

HER VITALS

Hometown
Great Neck, NY

Non-eco-friendly indulgence

Deodorant. "The natural stuff doesn't work that well," Levine says.

Latest obsession

Knitting. "I just started making sachets and hats."

pure genius

Robin Kay Levine, 34

Why we admire her The acrid fumes of ammonia and bleach filled Robin's nostrils as she stepped into her sister Leslie's New York City apartment one afternoon in March 2005. It was the usual smell left behind by the housekeeper, who cleaned

up while Leslie, then 36, was out getting chemo for breast cancer. In town from Los Angeles, Robin raced to open the windows. It has never been clear why her sister developed cancer—it doesn't run in the family. But Robin suspected that chemical cleansers, which have been linked to breast cancer, might have been a cause. "Your skin absorbs the chemical ingredients, which enter your body and mimic estrogen, causing imbalances in your hormonal system," she says. So Robin developed all-natural cleansers and a Web site, **Eco-Me (eco-me.com)**, where she sells kits containing the tools people need to make the products themselves.

How she got started Robin already made perfumes, so it was easy for her to start whipping up cleansers. She returned home after a 6-month sabbatical spent helping her sister, who is now in remission, to work on her formula. After long workdays—she was a manager at an animation production studio—she'd experiment for hours in her kitchen with various combinations of vinegar, baking soda, olive oil, essential oils, and water. When there was nothing left to scrub in her house, she scoured the neighbors'. In February 2006,

Robin perfected the formula and quit her day job. Four months later, Eco-Me went live.

At left, Robin (in front) and Leslie as kids; above, as adults—always horsing around.

What she has accomplished Each kit Robin sells contains recipes for a disinfectant, a scrub, and a wood polish that call for ingredients right from your pantry. Kits also come with a blend of essential oils, two spray bottles, a mixing jar, a scrub brush, and a microfiber cloth that's more effective and less wasteful than paper towels.

What's next Eco-Me will feature three new kits this fall: the Body Kit, which contains a skin scrub, astringent, and fragrance, and two Pet Kits (both dog and cat versions), which come with a dry powder shampoo, a conditioning spray with chemical-free bug repellent, a powder deodorizer for the kitty, and a flea spray for the pup.

» For more on Levine's cleaning kits, visit eco-me.com.



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Three small steps toward utopia



ACT NOW!

1 Snowboard for Cancer

Catch some air at Board-A-Thon, a fundraiser sponsored by Boarding for Breast Cancer. It runs January through April in ski areas across the country. For more info, visit b4bc.org.

2 Pass on PVC

Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) is the second-most-used form of plastic, but making it creates cancer-causing smoke. For a list of PVC-free products, visit greenpeace.org.

