

Opening Bottles and Jars – Bob Mattsson

My mother would say to open a stubborn pickle jar, slam it upside down on the counter. It either opened or broke! She had another trick and this one worked pretty well; she would hit the jar top with the back of a heavy butter knife blade in a counter clockwise direction. It dented the cover but usually worked. If you cannot get those caps and covers off with the rubber grip pad, try these tips. For bottles like syrup, ketchup, Worcestershire, etc., whether opened before or for the first time, run the cap under very hot water. Try not to let the water get on the bottle itself. This loosens any sticky stuff but more importantly the hot water causes the cap to expand and reduces the tightness of the fit. Take a dish towel and turn the cap to open. This usually works.

For jar tops that will not come off with conventional schemes, you can try the hot water, but jars are a little unwieldy to hold under the tap. Most of the jars you find difficult to open have their contents vacuum packed. This pulls down on the jar top making it very tight. Surely you have heard a jar hiss or pop when you opened it for the first time. That sound is the air rushing in to fill the vacuum. Well if you are having a hard time with one of these, you will just have to release the vacuum. This is done by taking a ‘church key’, remember those? It has a can opener on one side and a bottle opener on the other. Take the bottle opener side and gently lift the jar cap until you hear the air hissing in. Now it



should open easily. If you can't open it this way or cannot get the air to hiss in and you want at the contents, use the can opener side of the ‘church key’ and puncture a small hole in the jar top. You won't be able to reseal the jar with the top but at least you will get to those great little artichoke hearts before you panic. Another thing to try is to put on a pair of latex dishwashing gloves. Their non-slip surface makes for a good grip on the jar.



There are various jar openers on the market today. Some are hand held and others are attached to the underside of a kitchen cabinet. Black & Decker has electric ones that sit on the kitchen counter like any other appliance for about \$40. I haven't tried one but supposedly you can open a jar with one hand.



Reminder about hot air humidifiers. I want to remind everyone again about the humidifier pads. They *must* be changed out every year. They may look good but the water running over them for the entire heating season leaves a build-up of calcium and minerals that causes them to lose their porosity and prevents a good transfer of moisture. Also, there is a damper that can be opened or closed on the duct bypass hose that connects the humidifier to the return ducting. This should be opened during the heating season (very important) and closed during the cooling season. The handle used to move the damper indicates its position. This allows the air to circulate past the wet pad, picking up moisture and delivering it with the warm air throughout the house. If you are to leave it in one position, pick the open position.



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