LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFT?
Check out this holiday gift guide for recommendations for you and your family!

ALEX & ANI BRACELETS
Starting at $28 / www.electionsboutique.com
Alex and Ani is eco-friendly, positive energy jewelry made in America.

THE ORIGINAL STORMY KROMER CAP
Starting at $39.99 / www.bridgestreetexchange.com

MILWAUKEE-M18 FUEL LITHIUM-ION 2 TOOL COMBO KIT (2797-22)
In-store instant credit of $100.00
Reg. $429.00 / www.mckays.do.itbest.com

FINGERLESS GLOVES
$5.00 / www.frenchflamingo.com
The perfect accessory for a cold winter outfit.
Workout routines during the holidays

Between decking the halls, visiting family and attending holiday parties, it may seem like there is little time to maintain a workout routine during the holiday season. While the holiday season is an especially busy time of year, men and women who plan and stay dedicated to their routines do not need to let their health fall by the wayside until January.

Several studies show that people can gain anywhere from one pound to a few pounds between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Those who struggle to keep the weight off understand the importance of maintaining both a consistent fitness schedule and healthy eating habits. This may be challenging when the rich foods and parties synonymous with the holiday season are around to threaten healthy habits. Here’s how to stay on course.

• Establish a regular exercise date. Treat exercise as any other obligation on the calendar. Make it a necessity and not a luxury. Schedule time for workouts, even if it means removing something else from your agenda.

• Don’t worry about the length of your workouts. If you’ve accustomed to an hourlong workout but cannot fit in more than 20 minutes on some days, don’t skip the workout simply because it’s shorter. Make the most of that time by targeting larger, core muscles.

• Change your schedule. You may need to alter your daily schedule to fit in gym workouts or other exercise. Try getting up earlier and heading out prior to work or school. This will open up time throughout the rest of your day, and you can use that time to meet the demands of the holiday season.

• Try new activities. Workouts need not be limited to exercises in the gym. Plenty of activities work the body and burn calories. Sledding, ice skating, skiing, and snowboarding are just a few winter sports that can help you stay in shape.

• Add short, high-intensity exercises. Burn more calories in less time with high-intensity workouts. This way you won’t need to schedule as much time for workouts but will still get the benefit of exercise.

• Transform chores into exercise opportunities. See that vacuum cleaner, rake or broom as a piece of exercise equipment. While cleaning up for holiday company, turn on the radio and get your heart pumping, too. Do leg raises while you’re preparing meals or do some pushups off of the kitchen counter.

• Use your bodyweight. Even if you can’t make it to the gym, rely on your own body resistance for a thorough workout. Pushups, squats, burpees, mountain climbers, jumping rope, and lunges are some exercises that rely on bodyweight for effectiveness.

• Periodically exercise during the day. If you have a few free moments here and there during the day, use these opportunities to exercise. By the end of the day, you may find you squeezed in an entire workout’s worth of exercise over the course of several 10-minute intervals.

Exercise and fitness do not have to play second fiddle to other holiday activities. Make time for workouts, and you will be ahead of the game come the new year.
**Soothing Relaxing Massage**
$65 / www.serendipitydayspas.com
Escape the holiday stress with a warm relaxing massage. Our therapists customize your massage to fit your needs all while using warm rice bags, hot towels, heated beds and aromatherapy. All of our therapists have received 5 star recognition for their service and quality. Treat your loved ones to the very best!

Serendipity Day Spa
129 E. Broad St.
Linden, MI
810-735-6868

**Kelly Moore Camera Bags**
Starting at $169.99 - $299.99 / www.fentoncamera.com
These convertible camera/handbags are fashion and function combined in every style! Made of water resistant, man-made materials, Antiqued Brass or Silver Hardware.

Billmeier Camera
100 S. Leroy St.
Fenton, MI
810-629-2287

**GIFT IDEAS FOR...**

**Her**

**Emozioni Hot Diamonds**
Starting at $39.95 / www.sawyerjewelers.com
There are 3 pieces that make up an Emozioni necklace, the chain, the keeper and the coins of their choice. This Christmas we will be offering a FREE Coin with the purchase of a Chain and Keeper, decorate her with Hot Diamonds from Sawyer Jewelers. Hotdiamonds.com

Sawyer Jewelers
101 N. Adelaide
Fenton, MI
810-629-7936

**Mariana Spirit of Design**
$396 / www.mosartjewelers.com
Looking for that special, exciting, refreshing piece. Unique and colorful with genuine natural stones. Rose gold finish, adjustable lengths, Lifetime guarantee.

Mos’art Jewelers
17235 Silver Parkway
Fenton, MI
810-750-2000

**Knit Leg Warmers**
$19.50 / www.creativemotionsusa.com
The cutest knit leg warmers around. Can be paired with both boots or heels. Makes a great stocking stuffer! Fur styles available.

Creative Fashions
106 Battle Alley
Holly, MI
248-634-5114

**Fingerless Gloves**
$5.00 / www.frenchflamingo.com
The perfect accessory for a cold winter outfit! These fingerless gloves offer style and warmth at an affordable price and are available in different colors and lengths.

French Flamingo
121 S. Saginaw St.
Downtown Holly, MI
248-807-1547
Many offices host a gift exchange during the holiday season. Professionalism should always be a top priority when gifting coworkers, and some men and women may want to brush up on gift-giving etiquette before exchanging gifts with fellow employees.

Long before any gifts are exchanged, research your firm’s policies on gift-giving. An employee handbook or a visit to the human resources department is a good place to start. When in doubt, inquire among more seasoned workers.

Many companies put dollar limits on gift values, while others have strict policies forbidding such exchanges, as it’s easy for gifts to create discomfort around the office or give the impression of favoritism.

Gift exchanges also depend on the relationship between employees and their supervisors. Close, friendly relationships may warrant gift exchanges, especially if everyone else is on board with the idea. Gifting a boss is not necessary, but employees who have a close working relationship with their supervisors may want to purchase a professional gift to indicate their appreciation of a supervisor’s support. These can include picture frames, gloves, scarves, books, and personal interest items. Steer clear of personal gifts or ones that can be taken the wrong way.

Inappropriate gifts should always be avoided. Decorative gifts that do not fit within the office environment and are not professional and appreciated. Employees should also keep in mind that personal thank-you notes are courteous, especially if employees who receive gifts from their bosses should not feel obligated to reciprocate.

Tenure can also dictate gift-giving. Employees who have been with their companies longer than their coworkers may receive a more personalized gift. Employees on any particular religion or holiday, inspirational books, calendars, plants, and publications that cater to a particular interest likely won’t raise anyone’s ire. However, self-help gifts, perfumes, lotions, or overly personal gifts may give recipients the wrong impression. While homemade foods were once popular gifts, many companies now discourage such gifts because they may trigger various food allergies.

Gift cards tend to be universally acceptable, but only when they do not exceed the agreed-upon spending limit. Grocery store gift cards can help employees offset some of the costs of entertaining, and gift cards to popular department stores may help offset holiday spending. Whenever any giving between coworkers takes place, care should be given to ensure that all the gift values are equivalent. Coworkers who are especially close and want to give a more meaningful gift should exchange those gifts on their own time and not during office hours.

Tenure can also dictate gift-giving. Employees who have been with their companies longer than their coworkers may receive a more personalized gift. Employees who receive gifts from their bosses should not feel obligated to reciprocate. Employees should also keep in mind that personal thank-you notes are courteous, professional and appreciated.

GIFT IDEAS FOR...

**her**

**CHERRY JEWELRY ARMOIRE**

Starting at $299.95 / now until Christmas

Every woman needs one of these! This is the perfect gift to help her get organized. She will find her special pieces in an instant. Come in today while selection is good.

Stevens Furniture, Inc.
1030 Silver Lake Rd.
Fenton, MI
810-629-5081

**ALEX & ANI BRACELETs**

Starting at $28 / www.eclectionsboutique.com

Alex and Ani is eco-friendly, positive energy jewelry made in America. At the heart of Alex & Ani is their Charity By Design division, where 20% is donated to Charity. Every bangle has symbolic meaning, so you can give a gift truly from the heart.

Eclections
495 Fenway, Suite 1
Fenton, MI
810-629-2019

**BRIGHTON**

Starting at $4 / www.eclectionsboutique.com

Brighton makes the perfect gift for any woman on your shopping list. From gifts like small clocks and picture frames, to their iconic leather handbags and wallets, to their unparalleled jewelry and charms, no one ever go wrong with Brighton.

Eclections
495 Fenway, Suite 1
Fenton, MI
810-629-2019
The holiday season is a time to share happy experiences with friends and family. But reconnecting with loved ones for the holidays is not always possible, especially when family and friends are spread out across the country, if not the globe. Even though these people may not be close geographically, they’re still close in our hearts and, therefore, still on our holiday shopping lists.

Some issues arise when sending gifts to faraway friends and family. Distance necessitates shipping gifts, which may not be close in sight but certainly not out of mind come the holidays. Distant family members and friends may be out of sight but certainly not out of mind come the holidays. When it comes to sending gifts, ship smart.

**Even though these people may not be close geographically, they’re still close in our hearts and, therefore, still on our holiday shopping lists.**

**LAZ-BOY POWER RECLINER SOFA**

Sale $1,149.95 /now until Christmas!

Your guests will love visiting with this new leather looking sofa, with smooth comfort for any room in your home. Also available in other colors by special order.

Delivery available.

Stevens Furniture, Inc.
1030 Silver Lake Rd.,
Fenton, MI
810-629-5081

**GIFT IDEAS FOR...**

**ITASTE VV BY INNOKIN TECHNOLOGY**

$45.00 / www.vaporiaworld.com

Give the Gift of Health. Vaping, the better alternative to smoking! Breathing, smelling, and sense of taste gets better plus many other benefits! All the same sensations of smoking WITHOUT all the carcinogens! Itaste VV, a long lasting superior battery, individualized settings, Variable voltage and Variable wattage. A personalized Vaping experience! VAPING KICKS ASH!

VAPORIA
14300, Fenton Rd.
Fenton, MI
(behind the Sagebrush Cantina)
810-354-8337

**SOFA SLEEPERS**

$699.00 / www.winglemire.com

3 Great sizes! Twin-Full-Queen
3 Great colors!
Denim-Crimson-Basil
Comfortable with a smooth and easy set up. Be ready when the family comes for Christmas.

Winglemire Furniture
Downtown Holly
248-634-8731
Great gift ideas for auto lovers

Auto lovers tend to consider their cars their most prized possessions. While it may not be possible to buy the auto lover on your holiday shopping list a new car, there are many gifts that are sure to please those people who can’t get enough time behind the wheel or in the garage.

- **Global positioning system:** Often referred to as a GPS, a global positioning system is a satellite-based navigation system providing location information no matter where drivers find themselves on their next road trip. If a GPS is within range of a GPS satellite, drivers will never again find themselves pulling over on the sides of roadways in an effort to find out just where they are. Though many new vehicles come with GPS, vehicle manufacturers tend to offer them as accessories and not standard features. So if your favorite driver is driving an older vehicle or did not splurge on a GPS when purchasing his latest ride, this gift is sure to please.

- **Car wash kit:** Auto lovers not only love to get behind the wheel, but they also love to get behind the wheel of a good-looking automobile. A car wash kit, complete with a wash and wax that repels water and protects a good polish, is an ideal gift for auto enthusiasts who like their vehicles to look as good as they drive.

- **Customized floor mats:** Many auto enthusiasts consider their cars an extension of themselves, and a customized accessory, like a new set of floor mats, can add a personal touch to drivers’ rides. If your loved one has a special nickname for his or her vehicle, consider inscribing that nickname on a set of customized floor mats. Auto enthusiasts who have an equal passion for a certain sport may appreciate floor mats with the logo of their favorite team.

- **Hands-free headset:** Car lovers spend lots of time in their cars. Though such time might once have afforded auto enthusiasts an escape from the daily grind, nowadays the prevalence of smartphones has made it easier than ever for the outside world to find its way into vehicles. As a result, auto enthusiasts may appreciate a hands-free headset that allows them to take calls while driving without compromising their concentration on the road. Some hands-free devices even allow drivers to stream music from their smartphones directly to their car stereos, allowing drivers to hit the open road while enjoying their favorite tunes.

- **Auto show tickets:** Many auto lovers keep an open eye for their next vehicle purchase. Auto shows are often the best places to learn about new vehicles and what motorists can expect in the future, so why not give your favorite car guy or gal tickets to an upcoming auto show? He or she may find his or her next vehicle or simply enjoy walking around and seeing all the latest automotive industry upgrades and gadgets.

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**MILWAUKEE-M18 FUEL LITHIUM-ION 2 TOOL COMBO KIT (2797-22)**

In-store instant credit of

$100.00/Reg. $429.00 / [www.mckays.do.itbest.com](http://www.mckays.do.itbest.com)

Includes the M18 FUEL™ 1/2” Hammer Drill/Driver (2604-20) and M18 FUEL™ 1/4” Hex Impact Driver (2653-20). M18 FUEL™ features a POWERSTATE™ Brushless Motor, REDLINK PLUS™ Electronic Intelligence and REDLITHIUM™ Battery Technology, this results in longer motor life, more run time and more power. The POWERSTATE™ brushless motor works harder and lives longer than all leading Competitors.

McKay’s D0-it-Best Hardware
15146 N. Holly Rd.
Holly, MI
248-634-5301

**Holiday gift guide**

VIDEO ONLINE AT [www.tctimes.com](http://www.tctimes.com)

**GoPro HERO 4 SILVER**

$399.99 / [www.fentoncamera.com](http://www.fentoncamera.com)

Capture your world in an all-new way with HERO4 Silver, the first-ever GoPro to feature a built-in touch display. HERO4 Silver combines powerful, pro-quality capture with the convenience of a touch display. Just view, tap and swipe the screen. With 1080p 60 and 720p 120 video and 12MP photos at a staggering 30 frames per second.

Billmeier Camera
100 S. Leroy St.
Fenton, MI
810-629-2287

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**GIFT IDEAS FOR...**

**HIM**

**ROCK N ROLL AVENUE**

HANDCRAFTED VINTAGE GUITAR SHELF BEATLES

$135.00 and Vintage Apple Records Vinyl Clock $22.00 / [www.facebook.com/VintageRowFenton](http://www.facebook.com/VintageRowFenton)

Calling all music fans...get your one-of-a-kind, vintage music memorabilia with the repurposed guitar shelf or LP vinyl clocks. Perfect for the family room, music room, man cave or anywhere music is enjoyed. Vinyl records, turntables and vintage guitars also available.

Vintage Row
(look for Rock N Roll Avenue booth)
1459 N. Leroy St.
Fenton, MI
810-208-0890
GIFT IDEAS FOR...

**THE ORIGINAL STORMY KROMER CAP**
Starting at $39.99 / [www.bridgestreetexchange.com](http://www.bridgestreetexchange.com)
USA Made - Made in Ironwood, MI
23-25 oz. 80% wool/20% nylon, 100% cotton flannel lining.
This six-panel, hand-stitched beauty is built for long-lasting comfort, and for more than 100 years, it’s been an icon of the great American outdoors.
Bridge Street Exchange
109 N. Bridge St.
Linden, MI
866-215-1861

**2015 OMAHA 515**
$150-$200 / [www.diamondsportgear.com](http://www.diamondsportgear.com)
With trusted power and championship performance the Omaha 515 is the most proven one-piece bat and most consistent high performance bat in baseball. The Omaha 515 delivers the right mix of undeniable power, a massive sweet spot, superior balance, maximum barrel flex, and a lighter swing weight.
Diamond Sports Gear
1580 N Leroy St.
Fenton, MI
810-629-0718

**ASHLEY ROCKER RECLINERS**
$199.00 / [www.winglemire.com](http://www.winglemire.com)
With exciting contemporary style of the sweeping padded arms and plump bustle back design, the sleek beauty of the “Darcy” Rocker Recliner collection is sure to awaken the decor of any home.
Many colors to choose from. Easy to care for Microfiber with great comfort.
Winglemire Furniture - Since 1858
Downtown Holly
248-634-8731

**CITIZENS ECO-DRIVE WATCH**
$395 / [www.mosartjewelers.com](http://www.mosartjewelers.com)
Sporty, powerful, fueled by light 5 Year warrenty Eco-drive never needs a battery.
Mos’art Jewelers
17235 Silver Parkway
Fenton, MI
810-750-2000

**CRAFTSMAN 28” 277CC DUAL-STAGE SNOWBLOWER W/EZ STEER (88395)**
$999.99 / [www.searshometownstores.com](http://www.searshometownstores.com)
What man wouldn’t want this for Christmas! Choose from the eight power-propelled speeds of this 28” Dual-Stage Gas Snow Blower to suit your needs.
A four-way, 190-degree chute rotation is possible with an easy-to-use joystick. Deluxe Glide-Tech skid shoes slide along any obstructions and help keep your garage floor and driveway free from rust stains and damage. Effortless maneuverability, moves smooth, and direct the snow flow easily.
Sears Hometown Store
14283 Fenton Rd.
Fenton, MI
810-629-1900

**THE ORIgINAL STORMY KROMER CAP VIDEO ONLINE AT www.tctimes.com**


**How to give holiday gift cards**

Nearly every man or woman has hit that all too familiar wall when holiday shopping for friends and family. While many people might be a cinch to shop for, there always seems to be one stickler on holiday shopping lists, and finding the right gift for that person can be an exercise in patience and perseverance.

But even the most patient shopper has his or her limits, and many people find themselves giving gift cards to those friends or family members who seemingly have everything already. Such cards make great gifts, but only when gift givers employ a few tricks of the gift card trade.  

- **Buy directly from the retailer.** Only buy gift cards directly from the retailer, as cards sold by other sources, such as an online auction site, may be stolen or counterfeit. You don’t want to be the person who gave a stolen or counterfeit card, and your friend or family member does not want to be subjected to an inquiry as to why he or she is attempting to use a stolen or counterfeit card.  
- **Include a gift receipt with the card.** When giving a gift card, don’t forget to include the gift receipt. The gift receipt not only verifies the value of the gift card, but also includes the date the card was purchased. That’s important information, as many companies begin to charge fees, some of which may be exorbitant, on unused cards after a predetermined period of time. Recipients who have the gift receipt won’t have to haggle with retailers about the value of the card should that ever be in dispute, and the receipt also can serve as a reminder that the recipient needs to use the card before a given date to avoid fees.  
- **Consider a general purpose gift card.** If that stickler on your holiday shopping list is especially difficult to shop for, then you might want to consider a general purpose gift card issued by a company such as American Express, MasterCard or Visa. These cards generally allow recipients to use their gift wherever they choose, whether it’s to put gas in their tank or buy groceries. That versatility is valuable if you truly have no idea what your friend or family member needs or where he or she likes to shop. One notable disadvantage to general purpose gift cards is that they tend to come with more fees than more traditional gift cards purchased directly from specific retailers. Investigate these fees and find a card that charges no fees or only minimal fees.  

Gift cards make great gifts and can bail out frustrated holiday shoppers who simply can’t find that perfect gift for a friend or family member.

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**MICRO-START PERSONAL POWER SUPPLY**

starting at $129.99 / www.sloanssalesandservice.com

The world’s smallest Jump Starter and Personal Power Supply. Just charge it once and take your power where ever you go. So small it fits in your pocket, yet so powerful it can jump-start a car or truck! Amazingly it will also power and charge your electronics such as cell phones, tablets, MP3 players, laptops and more... The Micro-Start gives you the security of knowing if your battery goes dead you will still be able to start your car or make that important call no matter how far away from power you are. It even has a built in flashlight! Three different models available.

*Sloan’s Sales & Service*  
1005 N. Bridge St.  
Linden, MI  
(810)458-4299

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**GIFT IDEAS FOR...**

**the person who has everything**

**SANTA WAX MELTER**  
$25.00 and Pure Soy Wax Melts, $5.00 ea. / www.facebook.com/VintageRowFenton

Capture the look and aroma of the holidays with this festive, Santa wax melter and pure soy wax melts. The Candle Closet’s soy wax melts and jar candles are 100% pure soy, locally handcrafted in small batches, and presented in timeless glassware. With over 30 fragrances to choose from, there’s sure to be a favorite scent for everyone.

*Vintage Row*  
(look for The Candle Closet booth)  
1459 N. Leroy St.  
Fenton, MI  
810-208-0890

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**U OF M AND STATE TRASH CANS**  
$29.99 each now until Christmas / www.mckays.do.itbest.com

A perfect gift for the person who has everything and Loves Sports. These sold by the pair for tail gate parties or just in the yard for friends get-togethers. Very rugged and large enough to hold many large amounts of products. Your student would love to have one of these in their dorm room.

*McKay’s Do-It-Best Hardware*  
15146 N. Holly Rd.  
Holly, MI  
248-634-5301

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**how to give holiday gift cards**

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Gift cards make great gifts and can bail out frustrated holiday shoppers who simply can’t find that perfect gift for a friend or family member.

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**WHAT DO YOU BUY FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS EVERYTHING?**

Compiled by Christopher Jones, staff reporter

“Something personal and homemade.”

- Corl Williams  
Fenton

“What I would think of is a lotto ticket. It doesn’t have to be the big bucks. Everyone can use that.”

- Linda Goett  
Fenton

“Buy them an experience. Like dinner or a ticket to an event.”

- Jennifer Dumeah  
Township

*“While many people might be a cinch to shop for, there always seems to be one stickler on the holiday shopping list.”*
**FRENCH INSPIRED GIFT BASKETS**

starting at $50.00

Let us create your own one of a kind gift basket. Select from our vast array of unique items. Gift Basket as shown: Three piece ceramic kitchen set from France. Set of four napkins with rings. Dish Towel and matching note cards. Large bag of Herbes de Provence.

La Petite Maison
107 W. Shiawassee Ave.,
Fenton, MI
810-354-8344
Open Daily 10:00 am to 5:00 pm • Friday’s until 8:00 pm

**LIONEL TRAIN**

$400.00 / www.howardshiddentreasures.com

This is the New York Central Special by Lionel Trains set. Featuring a steam engine with working headlights and smoke. Tender with steam whistle. Powerful 3 Amp. 40 W transformer. 2 sections of grade crossing.

Howard’s Hidden Treasures
17075 Silver Parkway
Fenton, MI
(Located near the Fenton UPS store)
810-354-8318

**HANDMADE ASSORTED CHOCOLATES**

Starting at $23.95

A thirty piece assortment of handmade assorted chocolates from Sweet Variations is perfect for those on your list that have all the “toys” they need. A wonderful collection of nut clusters, creams, caramels, and a few surprises that can be enjoyed by one person or shared.

Sweet Variations
Downtown Dibbleville
101 W. Shiawassee
Fenton, MI
810-750-9799

**CUSTOM CANVAS PRINT**

$22/sq ft. / www.goingpostalfenton.com

Here is that perfect personalized gift you were looking for. Give someone something they will remember with a canvas print. These prints are done on canvas with a wood frame, not some cheap cardboard frame you see elsewhere. Best of all you can order this week and still have it for Christmas.

Goin’ Postal
1421 N. Leroy Street
Fenton, MI
810-208-7155

**CRAFTSMAN CORDLESS BOLT-ON 20V MAX LITHIUM ION DRILL/DRIVER (46133)**

$79.99 / www.searshometownstores.com

Includes: Drill Driver, Bolt-On body, charger and battery. From simple home projects to fast paced jobsite action. This system allows for an additional 13 optional attachments, all driven by the bolt on base… including a Sander, Jigsaw, Multi-Tool, Trim Saw, High Pressure Inflator, 2 Speed Hammer Drill, Cut Off Tool, Impact Wrench, Cutter, Hedge Trimmer/Shear, Reciprocating Saw, Impact Driver and Router… Each priced between $30 - $40. Powered by a high capacity 20 Volt Max lithium ion battery, it gives you tons of torque until the job is done.

Sears Hometown Store
14283 Fenton Rd
Fenton, MI
810-629-1900

**GIFT IDEAS FOR... the person who has everything**
**Gift ideas for the special seniors in your life**

With lifetimes of experiences and seemingly everything they could ever want or need in life already at their disposal, seniors can be difficult to shop for come the holiday season. Many even insist that their family members save their money and not buy them anything for the holidays.

But if the thought of Grandma or Grandpa not having something to open come the holidays is simply unacceptable, consider the following gift ideas.

### **Activity assistance devices**

The realities of getting older often mean the body slows down and activities may not be as easy as they used to be. Many active seniors are not ready to live sedentary lives, nor should they be forced to do so. Plenty of products exist that can make life easier and more comfortable for older adults.

- Television amplifying headphones are one product that can be a great fit for seniors, particularly those having difficulty hearing their televisions. The headphones amplify the sound of the programming without disturbing others in the room, and many such headphones even allow users to mute their televisions. This feature is perfect for someone who likes to watch TV while a spouse is sleeping or reading in the same room.
- Other devices that can make life easier for seniors include magnifying products or bookholders. In addition, gel seat cushions can take pressure off of the spine in the car or at home.

### **Food**

Food is always a handy gift because it doesn’t take up much room and can be enjoyed at a recipient’s leisure. Perhaps there is something the senior in your life used to enjoy as a child but now finds hard to come by. A search of the Internet may uncover that special treat. You may be able to ship a specialty soft drink or favorite cookie that is not available in a nearby store. Otherwise, ask a store manager if a particular item that’s not in stock in the store can be a special order.

### **Photos**

What grandparent does not enjoy looking at his or her family members? Computer-savvy men and women can use photo software to design personalized photo books, calendars, mugs, and other photo-related gifts. Just about anything can be emblazoned with a photo, including tote bags and pillows.

Another idea is to collect old photos and compile a memory book. Scan the images so they are preserved digitally and then print out the images in a book that includes the family history.

### **Time**

Seniors who truly do not want or need anything probably will likely jump at the opportunity to spend time with loved ones. Treat a friend or family member to a meal out or simply spend a few hours chatting at his or her home. Sometimes the company of a new face and good conversation is the ideal gift.
Few opportunities to thank teachers for all of the hard work they do present themselves during the course of a typical school year. But a thoughtful holiday gift is one way that students and parents can show their appreciation for a teacher’s efforts.

It’s customary for students to offer teachers small tokens of their affection, whether it’s during the holiday season, at the end of the school year or both. Choosing a gift for a teacher can be challenging, as the relationship between student and teacher and/or parent and teacher is not personal, and it’s very possible students and parents have little knowledge of a teacher’s interests outside the classroom. But the following gift ideas are essentially universal in their appeal, making them great gifts for the special educator in your life.

• Handwritten notes from students: Rather than trinkets that proclaim “World’s Best Teacher,” students can write their own sentiments about their teachers and present it with a gift card or another gift that doesn’t take up much space. A heartfelt note of appreciation and gratitude can be all it takes to put a smile on a teacher’s face this holiday season.

• Food: Food can be enjoyed in and around the season. Avoid making items yourself, as some people are particular about eating foods that were cooked in someone else’s kitchen. Stick to pre-packaged food baskets, or even treat the teacher to a meal with a gift card to a restaurant.

• Something scholarly: A gift that provides a teacher with some intellectual stimulation might just do the trick this holiday season. For example, a set of safety goggles or a kit for doing in-class experiments might work well for a science teacher, while a biography or a best-selling novel may fit the bill for English teachers.

• Gift cards: Very often all of the students in a class donate a small amount toward a gift card. Consider a card that is redeemable at a nearby store or a generic cash card the teacher can use anywhere credit and debit cards are accepted.

• Classroom supplies: Budget constraints have forced many teachers to supplement classroom materials out of their own pockets. So a gift of school supplies or a gift certificate to an office-supply store or teacher-supply center may be greatly appreciated.

• Catered lunch: Consult with the school principal to set aside a day when teachers can enjoy a catered lunch provided by the students. Each class parent can collect funds, which can then be pooled to host a lunch for the teachers.

When gifting teachers, there are some gifts to avoid.

• Trinkets and mugs: Through the years a seasoned teacher has likely collected a fair share of trinkets and coffee mugs. Chances are he or she does not need another one.

• Perfume and lotion: Avoid scented lotions, perfumes and other cosmetic products, as such items are more personal.

• Overly expensive gifts: Do not give a gift that is beyond the standard range of others in the classroom, which usually falls between $10 and $20. It could appear as if you’re buying affections for the student, and it could make the teacher uncomfortable.

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Great gifts for the family foodie

The best holiday gifts are often those that encourage their recipients to pursue a passion or favorite hobby. Tickets to a ballgame might be right up a sports fan’s alley while the family globetrotter would no doubt love a contribution to his or her travel fund.

When gifting the family foodie, that one person who loves to cook or simply can’t get enough of his or her favorite cuisines, shoppers have a host of options at their disposal to ensure this holiday season brings a smile to their favorite foodie’s face.

- **Spice rack:** Few home cooks can get by without a vast selection of spices, so a spice rack that includes all the essential spices makes perfect sense for the family foodie. Some spice racks even come with several years’ worth of free spice refills, so do your homework and find one that will have your friend or family member spicing things up for years to come.

- **Cooking lessons:** Cooking lessons can be a great way for men, women and even children to cultivate their love for food. If your friend or family member prefers a specific type of cuisine, then find him or her cooking lessons where he or she can learn how to prepare and not just eat some favorite dishes. Cooking lessons also make a great opportunity to bond with a loved one. If you, too, want to expand your cooking horizons, buy your own lessons and go with your friend or family member.

- **A night out:** If your favorite foodie prefers his or her meals made by someone else, treat that friend or family member to a night out at his or her favorite restaurant. You can give a gift card to the restaurant or take this special someone out yourself and enjoy a great meal and great company to boot.

- **Serving dishes:** Many foodies not only love to eat but also love to serve up their favorite foods to family and friends. If your friend or family member has played host to guests many times in the past, surprise him or her with some new serving dishes. You probably have a sense of their serving style already, but if you don’t, make a mental note the next time you visit or simply buy them a gift card so they can buy whichever dishes they need to make their next soiree a success.

- **Wine rack:** A great bottle of wine completes a great meal, so why not buy your family foodie a place to store all of his or her bottles of wine? Wine racks can range from the simple, inexpensive standup models to more complex or expensive models that need to be installed. If the eventual recipient of your thoughtful gift rents rather than owns his or her home, avoid buying a wine rack that needs to be installed, as that might cause damage that will cost them some money when the time comes to move out. But if your friend or family member owns their home, then look for a wine rack by supplementing your gift with a few bottles of your loved one’s favorite vintages.

With so many potential gifts to choose from, shoppers often find foodies are fun to shop for come the holiday season.

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It’s not uncommon for families to welcome a new pet into their homes during the holiday season. Parents may give their children their first pet during the holidays, but those who choose to give a pet to someone outside their immediate family or to someone they don’t live with should consider the following advice before going through with that decision.

Consult the eventual recipient first

The element of surprise is part of what makes the holiday season of giving so special, and few things may inspire more enthusiastic responses than new pets under the tree. But however appealing you may find such reactions, it’s still best to first consult the intended recipient before buying or adopting the pet. Pets make wonderful additions to a home, but some people may be allergic to certain animals or simply not have the time or energy to devote to pet ownership. No one wants to return an animal to a kennel, and forcing a loved to take on the unwanted responsibility of pet ownership does not make much of a gift.

Let the recipient choose the pet

Aunts or uncles may think a cute puppy is an ideal holiday gift for their nieces and nephews, but it’s best to let those youngsters’ parents choose the pet rather than going it alone. Once mom and dad have given you the greenlight to gift their kids a pet, let them decide which type of pet will become the newest member of their households. Parents may not feel their children are ready to handle the significant responsibility of dog ownership, and they may prefer their kids first receive a more low-maintenance pet, such as a fish.

Pay for everything

Pets are expensive, even those that are adopted from nearby shelters. Cats and dogs adopted from local shelters or even animals bought directly from breeders will need some immediate medical care, including shots and initial examinations at the veterinarian’s office, as well as food, dishes, leashes (if giving a dog), and bedding. When giving pets as a gift, men and women should fit the bill for these additional expenses, which can be significant. Recipients may not be able to afford these additional expenses, especially during the holiday season, nor did they ask to take on such a financial burden. So men and women giving pets as gifts should be capable of handling the oft-overlooked costs of adopting or buying a new pet.

Be willing to take the pet

Some households simply are not a good match for pets. Men and women looking to give pets as holiday gifts should be willing to take the pet into their own homes if things are not working out with the recipient. This does not mean gift-givers have to keep the pet forever, but they should be willing to temporarily care for the animal until it finds a new home.

Pets sometimes make wonderful gifts, but men and women who are considering giving pets as gifts this holiday season should not approach such gestures lightly.
Irresistible gifts for the outdoor enthusiast

The great outdoors is even greater when you’re prepared for all of the things Mother Nature can throw your way. Holiday shoppers with a person who enjoys the outdoors on their shopping list can turn this holiday season into a truly joyous occasion with the following gift tailor-made for tackling the great outdoors.

• Folding kayak: Kayaking is a great way to take in the great outdoors, but not everyone has the room at home to store kayaks when they aren’t being used to traverse nearby waterways. Those who live in apartments, condominiums or smaller homes with limited storage may appreciate a folding kayak, which can be stored in a closet or beneath a bed and put together in a matter of minutes. Folding kayaks that can be stored in vehicle trunks and quickly assembled once you arrive at your kayaking destination also can save kayakers money on roof racks for their vehicles.

• Waterproof backpack: A good outdoor person knows never to leave home without a waterproof backpack? A waterproof backpack protects valuables, including cell phones, cameras and tools, from the elements. Look for backpacks with waterproof zipper systems to ensure your loved one’s valuables are fully protected on rainy treks through the forest.

• Water filter: Drinking straight from natural water sources may seem like a genuinely adventurous thing to do, but it’s genuinely dangerous as well. A hiker’s water filter greatly reduces his or her risk of suffering illness after drinking water tainted with bacteria such as E. coli. Even the most serene streams or isolated rivers can contain harmful bacteria, so a portable water filter is a necessity.

• Compass: Many of us have grown to rely on our smartphone apps to get us from point A to point B. While such apps may do the job when we are near cell phone towers, phone signals are often less reliable in more remote locations, such as forests and national parks. A reliable compass is all one may need to make his or her way through the wilderness.

• Hot dog roasters: No trip to the great outdoors is complete without roasting some hot dogs over an open flame. But far too many hot dogs have been lost to the fire thanks to traditional campfire forks that don’t provide adequate hold as hot dogs cook over an open flame. Curly hot dog roasters wrap around the hot dogs, snugly holding them in place as the franks cook.

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