

40 ORGANIZING TIPS

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Keep these hints in mind while decluttering and organizing through them.

If something has not been used in the last two years, it's probably just taking up good real estate. Be really honest with yourself as you work through these 40 organizing tips.

Ask yourself these questions as you go: "Do I really love this?" and "Do I really need this?" This will really help you part with a lot of clutter!

- Are you a serious procrastinator? Put your goal, no matter how simple, on your calendar. Put a start time, finish time and reward. Learn a 'just do it' attitude.
- Organize your sewing needs! Gather all the items in your house that need mending and do it or take it to someone who does. Make a designated mending spot in your home and let everyone know where it is.
- Get control over mornings. If your house is crazy in the morning, switch some of the time consuming tasks to the evening. You can make lunches or get kids to lay out their clothing the night before.
- Organized people are listers! Keep a To Do list and a Project list. This way projects won't be left undone for years and marking things off a list is a great feeling of accomplishment!
- Organize gift wrapping supplies. Put all wrapping supplies in the same area. If you're a 'boxer', use shirt boxes to separate bows by color (pinks/purples, blues/greens, yellows/whites). If you're a 'bagger', hang multiple bags on a hanger to save shelf space.

Organizing tips for Paper

- Take control of incoming mail. Control incoming mail by spending five minutes a day taking care of it. Throw the junk mail away first. Then open other mail and put bills to be paid with their return envelope in one stack and the filing portion of the bills in another stack. Now put the bills to be paid in your bill paying designated area and put the remainder in the "to be filed" spot.
- Corral those magazines. If you're like most, you are unable to read for an hour each night to keep up, so you'll probably need to go through and keep only the very few that you are interested in. You can donate magazines to doctors/dentists. Keep your magazines in a small basket and when it has no more room, it's time to donate.
- Keep your schedule organized. Use only one calendar for everything. Using more than one will only cause missed or double appointments and confusion.
- Projects - Keep all the paperwork for each project, no matter the size, all together in a file folder.
- No due date dilemmas! Put the deadline of a project on your calendar a few days before the actual one. You'll always be ahead of the game!
- Keeping school days straight. In April, you can usually get your school district's upcoming year's calendar off the Internet. Print it and write the school days off in your calendar.
- Plan ahead on vacations! Now that you know when the kids get out of school, try to plan your vacation ahead of time. It's sometimes cheaper if you plan ahead, too.

- Keeping children's paperwork organized. Every time you get papers with information from the school, athletics, clubs, etc. write down the info in your calendar and/or your shopping list then throw the paper away.
- Don't let your files take over! Write on your January calendar to purge your files. Go through your file cabinet and pull all the previous year's monthly statements and place them in a container in the attic. You only have to keep three year's worth - then shred.
- No room for a kitchen bulletin board? Here's an idea... For those papers that can't be written on your calendar and tossed, just tape them to the inside of the pantry door or other cabinet doors. This is great for rosters and such.

Organizing tips for the kids' rooms

- Have the toys taken over? Have your kids go through their toys in November (before Christmas) and a week before their birthday and donate unwanted ones. This will free up room for incoming gifts.
- Declutter kids' clothes. In July, help the kids go through their clothes and donate old or worn ones and make a list of items needed to start off school.
- Keep the zoo in check. Use a plastic tub, a hanging chain with clips attached, or a hanging mesh separator. If all the stuffed animals won't fit in it, discuss with your child about donating some to children that don't have any animals.

Each time you organize an area in your life, you will feel less stressed and rejuvenated!

Organizing tips for your bathroom

- Linen closet towels. Go through the towels and put a few old ones in the garage and donate all the others not needed.
- Medicine cabinet gone wild? Use a three-tiered spice rack. Arrange the bottles, jars, and containers by height. Use small plastic containers or single cutlery trays for different things like ointments and boxed medicines.
- Organize the bathroom. Go through all cabinets and get rid of unused items. Be sure to put easily tipped over items into a small basket or container so you're not wasting time constantly picking them up.
- Divider trays work great. Go through your cosmetics, hair accessories, and nail polish and toss old or unwanted items. Use the trays in drawers to help keep things organized.
- Is your bathroom floor a towel magnet? Using hooks rather than towel racks are easier and quicker and more likely to be used. Be sure to have as many hooks as you have people in your household.
- Beach towels overloading the closet? If you do not have room for these in the house, consider getting a big plastic bin and putting them in the garage or laundry room.

Organizing tips for the kitchen

- Cleaning supplies - Put all the cleaners and tools you use frequently in a carry-all with a handle. You can find these at the dollar store.
- No more junk drawer! Take everything out and sort it all. Get a drawer divider tray or small containers to keep items separated and organized. Only keep things you recognize and use. Now you can call it your helper, goodies, or pencil drawer!
- Tackle the kitchen cabinets! Pick a week and mark your calendar for kitchen clean up! Go through one cabinet each day to declutter. Keep in mind the helpful hints on the front page. Decide which items are really needed and which ones are just taking up space, making the cabinet cluttered. You'd be surprised how many things you can donate.

Avoid procrastination by telling yourself you only have 10 minutes for your task. Everyone knows the hardest part is getting started!

- Organizing tips for your vehicle
- Let's organize that trunk! Put two containers in the trunk - one for emergency items and one to keep periodic items corralled.
- Keep the inside of the car organized - Clean out the car and put a stock of small plastic bags under the seat, keeping one hanging somewhere available. Make a habit of putting your trash in the bag and toss it out when it's full. Clean out the glove compartment and leave only the necessary maps, pen, paper, and tire pressure checker in there.

Clutter can make you feel overwhelmed. Decide to work a certain amount of time each day or each weekend to organize your home ... and your life.

Organizing tips for your bedroom

- It's time to organize the handbag! Try to keep one specified area in your handbag for papers/receipts. The key to not having a 5-pound handbag is to put away those papers/receipts every day when you arrive home. Keep a small bag inside to keep all the beauty items together. Also note that a heavy handbag is bad for your back because most women will lift their shoulder up to an inch higher to hold it on.
- Don't waste space in the closet. A lot of space is wasted inside of closets. Look inside and ask yourself, "Am I using all this space efficiently?" Use the walls inside of closets to hang items that are used often. If there is a lot of space at the top of the closet either build another shelf above or get containers that will stack.
- Clean out under the bed. As scary as it is, it must be done! Have a trash can and broom handy.
- Organize your clothes. If you have extra closet space, you can always put the opposite season's clothes in there. If not, go ahead and organize your clothes by season. This will save you time every day. While organizing, be sure to donate the clothing no longer wanted.
- Shoes, shoes, and more shoes? Put your shoes in a shoe organizer of some sort. This saves a lot of room and looks better. Donate unwanted shoes.

Organizing tips for your office or study

- Take a look at those books. Put on your favorite music and come prepared with small boxes. Hit every book pile in your home remembering that decluttering the stacks means decluttering the mind.
- Card organizers are wonderful! Card organizers come as a notebook or a box. With the notebook, you can write down birthdays, etc. on each month. The box organizer can be divided by months, or usually by the kind of cards (birthday, anniversary, thank you, get well soon). You'll never be late for an occasion again!
- Software - All software and instruction booklets should be in one place. This helps you see ones that are obsolete or duplicates.

Most important, crucial tip!

- Everything has a home - Take ten minutes at the same time each day to pick up items and put them in their proper home. Set a timer and go.