



Easy Tips to Organize Your Space

How much time do you spend searching for your car keys, a bill or your shoes? For many of us, this is a weekly, if not daily, occurrence. Although our homes have gotten bigger over the last few decades, we still seem to run out of space quickly. As we accumulate more and more stuff that we may or may not love or use often, it becomes difficult to find the items we really need. Take the headache out of organizing with these tips.

80% of household clutter is the result of disorganization, not lack of space. Schedule time to clean and organize a room in your home every week.

Source: National Association of Professional Organizers

Give each item a home. Everything you own should have its place, whether it's on a particular shelf or in a drawer or basket. It may be easier to use the place where the item most often ends up as its official home. Let everyone in your home know where the item belongs, so no one has to hunt for it.

Invest in dual-function furniture. Maximize your space with furniture that has built-in storage or shelving.

Get support. Improve the chances that your spouse and child(ren) will maintain the new system, and enlist their help in creating it. Seek their help to create systems that work with their habits and personalities.

Be picky. When you are cleaning, keep in mind: If you don't love it and it's not useful, get rid of it. Toss incomplete appliances (e.g., blenders or crock pots without lids) and plastic storage containers without lids or that are warped beyond use. When buying things, ask: Where can I put this? What will I do with it? What will it replace?

Organizing takes time. It's safe to assume that it'll take twice as long to organize a room as you initially estimate, especially if you're sorting sentimental items. Resist the urge to become attached to objects. You can still have memories without having the actual object.

Never underestimate the power of pretty boxes. You're more likely to stick to your new system and stay organized if you like the storage unit.





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Organizing by Room

Organizing your home may seem like an intimidating process; however, if you break it up by room, you will be able to complete the task much quicker.

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Home Office/Den

In many homes, this room is multi-functional, serving as an office, the children's playroom and the family entertainment center, depending on the time of the day.

- **Organize the room by function**, putting toys in one area of the room, books and DVDs in another and your desk in a third part of the room.
- **Have a system.** Throw mail into a basket and set aside 20 minutes each week to sort it into piles of bills, magazines, catalogs and junk mail. Go to http://www.directmail.com/directory/mail_preference/Default.aspx to add your name to the National Do Not Mail List and reduce the amount of offers that you receive.
- **Sort and donate/toss.** There's no need to keep items that you don't use. Go through your books, DVDs, CDs and children's toys. Anything that hasn't caught your attention in the past year is probably something you can live without. Donate it to a local charity instead.

25% of people with two-car garages don't park their cars in there, and 32% park only one.

Source: US Department of Energy

Kitchen

The kitchen is often the "central command" of the home, where families eat, plan and drop their backpacks and bags at the end of a long day. To keep the kitchen functional and free of clutter:

- **Abide by the "magic triangle" area** between the sink, stove and refrigerator. Keep the cooking items you use most often within this zone so that they are within reach when you need them.
- **Reclaim your junk drawer.** Anything that you'd put in a "junk" drawer should probably go somewhere else—the trash.
- **Shelving and wall hooks** organize items vertically and keep the floor clear.

Garage/Attic/Basement

We tend to put larger items, such as old furniture and outdated home décor, in the garage, attic or basement, away from our sight. To reclaim the functionality of these rooms:

- **Transfer anything you want to keep into sturdy storage containers.**
- **Utilize vertical space with shelving and ceiling hooks.** Organize the containers by function, room or family member; and hang bicycles and other sports equipment.
- **Eliminate anything that is broken or unusable,** including tools, paint, toys, household decorations, etc.

The Closet

To figure out what to keep, every time you wear something, flip the hanger to the opposite direction. Those articles of clothing that haven't been turned within 6 months should be donated or sold. If it doesn't fit, get rid of it.

Top 5 Reasons Homeowners Hire Professional Organizers

1. Too much clutter
2. General disorganization
3. Difficulty determining what to keep and/or discard
4. Difficulty finding things
5. Selling a home or moving

Source: National Association of Professional Organizers