If you are unable to find a suitable image for your article, you may submit for review without one.

Things You'll Need

List all the ingredients, tools, gear, supplies or materials needed to complete the specified task. Be sure to list only each item (and not how it will be used) in the order it is mentioned in the steps. Do not include intangibles, such as "time to complete the task," "an open mind" or "patience," or implied items (such as "Internet connection" for a title about performing tasks on the Internet).

Capitalize the first letter in the first word of each item, and don't use articles, such as "a," "the" and "an," to introduce items. See examples below:

> **CORRECT:**
> Spoon
> Ice bucket
> ½ cup flour
> 2 staplers
>
> **WRONG:**
> Spoon to stir the liquid
> An Ice Bucket
> A Half Cup of Flour
> Two Staplers
> Cooking Experience

For clarity, separate numerals and amounts when an item requires both. For example, write 4 bolts, 1/4-inch, as opposed to 4 1/4 inch bolts.

Add Article Steps

- Complete at least three steps (but ideally include five to seven) in chronological or logical order. Clearly outline the actions a reader must take to complete the stated objective.
- Start each step with an actionable verb, and tell readers precisely what they need to do, without generalizing. For example, write "Insert the tube of caulk into the caulking gun with the tube nozzle pointing away from the trigger," instead of "Fill caulking gun with caulk." Stick to strong, concrete actionable verbs. For titles that call for a mental process, such as "How to Plan for Your Retirement" and "How to Feel Better About Your Legs," thought-processed verbs like "Consider" and "Plan" are acceptable only if you cannot use a strong, actionable verb.
- Each step should be short and concise, ideally about two or three sentences. It can be longer if information essential to completing the step must be provided. Consider the flow of the steps within the article when determining step length. Avoid stilted or choppy steps, as well as lengthy, convoluted steps.
- Refrain from stating the obvious. For an article entitled "How to Attach a New

Cable Box to a TV," don't start with "Open the box and remove the cable box from it. Unwrap the packaging around the cable box." Instead, go directly to the task.

- Do not refer to the order of the tasks within the steps. For example, don't write "The first thing you must do is ..." in Step 1. The reader knows it's the first thing: Step 1 was the clue. Do not refer to the action in previous steps, unless you must do so to clarify an instruction.

CORRECT:

Step 1: Split the wire in two. Firmly grip the two sides in each hand, and gently pull apart until you separate an inch of wire.
Step 2: Attach the ends to the coaxial cable. Screw the connector into the end of the cable.

WRONG:

Step 1: First, you'll need to split the wire in two. Then, firmly grip the two sides in each hand, and gently pull apart until you separate an inch of wire.
Step 2: Now that you've split the wire in two, attach the ends to the coaxial cable. Screw the connector into the end of the cable.

Steps 1 through 3 are required.

Add Tips to Your Article

Provide additional information and/or offer further advice. An example tip might be: "If you are diabetic, you can leave the sugar out of the pie or use 5 tsp. of artificial sweetener instead."
Order tips from most important to least important. Do not repeat steps in the Tips section, and do not use the Tips box to summarize steps or the article.

Add Warnings to Your Article

Note any possible dangerous consequences, risks or undesirable results that can occur when following the steps. Order warnings from most important to least important.

Location

Include a location name or address that directly relates to your article if your article is location-based. The main objective of this section is to categorize the article using the lowest common denominator for all locations mentioned. See examples below:

- If your article is titled "Things to do in Chicago," type Chicago in the city box, and select Illinois from the state pull-down menu.
- If your article is titled "Best Shops on Armitage Avenue in Chicago's Lincoln Park," type Chicago, select Illinois, and add 60614 to the postal code box.
- If your article is "Best Ways to Explore Disneyland," type the street address of Disneyland.
- If your article is "Backpacking Through Eastern Europe," type "Eastern Europe" in the Region box.

Key Concepts

Refer to the [Key Concepts](#) section for further clarification.

Each article must contain at least three unique "key concepts" in separate boxes, which concisely summarize what the article is about. Key concepts (or tags) are the phrases the reader uses to search for the subject of your article.

References and Sources

Refer to the [References/Sources](#) section for more information.

- The References field is used to cite external sources and reference any material you used for your research. Sources enhance an article, improve the quality and lend a tremendous amount of credibility to your work.
- Only reference websites of establishments you used directly for your research. For example, if you are writing about the Hard Rock Cafe in London and included the date it opened, reference the exact website from which you drew the information in the References section. Include the longer URL, such as: http://www.hardrock.com/locations/cafes3/cafe.aspx?LocationID=91&MIBEnumID=3, with the appropriate link text. However, if you did not use any information from the establishment's website as research, do not reference it.
- Never regurgitate one source's list. A list taken from another publication or website (including repeating the same subheads) will be considered plagiarism.
- The Resources field provides pertinent information that expands on the article content. It is separate from the References section, which is used to cite material used as research. Think of this as suggested reading for the audience.

Example

[How to Fix a Peeling, Bonded Leather Sofa](#)