

# OUTWIT 'Wrap Rage'

Any way you cut it, clamshell packaging is a pain. The right tools reduce the pitfalls.

CHRISTMAS MORNING USED TO RESONATE WITH THE SOUND OF CHILDREN RIPPING OPEN BOXES, FOLLOWED BY THE WHIRRING OF TRAINS AND THE CHATTER OF BATTERY-OPERATED DOLLS.

But nowadays, such joyful noises are delayed as parents and grandparents face the frustration – and danger – of liberating mountains of gadgets from their nearly impenetrable plastic clamshell packages. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that, in the last five years, plastic container-related injuries sent 31,224 people to emergency rooms.

The clear, tough clamshells serve to showcase the product in stores while foiling shoplifters, but easier-to-open alternatives can do the same thing. One new design features rounded plastic devoid of sharp edges, and an adhesive strip that emits a loud 'pop' to deter theft. And Amazon.com has rolled out 24 products – from Microsoft, Motorola and Fisher-Price – with "frustration-free" wrap.

It's part of the fight against what Amazon.com's CEO, Jeff Bezos, has dubbed "wrap rage." Yet millions of retail items remain encased in the forbidding packs. Scissors and box cutters are unwieldy, if downright useless, against the hard, irregular shapes.

Costco has so far replaced 65 percent of the clamshells produced by its in-house packaging division – including the Kirkland Signature by Borghese cosmetics line – with a "card and blister" pack that uses thin plastic glued to paperboard. It's designed to be environmentally friendly, but it's also easier to open, says Toni Morelli, a buyer at Costco's corporate office. "The secret is to peel the front and back card apart like an onion."

There's no easy way to open clamshell-packaged products. Even devices made for that purpose require some hand strength to operate. And there's still some chance for injury – to you or the product – with the open-bladed devices. But they beat scissors and box-cutters, that's for sure. Here are two we found:

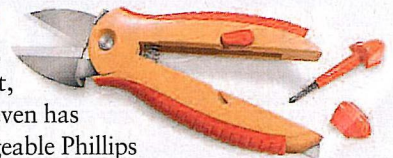
The soft-grip handles of the **Zibra Open**

**It! Universal Package Opener** (\$10, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) help you hold tight,

while snipping apart plastic and wires. It even has

an integrated screwdriver (with interchangeable Phillips

and flat heads) to open battery compartments and tighten components.



The **Open Smart Plastic Package Opener**

(\$10, [www.opensmartproducts.com](http://www.opensmartproducts.com)) uses a puncture-then-pull method designed to make a smooth cut.



**BUZZING**

## Away Pain

A new device that makes shots easier on kids can help adults, too.

BIOLOGIC DRUGS ARE A BLESSING FOR MANY CHILDREN WITH JUVENILE RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS (JRA). But they come with a drawback: the fear and tears that come with regular injections or intravenous infusions.

An Atlanta pediatric emergency doctor has developed a solution. It's Buzzy – a vibrating, bee-shaped gadget with ice packs for wings that is placed on the patient's skin, then moved slightly away from the injection site just before the shot is given. The cold and vibration confuse the body's nerves, distracting attention away from the poke of the needle.

Buzzy (\$34, [www.buzzy4shots.com](http://www.buzzy4shots.com)) has made Friday night methotrexate injections much more bearable for 9-year-old Rebecca Kuo of Little Rock, Ark. Rebecca's mom, Katherine, says, "With the Buzzy, she looked at me in complete disbelief and said, 'It didn't hurt.'"

Although designed to ease the burden of giving shots to children, Buzzy has also been successfully used on adults for injections, IV insertions, blood draws and even travel immunizations.

– MARY JO DIBONARDO

– ELLEN FIX