

Chemistry Life Hacks?

Coffee too bitter?

Try sprinkling a pinch of salt into your cup. The salt dissolves, releasing sodium ions into the coffee. These ions can block some of the bitter compounds from binding to receptors on your tongue.

Cut onions without crying

The compound in onions responsible for the tears is syn-propanethial-S-oxide. Chopping onions breaks open cells, launching a series of reactions that release this volatile irritant. Enzymes first convert amino acid sulfoxides into sulfenic acid, then into syn-propanethial-S-oxide. When syn-propanethial-S-oxide drifts up to your eyes, tears well up to wash away the irritant. Tip: Refrigerate onions prior to chopping— it will slow the conversion and release of these compounds.

Quick-chill beverages

If you need to chill drinks fast, try this: Fill a bucket with water, mix in a bunch of salt, add ice and fully submerge the bottles or cans. Your beverages should be chilled in less than 20 minutes. How? Salt interferes with formation of ice crystals and depresses the freezing point of water from 0 °C (32 °F) to as low as -21.1 °C (-5.98 °F). Drinks surrounded by an extra-cold liquid will chill faster than if they just sit on ice.

DIY fruit fly trap

Pour some apple cider vinegar and a few drops of dish soap into a small dish. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and poke some holes in the top. Fruit fly larvae feed on microbes that thrive in fermenting foods, so the adults are attracted to vinegar as a potential place to lay eggs. The dish soap breaks the vinegar's surface tension, so when the flies fall in, they die.

* Check out more great chemistry-inspired life hacks!

Sources:

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American Chemical Society

1155 Sixteenth Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036 T [202] 872-6042 F [202] 872 4370 www.acs.org