It goes without saying that, on any given day, we all can use a little help along the way. For lots of help, try the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. It has a whole room full of advice. The Lafayette Extension office, in suite 325 at 1010 Lafayette St., has hundreds of flyers, pamphlets, and booklets on subjects both mundane and strange — with something, no doubt, for everyone. And they're free.

Say you're into home repair. You can get detailed directions, complete with illustrations, on "How to Patch a Large Hole in Sheetrock." If you're considering using someone else to insulate, re-side or re-roof your house, check "Home Repair Rip-offs."

Conserving energy is another big homeowner interest, so try the flyers titled "Reduce Your Heating Cost!" or "Water Heater Use and Energy Conservation" or "Check Your Air Conditioner's Performance." (You can also get similar advice on your vehicle, as with "Tires and Energy Saving Tips."

There is also a series on home maintenance and design. If you're building a home or remodeling your kitchen, get "Kitchen Planning Scoresheet." Any household, new or old, could use the 20-page pamphlet "Basics of Housecleaning & Home Care."

Concerned about the environment? Start with basics like "Understanding Pesticide Hazards" and "Drinking Water Standards." But if you need something more precise — for instance, if you're a farmer — grab "Storage and Disposal of Pesticide and Containers on the Farm."

Naturally, you can count on your Extension office to have plenty of wise words on clothing construction. But if you don't have time to sew, you still might want the flyer on "Clothing/Textile Labels."

Everybody's concerned with their diet these days — at least a little bit concerned. And the Extension shelves are well stocked on this item. You can get copies on the "Food Guide Pyramid," "A Daily Food Guide," "Eating Right: Vitamins and Minerals," and "Nutrition and Fitness."

You'll also find measuring guides such as "A Guide to Common Can Sizes" (in case you need to know that a one pint, 10 ounce can contains about three and one-half cups.

Or, you also can get creative clues for varied meals, as in "Quick and Easy Entertaining Ideas" or "Take-Along Lunches." (sneak preview: Instead of a sandwich, try cheese cubes, deviled eggs, a stuffed apple, or meat slices wrapped around vegetables such as celery. And slip a book into your lunch bag.)

Extension flyers cover a broad range of ages and interests. Flyer family concerns start with infant and child care and run the gamut on up to "What is long-term care? Why you need to know."

Family info contains useful advice on raising kids and reducing stress, including strategies for play. Try "Puzzles for Preschoolers" or "Let's Play with Clay Dough." You'll get how-to directions, along with reasons why to do it, as in the following for finger painting: (1) Kids learn about colors. (2) They learn it's OK, sometimes, to be messy. (3) They have a good time!

Among the wealth of gardening and farming advice, you can get specific direction on raising various livestock such as sheep. There is a 34-page booklet called "Beginning with BEES."

And a series called the "Pest Management and Insect Identification Series" gives fun facts on creatures you've likely seen but can't define: the pecan spittlebug, for one.

If you're moving beyond basic care, whether of your household or garden, keep in mind that Extension agents are also available to give you one-on-one advice. All you have to do is pick up the phone.

Call 267-7090.