



Health & Safety



A little help with the yard work, please

No matter what kind of house you get, sooner or later, there's going to be yard work. According to Home Advisor, the average cost of landscaping in 2020 was \$3,318.

If that sounds plenty salty, imagine a \$10 million home. According to Business Insider, this property will cost \$100,000 or more per year, just for landscaping.

Take these examples:

- Rapper 50 Cent. In 2019, he sold a \$2.9 million Connecticut mansion. The taxes, upkeep, and landscaping ran \$70,000 per year.

- Michael Jackson. The lush gardens and grounds of Neverland reportedly cost \$95,000 per month for the front of the house which, among other things, featured a lavish carpet of red and white flowers.

- At President Trump's Mar-a-Lago property, it costs more than \$100,000 per year just to mow 20 acres of lawn, including two grass croquet courts and a putting green, according to Lawn Starter. That wouldn't include lawn treatments or maintenance. It also takes a crew of five to 10 people to do it.

Smartphone pinky joins list of tech injuries

Cell Phone Elbow, Smartphone Neck Pain, Texting Claw and now Smartphone Pinky, the newest tech injury.

No one has studied Smartphone Pinky yet, but a plethora of Twitter, Instagram and TikTok users claim it's real with photographic evidence.

Supposedly a dent appears in the little finger on the middle bone. Sometimes people say the position of their pinky changes, or that the finger starts to sway downward from the knuckle.

You might check yours.

Although the supposed malady is debated, notice that most people do hold their phones so that the little finger takes most of the weight.

According to The Conversation, the change in the little finger might well be just a soft tissue compression from the constant weight of the phone. Unlike Cell Phone Elbow, no one has reported actual pain from the little finger.

With Cell Phone Elbow, pain and tingling in the forearm and little finger come from holding a mobile phone up to the ear or holding it while lying in bed for a long time. The pain comes from the shoulder rubbing the ulnar nerve, one of the major nerves in the arm. Just six minutes of those postures increases the strain on the nerve by 69 percent.

Texting Claw is a repetitive strain injury that presents as pain in the thumb and wrist. It comes from making small repetitive movement with the thumb against the screen. Reduced texting appears to alleviate the problem.

Finally, neck pain can come from staring down at a screen for a prolonged period, which increases strain on the shoulder blade.



How to filter noise in open-plan office

The beauty of open-plan offices...no barrier to communication, flow of ideas, people connect, gossip ensues, conversations buzz . . .

But what if you have to actually concentrate to work?

Those who struggle with distracting noise have probably tried it all: Noise cancelling headphones, white noise through earbuds and plain old-fashioned ear plugs. Each approach has its advantages and drawbacks.

Noise-cancelling headphones are perfect for any situation in which there is a constant, low-frequency noise: the constant engine hum of an airplane or a freighter, for example. But the irregular noise of conversations might seep through. High-end noise-cancelling headphones are expensive, but several brands, including Bose, are said to work well in office settings.

White noise played through Apple AirPods can genuinely filter out office noise. But it has a serious drawback for your hearing. According to Rachel Becker writing in The Verge, hearing experts say white noise is deceptively quiet. You might think you are playing a low noise but the noise could be much louder than you think. Sound played loudly and for a long time is the worst possible thing for your hearing.

As it happens, earplugs are probably the best for

Maximum Hip

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Across

1. Snail mail org.
5. Union foe
9. Skirt feature
10. Continental currency
11. Car
12. Like Death Valley
13. In frightened manner
15. Place for a stud
16. Type of optical telescope
22. Mélange
23. Vagabond
24. Norway's capital
25. Matinee hero
26. Be rife (with)
27. Coward of note

Down

1. Thunderbirds' org.
2. Pivot
3. Hummus holder
4. Place for supplies
5. Sand-dollar relative
6. Ringlelet
7. Seed covering
8. Torso
14. J.F.K. regulators

16. Tooth part
17. Choice word
18. Manicurist's tool
19. ___ list
20. Wind instrument
21. Throw, as dice

The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

[Click Here To Peek at Answers](#)

cancelling ambient noise, and they are an inexpensive solution. They fit tightly in the ears, and unlike with AirPods, the ambient sound doesn't filter in. At the same time they don't jangle your inner ear and affect your hearing. The drawback is that they can be annoying to wear.

Check out the Noise Reduction Rating from 16 to 34. An NRR in the 16-20 will allow you to hear someone speak to you, or allow you to hear music at a concert, but it will lower the general volume. If that isn't enough, you can find disposable foam inserts with very high NRR, although they aren't subtle. For problems not solved by any over-the-counter brand, custom earplugs run about \$1,000, and are available from many companies online.



"Trimmed, but not so much that I can't claw up the furniture."

Your car is watching you and that might be good news

Your auto insurance rates could soon be set based on how you, personally, drive -- not on your statistical risk.

General Motors Co. (GM) has launched an auto insurance program with its OnStar subsidiary to match data on driving patterns and usage to insurance costs. Tesla and Ford have also announced initiatives, according to Claims Journal.

Right now, insurance companies use criteria such as age, gender, neighborhood and/or credit scores to set insurance prices. Consumer advocates have found this unfair because a good driver could live in an unsafe neighborhood.

The mechanism of future insurance pricing will come from telematics -- devices that collect real-time information on driving patterns and use. According to JD Power, demand for insurance based on telematics has increased during the pandemic as customers, working from home, thought they could save money on insurance.

What that could mean for good drivers and drivers who don't drive much is lower rates. Bad drivers would get higher rates. Depending on how the technology is deployed, drivers might get real-time feedback about how they are doing, according to the Insurance Information Institute (III). That could be like having a permanent back-seat driver who is always right. But drivers do respond when they have incentives to drive better, according to iii.org.

A study by Willis Towers Watson showed that, in commercial fleets monitored by telematics, crash rates fell by 80 percent.

But will drivers have privacy concerns or will they resent having their every driving move monitored? Another survey by Willis Towers Watson suggests not. Resistance to the idea of



cars monitoring driving is low, about seven percent.

GM will use data from its on-board concierge service, OnStar. The service helps drivers in emergencies and with navigation, but it also collects data on driving patterns. It takes special note of hard braking and acceleration.

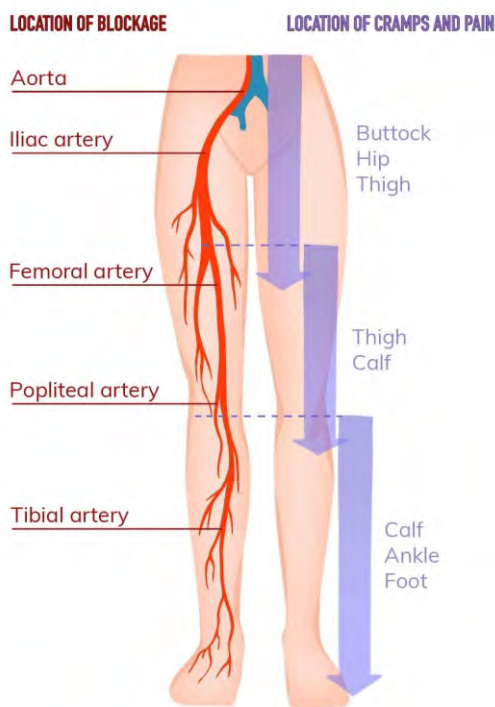
Tesla's initiative hasn't yet launched.

Ford Motor Company has teamed up with Allstate Corporation to allow customers to share driving data.

GM says its OnStar program has provided the company with more data from connected vehicles than any other carmaker, as quoted in Claims Journal.

The company's insurance offer will start in Arizona and use braking, acceleration, and general usage data to help set insurance rates. The program is set to expand nationwide using more data, including tire pressure, lane keeping and automated braking. More use of connected car data could be used if regulatory hurdles can be overcome.

Leg pain could be alarm for heart health



Everyone gets a charley horse now and again while walking. But what if you experience a painful cramping sensation more often than normal, or even every time you walk? Claudication — the medical term for leg pain while walking — is a common symptom of peripheral artery disease (PAD), an often undetected and sometimes dangerous condition, according to the Harvard Heart Letter.

PAD occurs when fatty deposits narrow and clog arteries outside of the heart, most often in the legs. While some people have mild or no symptoms, cramping in the arms or legs that starts during physical activity and disappears after a few minutes of rest occurs in some PAD patients, according to the Mayo Clinic. Pain may also occur in the buttock, hip, thigh or calf, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Other symptoms of peripheral artery disease include: Muscle weakness; Hair loss; Smooth, shiny skin; Skin that is cool to the touch, especially if it occurs with pain while walking that subsides after stopping; Decreased or absent pulses in the feet; Persistent sores in the legs or feet; Cold or numb toes.

Peripheral artery disease is often a sign of fatty deposits in other areas of the body, which can reduce blood flow to the heart and brain, according to the Mayo Clinic. Contact your physician if you're experiencing these symptoms and over age 65; over age 50 and have a history of diabetes or smoking; or under age 50, but have diabetes and other risk factors like obesity or high blood pressure.

According to the CDC, a doctor may use a variety of tests and imaging techniques to diagnose this issue. Treatment may include aspirin or other antiplatelet medications, as well as lifestyle changes like tobacco cessation and exercise. In some cases, surgery may be necessary.

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| 3 | 4 Congress assembles | 5 | 6 Carnival season begins | 7 | 8 | 9 |
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