

Business

Harper's Bazaar's essential guide for working women

THE WHITE SUIT

Chic, sharp & versatile

5 STEPS TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM

BUSINESS TRAVEL
A survivor's guide

Let's get to work

2 ALTERATIONS
Dangling buttons, fallen hems, broken zips, bobbly cashmere... whatever the emergency, slick tailoring and alteration service Designer Alterations (020 7498 4360; www.designeralterations.com) can sort it out with a visit to your home or office. Set up 12 years ago, the company has a clear understanding of those who have little time to dedicate to their clothes, but want to look their best, whatever the occasion. Tailor Julia Dee and her team will organise all types of cleaning, repairs, wardrobe planning, and storage for out-of-season garments, and also sells on designer cast-offs. *From £18.*

3 CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINERS
Holding any child's attention for longer than 15 minutes is a feat; and if the room is bursting with a five-year-old Spider-Man and his 20 classmates, then Twizzle Parties & Events (020 8789 3232; www.twizzle.co.uk) simply must be called on. Used by leading party organisers, host Mr Twizzle provides full-on entertainment and fun for all ages. Brief him on your children's likes, dislikes and expectations, and an adventure will be devised – using puppets, magic, games, balloon modelling, dancing, spy school, photo-shoots, animals and even recording studios. The older kids get, the more the game has to be raised – and Mr Twizzle will never let you down. *From £150.*

4 ART AND ANTIQUES
Investing in art has never been so big, and choosing the right person for advice and guidance will save you the groundwork. But if you're after 21st-century art, walking into a gallery and buying a piece off the wall is not an option – contemporary galleries will generally only sell new works to buyers they have known for many years. Enter art consultant Bridget Brown (020 7727 3020), with 15 years' experience, enviable international-gallery contacts and excellent knowledge of emerging artists. She advises corporations and private individuals who wish to invest significant amounts (minimum £10,000). Corfield Morris (020 7038 3548; www.corfieldmorris.com) offers a similar service for antiques, jewellery and silver, with bases in London and New York.

5 POCKET CONCIERGE
Fast-track your life and get hold of all the best outsourcing numbers with Cary Whitley's book *Secret Services* (£12.99, Fab Publishing), published at the end of May (ring 020 8530 1153 for stockists). Covering all budgets, this nationwide directory includes help for parties, weddings, clothes, cleaning, courses, repairs, food, home offices, staff, beauty, presents, children, pets, travel, vintage, beauty, luxury and the home. Compiling her book from the results of two

years of research, along with plenty of word-of-mouth suggestions, Whitley (who should have been a private detective) has made an exhaustive guide for any time-pressured woman with high-maintenance standards. Did you know that you can fly long-haul with a free nanny service, swap your wardrobe for nothing, or hire someone to wrap all your Christmas presents? You do now...

6 JUNK CLEARANCES
Following the old 'rag-and-bone man' principle, Ecojunk (0800 043 0432; www.ecojunk.co.uk) will dispose of any unwanted possessions in the greenest way possible. It will handle household junk, large and cumbersome items and garden waste, but not daily rubbish. Hitting a recycling target of 52 per cent of everything taken away, it is a pretty impressive outfit. Set up by Matt Shorter, the company has links with charities, and most of the furniture and useful items are passed on to them. After an initial meeting and an estimate, you can make an appointment for the boys in green to load everything onto the lorry and dispose of it in a proper fashion. *From £51.*

7 HOLIDAYS
If you want to book an eco-adventure summer holiday, rent a Landmark Trust house in Dorset, or arrange a surprise weekend away in Prague, but find you lack the time or insight to do it properly, then ask Bridget Stott's company Piece of Cake (01608 646 905; www.pieceofcakeuk.com) to do it for you. Stott will organise everything from tickets, hotels and transfers to itineraries, visas and inoculations; book restaurants, drivers and appointments; and even provide insider shopping guides, so that no time is ever wasted during your tailor-made trip. As a travel and lifestyle journalist, she has an endless list of contacts, thrives on research, uncovers unusual places and meets people in the know – so 'well informed' is an understatement. *From about £250 a day.*

8 INTERIOR RENOVATIONS
Pilgrim Payne & Co Ltd (020 8453 5350; www.pilgrimpayne.co.uk) is a family-run establishment of the old school that specialises in the cleaning, repairing, altering and making of curtains, loose covers and upholstery. The team will spring-clean your house, restore and maintain rugs and textiles, and remove unthinkable spots or stains from pretty much anything you ask them to. After an initial quotation, your furniture will be cleaned on site. Soft furnishings are taken to the company's Wembley headquarters to be cleaned and revamped, after which they will be delivered and rehung, once they have passed the impossibly high Pilgrim Payne & Co quality test. *From £20 (for the cleaning of a Persian carpet).*

9 FITNESS OVERHAUL
Personal trainer to the A-list Mark Anthony (020 7602 2929) advises you to look at the bigger picture when considering his intensive one-to-one bikini body programme. He knows that results only come with dedication – and a little help along the way. All aspects of a busy schedule are taken into consideration: sessions can be booked between 5am and 10pm, and meals are delivered daily (except on Sundays) by Silhouette Chefs. After an introductory class and nutrition consultation, clients train four days a week, for an hour at a time. A car will collect you from your home or office, and drop you back afterwards. The only trouble is that your new body will then require a new wardrobe. *A six-week course costs £3,500.*

10 DIY
Not doing it oneself is only a pleasure when the relevant tradesperson actually turns up, does the job properly, creates minimum disruption, clears up and charges what was originally agreed. Former Citigroup investment banker Kerrie Keeling felt so strongly about this that she set up A Woman's Touch (0207 167 2123; www.awomanstouch.org.uk). Ninety per cent of her staff of plumbers, painters, tilers, plasterers and carpenters are women, as she believes they think on a more practical level. They currently work within the M25, but from spring will include Edinburgh, Manchester and Brighton. *From £75 for a half-day.*

11 LAUNDRY
With a fast turnaround of two days and an excellent collection and delivery service, the Laundry Box (020 7481 2345; www.thelaundrybox.co.uk) will launder bedding, towels, linens, blankets, underwear, shirts, trousers and nightwear – and provide a comprehensive dry-cleaning service. *From £25.* Just Shirts of London (020 8992 2777; www.justshirtsoflondon.co.uk) can launder women's and men's shirts beautifully – either starched or unstarched – with free collection and efficient delivery to the location of your choice. *From £2.10 a shirt.*

12 PERSONAL ASSISTANT
Give yourself the same amount of help at home that you can expect at work. Whether it's booking appointments, visa applications, attacking your to-do list, checking on the house while you are away or doing the legwork for wedding preparations, lifestyle-management company Cushion the Impact (020 7704 6922; www.cushiontheimpact.co.uk) will dedicate its time to your needs. *From £30 an hour.* Andrea Osborne's super-efficient team will organise everything from your Christmas-card list and clutter clearing, to checking up on parking tickets and a home move. *From £25 an hour.* □