Holiday gifts:
It's a wrap

BY LISA CHAMOFF
Special to Newsday

Shopping for holiday gifts can feel overwhelming — but wait until it's time to wrap them. We spoke with Long Island gift-wrapping experts to get advice on how to present presents like a pro.

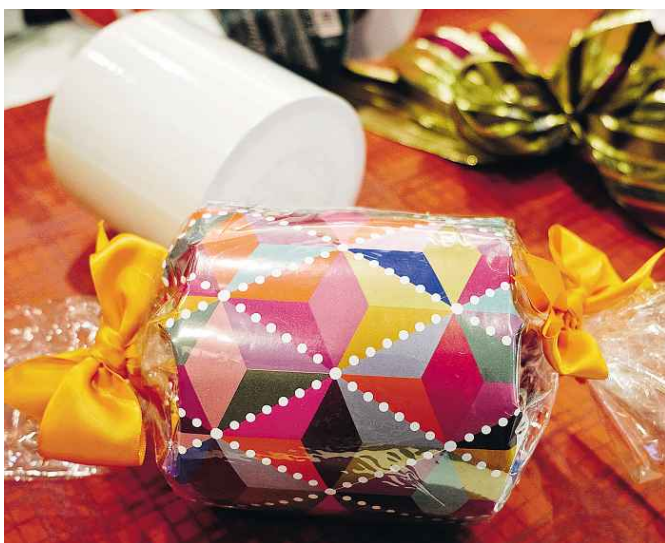NEWSDAY / THOMAS A. FERRARA

2 How to make a great bow

If you're a novice at bow making, Cantor recommends starting with ribbon that looks the same on both sides, such as satin. Ribbon that is fortified with wire is also helpful.

You can also create a few long, 7- to 8-inch loops and cinch the middle with a pipe cleaner, wire or another short piece of the same ribbon.

"Another way is to the take a box, tie a ribbon around it and add the looped bow you just made to it," Cantor says. "It looks professional and is easy to do."

STEVE PFOST

1 Wrapping unusually shaped objects

For items that are soft, housed in a blister pack or come without a box, Melinda Cantor, owner of Only You Gifts in Islip, suggests using bubble wrap or gift tissue before moving on to the wrapping.

"Let's say it's a blister-packed item that has a crazy shape that's impossible to make look normal," Cantor says. "Roll it around in some bubble wrap to even out the shape so it creates a cylinder. Now roll it in wrapping paper, cinch the ends with some ribbon or tape the ends up, add a bow, and it's good to go." Cantor also suggests making a gift bag out of wrapping paper, and has instructions for doing so at her website, onlyyougifts.com. "It's the perfect use for the odd scraps of paper left over, like making a soup with the turkey bone from Thanksgiving," Cantor says.

For oddly shaped gifts, Annette Drago, the owner of Wrapping It Up in Amityville, suggests using wrapping or tissue paper and then covering it with cellophane so the paper doesn't rip.

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3 How to wrap on the cheap

Drago suggests using pinecones and leaves from the backyard as decorative touches for wrapped gifts, and making tags from leftover holiday cards. "Look around at what you have in your house," Drago says. "I always have a box of things from greeting cards. Cut out something you like from a card, glue it to a piece of card stock and cut around it. Add it to a bow and make a tag out of it."

Cantor suggests making custom wrapping paper using your printer. "Depending on the type of printer you have, 8 1/2-by-11 or 11-by-17 are nice sizes for smaller gifts," Cantor says. "Use photos and words to really personalize that gift."

Cantor also likes using fabric for the odd-shaped gifts or pretty items. She places the gift on a half to 3/4 of a yard of fabric layered with tissue paper in the center, scoops up the sides with both hands and wraps a piece of ribbon around the neck. You can do the same with a scarf. "There is an extra gift given and also a fabulous presentation at the same time — a win-win," Cantor says.

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4 Other advice

To make packages look more "finished," Cantor recommends foil wrap because it allows for clean creased lines.

Drago notes that it's best to use double-sided tape so the tape is invisible. It's also important to have good scissors for wrapping.

"They have to be really sharp so you can have a clean line," Drago says.

A festive atmosphere can also help inspire a beautiful wrapping job.

"I do my best work when I have the holiday music on," Drago says.

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