

# **How to Successfully Organize Your Home**

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**Tame the Clutter and  
Organize Your Home  
For a More Peaceful and  
Stress-Free Life!**

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## **Why Be Better Organized?**

Most of us use only a small amount of our true capabilities, and we can all strive to do better. A good balance of your time is needed for family, work, goals, recreation, and relaxation. The more organized you are the more time you will have for yourself and your family without feeling stress and chaos on a daily or even hourly basis.

If you are under a lot of stress, a more passive and relaxing undertaking might be just what you need, at least to start with. For just one day a week, or a few hours on certain days, set aside time for your own unique enjoyment. When you do this, staying organized will not feel as much of a chore. You will naturally wish to remain organized so that you will have more time for yourself.

Take a walk in the park, listen to your favorite music, read an interesting book or magazine, leisurely work in the yard, or watch a favorite TV show; these are all examples of perks in terms of “free” time as a result of staying organized.

**(Throughout this ebook, use the white space for notes)**

## **Say Good-bye to Clutter**

Since clutter diminishes a smile and dampens the spirit, why do we tolerate it?

In some homes, it is very easy to find any given room in a cluttered mess, but it takes some hard work to declutter and organize.

Many people say that one of their favorite things to do when stressed out is to clean! Hard to imagine, right? Well, it is true. Cleaning gives order and purpose to your life, even if only in small chunks at a time.

We are not just talking about moving clutter around from one table top to another. We are talking about decluttering every room of your home. Say good-bye to the dust, say good-bye to the junk--say hello to room to breathe and move around! Now, doesn't that sound wonderful?

Start out by drawing up a list of what you absolutely want done. Think about those Leaning Tower of Pisa papers in the den, and then move slowly into the family room. See any piles of old photos just crying out to be placed in a photo album? Write that one down. How about those piles of clothing sitting in the bottom of your daughter's closet just waiting for a mother's touch? Write that one down, too!

By now, if you are clever, you see a list of very workable, one-at-a-time chores that can be assigned throughout a busy day. The idea is to get started and work your way around. By the end of the day, you will have a beautiful, uncluttered home as your reward!

Do not become discouraged if your attempt to enlist other members of your family to help seems to be ignored. Just write that down on your list as those who require an attitude adjustment toward organizing and then save that chore

for another time. Habits usually don't change overnight but, given time and encouragement, you will see other members of your family participating in the decluttering and organizing projects.

Children can be taught to keep their bedrooms neat and pick up their toys and belongings from other rooms. It may not be perfect every time, but will eventually result in a more-organized child and a less-stressed parent!

**Since clutter diminishes a smile and dampens the spirit,  
why do we tolerate it?**

## Basic Decluttering and Organizing Tips

One of the first steps to take to become organized is to “declutter your surroundings” and then decide where and how you want to organize and store things. A good rule of thumb is to measure what needs to be stored as well as measuring the area where you will store it. Then you can buy containers, bookcases, etc., that will meet your needs.

When you are shopping for storage tubs, buy them a little larger than necessary because you will no doubt accumulate more items over time. That organizing tip will save you time in the long run!

Another basic organizing tip is to store like items together; they are much easier to find. Put all of your cookbooks, for example, in one area of your kitchen or on one shelf of a bookcase. That way you know where they are and how many you have! If you have too many cookbooks to display, pack some away and rotate them every few months by making a note on your calendar.

As you declutter a room, make sure you are storing items that you use often in easy-to-reach places. For instance, do not store everyday glassware in the cabinet over the refrigerator which requires the use of a step stool to reach them. Place your regularly used items in convenient and handy places—an organizing tip for every room of the house.

Make the storage area easy to remember. If you seldom look under your bed, then you probably won't remember that is where gifts to be given away are stored in a bin. However, you may remember that is where you store your out-of-season clothing so they will be handy when needed.

A basic organizing tip to remember is that “everything has a place and everything is in its place”—even that wedding invitation you just received and those bills to be paid. Countertops and tabletops are not storage areas!

You can be successful in your quest for an organized life by getting started with these organizing tips and also by making organization a habit in your life.

**Countertops and tabletops are not storage areas!**

## **Questions to Ask Yourself Before You Begin Decluttering**

Sometimes the task of organizing your home seems overwhelming or you just can't seem to find the time or motivation to begin. If this is your situation, doing some "mind" work before you begin may be just the motivation that you need. Ask yourself these questions to get focused and motivated to start your organizing project today!

Where do you want to begin with your decluttering project? Areas to consider are the:

Hardest to declutter

Easiest to declutter

Most in public view (living room, kitchen)

Most that produces stress

Most costly (lost or unpaid bills)

Most upsetting

Areas interfering with your work.

Do you accumulate and seldom throw out mementos? Do you really want to read your notes from high school or every meeting or seminar you have ever attended? Are you afraid that your personal history and happy memories will disappear if you throw out souvenirs from past events and trips? If so, you are emotional about getting rid of things which is a typical dilemma when

decluttering. Start thinking about what means the most to you and what you can give away.

Are you bringing more clutter into your life by saying “yes” to everything someone offers to give you? Do you find “wonderful” things that other people throw away? Do you find great bargains that you cannot pass up at garage sales and flea markets? An organizing tip to use everyday is to think twice about bringing home things you don’t need!

Storage areas such as the attic and basement are where we usually store bigger items as well as those items that are sentimental keepsakes. Ask yourself if there are items that are rusted, broken, too unsafe to use, damaged by dust, cold or heat or too old to ever use again. If so, it’s time to get rid of what you will probably never use again.

**Where do you want to begin with your decluttering project?**

## **The Emotional Toll of Clutter**

Each area of your home provides you with a unique form of comfort. Comfort and clutter don't co-exist very well. Clutter and mess only serves to bring unbalance and will dampen any good spirit. It stands to reason that, give up the clutter and bring in the peace of mind. Consider these thoughts on the emotional toll of a cluttered home.

### **Declutter Your Kitchen**

Your kitchen is regarded as the heart of your home and for good reason. Here you are nourished and provided for, even if you are dining on a frozen entrée zapped in the microwave. An untidy and cluttered kitchen makes it hard to nourish yourself and others on both a physical and emotional level. How you care for your kitchen is a clue to whether you are giving proper attention to your own nourishment and that of others. Cleaning up and decluttering your kitchen will open space for you to receive the support and comfort that you and your family need in life.

### **Declutter Your Living and Dining Room**

These are special places where you socialize with family and friends. Here you engage with the world while being at home through watching television, reading the paper or discussing current events with old friends over dinner. Clutter can turn these otherwise special and social spaces into dens of isolation, especially if the mess is so bad that it has been awhile since you have invited people over. Look carefully at your living and dining rooms to see what they say about your relationships. Are they important to you? Are you hiding yourself from others by

burying yourself in needless clutter? Your living room should be an oasis for you and others to enjoy as a respite from the busy world.

### **Declutter Your Hallways**

You need clear hallways to navigate through your home. Clutter in your hallways prevents important connections between different areas of your home and your life. Look at your hallways and see what it says about the rest of your life. Do they contain good lighting and are they easily navigable, or do they cause confusion and trip you up? If you feel a disconnection between work and family, self and others, what needs to be done and your obligations, it may be time to give your hallways some good organizing to open up the pathways of your life.

### **Declutter Your Bathrooms**

Each day we use this important space to meet the world. We begin our days from this room. Clutter in the bathroom can mean you don't take pride in how you look and feel. How can you feel clean when using a cluttered, dirty bathroom? A clean, well-decorated bathroom is a tranquil sanctuary for rejuvenation and self-care. Scented soaps, attractive accessories, and fragrant candles all have their place here. This is beauty for the mind and soul. You can beautify your life by organizing and cleaning this important room. Take the time to transform your bathroom into a place of refuge and this will bring a sense of the sacred into your morning and evening personal-care rituals.

### **Declutter Your Bedroom**

Your bedroom is for sleeping and intimacy, and it functions as a place of renewal for self and relationships. Clutter in the bedroom is worse than in any other room. It is anything but restful and peaceful. If you are feeling "wired and tired,"

creating order out of chaos in this most personal space will help you relax and to let go of the stresses of the day. You will then get a good night's sleep or enjoy some special time with your partner. Of all of your rooms, this one is the most critical for being organized and peaceful.

### **Declutter Your Closets**

When we fill our closets with clutter, we harness our ability to be intuitive and insightful. Cluttered closets can indicate problems that you may not even be aware of but which block your progress through life, work, and relationships. Keeping the closet door closed is not an obvious solution. Organizing your closets IS!

### **Closing Thoughts on the Emotional Toll of Clutter**

Stop thinking of decluttering as a daunting task and start thinking of it as one of the most effective self-improvement exercises available to you. Every magazine and piece of paper you place in the recycle bin, and every book you give back to the library will liberate you. Giving those older items to charity will also give you a new lease on life! Free yourself now of clutter and open the flood gates of joy and energy into your life.

**Give up the clutter and bring in peace of mind.**

## **Best Kept Secrets to Getting and Staying Organized**

Where do you start when there are so many areas that need organizing? There are several ways to get started:

Start with the area that causes you the most anxiety. This is the room or area that you just can't stand to look at any more.

Another way to get started is with the area that would be the easiest to declutter. This will allow you to see immediate results and will be a great motivator to continue with other areas of your house.

You can also begin with messes and clutter that you see every day. Work on organizing your kitchen and family room before your hallway closet.

Reward yourself with a simple pleasure when you finish at least 15 minutes of organizing a particular area, such as sorting, paying and filing bills.

Assign everything in your house a place. This way when your family searches for something they need, they will know exactly where to find it and where to put it away.

Use this same principle to organize your silverware, with clearly defined places for every fork and knife or drawers for ties and socks and underwear. Think in this same way for every aspect of your home. This will save many hours of searching for things. It will dramatically cut down on the clutter of items left out "for now" or "until I find a place for it." Develop a new mantra: everything has a place and everything is in its place!

Never go up or down stairs empty-handed. Always grab some items that belong to upstairs rooms and quickly put it away while you are there.

Make a mental note to observe what things pile up in your house and where they cluster, and then come up with a place nearby that becomes the official home where those things will reside. Begin using baskets, shelves, and folders for organizing. They work well.

Set aside one basket for incoming mail, bills, and receipts and letters.

Attractive shelves can be used not only for décor but also to store books and memorabilia. The purpose and design of the room will dictate what shelves to use. Getting things off the floor and using vertical space will clear the clutter and make the room more accessible.

Create a number of brightly marked folders for discount coupons, invitations and directions, and other time-sensitive papers that just clutter your counters.

Folders are essential for a well-organized office.

Keep items that are used frequently in places where you can reach them without stooping or bending, and store them close to the place they will be needed.

Use drawer dividers for socks, underwear, lingerie, and tiny items to keep them separated and organized.

Hang hooks for your keys and purse at the entry to your home so that each time you walk in, you can hang them up.

Establish one defined place in your house for storing library books, and end a house-wide hunt when it is time to read or return them.

Get rid of all junk drawers, or allow yourself just one that you clear out once a month or more. When you determine that certain items are being used repeatedly, designate a drawer for them.

Get rid of these things you no longer use or need:

- \* Magazines you meant to read but have never taken the time for
- \* Magazines you have read that need to find a new home
- \* Expired medications
- \* Clothes you no longer wear
- \* Sunscreen that has expired or is more than one year old
- \* Extra paper or plastic grocery bags
- \* Makeup and makeup samples you have never worn
- \* Cookbooks you rarely use--copy your favorite recipes
- \* Organize your coupons and throw out all that have expired
- \* Stuff your crumpled plastic bags from your grocer inside a cardboard roll and keep under your sink.

Getting rid of your clutter and organizing your home top to bottom will free your mind to remember your daily chores. Be diligent about organizing, and you will find it much easier to keep up, week-by-week.

**Establish a new rule**  
**Throw out one old thing for every new item that enters your home.**

## **Organize a Bit at a Time**

### **Organize Your Junk Drawer**

It is easy to transform junk drawers into neatly organized compartments.

An egg carton can be used for the little items that end up in a junk drawer. This will keep your items tidy. It also helps keep visual order in the drawer so that you can instantly see what is in each small space.

You may want to purchase a pre-assembled utility basket or even a utensil holder that matches the dimensions of your drawer to quickly begin to get things in good order.

You will also find plastic divided trays that are specifically designed for junk drawers.

Trays that are interlocking are a great way to customize your junk drawer and make everything fit.

You can create your own dividers with cardboard, scissors and shelf paper. Start by cutting strips of cardboard to size and cover them with shelf paper. Leave a wee notch on each of the ends so that the cardboard dividers can interlock.

Place all similar, small items together in clear plastic snack or tiny craft bags to allow you to see them easily.

Now your junk drawer is organized, and everything is easily accessible!

## **Organize Your Living Room/Family Room**

A key to organizing a living or family room is choosing the appropriate furniture and accessories. Since it is a room that is always on display, keep it comfortable and tidy by avoiding clutter. Adopting the “less is more” philosophy will help to keep this room looking attractive while at the same time welcoming.

Think about freeing up the surface of the end tables by replacing the table lamps with wall-mounted swing-arm fixtures. You will find these swing-arm fixtures more convenient for reading since you can focus the light directly on the page.

A coffee table with drawers or a lid that opens is a great storage area for the living/family room. Ottomans with storage inside can hold throws, extra pillows and out-of-season slipcovers.

Low shelving units that fit under the windows are an excellent place to store toys, board games, or books. Vertical storage is the answer to providing ample storage and taming clutter. A combination of open shelving and closed cabinetry gives a room a more sophisticated appearance while providing a variety of storage solutions.

Fragile collectibles are easy to see but are protected from dust and damage when kept safely in a glass-door china cupboard or cabinet. Solid doors are an excellent way to hide items that are used frequently but don't warrant being on display.

What to do with the abundance of remote controls? A basket makes a suitable place to stash them or, even better, purchase a single universal control.

Giving the living room a focal point will immediately make it look more organized.

Putting pictures, favorite souvenirs, or collectibles into one area or on one shelf will result in a more attractive display rather than scattered around the room. Clustering objects that are similar in style such as wood or metal will also produce an eye-catching focal point in the room.

Keep book shelves neat and organized by sorting through them several times a year. Some books may need to be stored away and then rotated onto the shelves. Oversized books can be placed on a shelf under a coffee or end table.

### **Organize Your Dining Room**

Traditional dining rooms have become less important or at least less frequented in many households due to the open kitchen/great room concept. Even though lifestyles have changed, the traditional dining room still houses the meal service essentials.

In many homes dining rooms serve as a multifunctional space with homeowners using some of the space for an office or a library. In a home that does not have a dining room, a corner of another room may be used for dinner guests. Either scenario can present space and organizational problems.

Keep dining rooms neat and tidy since they are in the public area of the house. If you are using this area for a part-time office, keep office supplies and equipment stored away in the area when not in use. Using baskets and bins beneath a skirted table or behind a decorative folding screen is also a good way to keep things handy when not in use.

Get started with organizing your dining room by throwing out or using for crafts any chipped or cracked china or glassware. Repeat the process for stained

tablecloths, napkins or placements that are faded or out of fashion. This alone will free up space and allow you to assess what needs to be replaced.

Categorize your china by pattern if you have more than one pattern. Organize them within each pattern. Do the same with silverware, stemware, and glasses. Count what you have on hand. This process lets you know what you have which will help you plan more efficiently for family dinners.

If the dining room table seems to collect clutter, consider eating at the table on a regular basis. It is amazing how uncluttered that table stays when it is used regularly! Make it a rule in your house that nothing is placed on the dining room table and then forgotten. Each member of the family can pick up and put away!

## **Organize Your Kitchen**

The kitchen is the heart of the home. It is a gathering place, a special place. From your kitchen come sights, scents and sounds that signal the appetite. It is the most memorable place in your home.

Your kitchen might come complete with plenty of cabinets, cupboards and drawers, and some may not. Whatever your unique situation, it's how you utilize the space you have and how you discover ways to add more storage solutions (as needed) that makes a difference.

Use the cupboards and drawers in the kitchen to hold items that are grouped together.

For example, place your dishes in a cupboard that is either near the eating table or near the sink area. Food should be gathered with like-items together, and not

spread out into different cabinets that contain unrelated items (or having the same type food item put in two places).

Place your coffee maker on a counter-top above a cabinet area. Place your coffee and tea items together near the coffee maker. Pots and pans can be placed near the stove area.

To start with, it might be best to empty out the cabinets, one section at a time, and rearrange the items back into cabinets that best suit "the flow" of how you work in your kitchen. Take your time since this requires some thought. You might even want to draw a sketch of your kitchen cupboards and jot down what will go in each cupboard before starting on the actual project.

When you decide to organize you will have a place for everything and everything in its place. To accomplish this you will need organizing "tools" in which to store items. You can browse through catalogs or department stores for ideas on what to buy.

Get away from cluttering the counters with too many appliances. If you use the appliance often enough, keep it out. If not, keep it stored away where it cannot be seen. Consider building a shelf above the counter to hold appliances if your kitchen will accommodate it. This will free up your counter space.

Establish a place in your kitchen to keep 1) a message center and/or paper-related items, like a note pad and pens near the phone, 2) cookbooks and recipe boxes, 3) a mail center...

Organize your refrigerator in the same way as you would any other cabinet: group like-items together. Try to avoid keeping leftover foods in containers that sit in the back of the shelves, as they often go bad. It's a good idea to clean out the refrigerator weekly to be rid of foods that have "expired."

Using square and rectangular storage containers on a shelf or in the refrigerator are more space-efficient than using round containers.

Take advantage of these organizing tips. You will enjoy your kitchen that much more.

### **Organize Your Home Office**

If your office is in disarray and you can seldom find what you need, it is time to set up a system that works for you. One of the first organizing tips you can implement in your home office is to simply purchase a few organizational items. These easy office organizing tips are just the first steps to achieving a functional office.

**Choose a Filing System** - Choosing and setting up a filing system are key ingredients to organizing your home office. One good way to start this process is by visiting an office supply store. There you will find a variety of components to use in your filing system. Filing cabinets which can be found in various sizes to fit most office spaces are the cornerstone to a good filing system. However, there are clear plastic containers, stacking baskets and plastic crates that also work very well to hold files, notebooks and other office paper.

**Use In/Out Baskets** - As you are opening your mail, put papers that require immediate attention in your in basket. The out basket is used for outgoing mail or for papers and documents that are to be filed. In/out baskets may be stacking baskets that sit on your desk or baskets that are mounted on the wall that free up the top of your desk. A container that is divided into two pockets and holds papers vertically rather than horizontally is also very functional.

In/Out trays are very handy for prioritizing your paperwork. You will find plastic and also wire trays that are stackable and interlocking to save space on your desk. A shelf within reach of your desk is another place for your in/out tray.

Multi-tiered tray - You can keep your paperwork organized until the time comes to file it away by using a multi-tiered tray. For example, you might have one tray set aside for items that need to be filed, one tray for items that you still need to tend to and another for those items that you only need to hang onto temporarily.

Go Digital - One of the best ways to minimize paper is by storing information online. Your address book, bill paying, to-do lists, checkbook, and tax information are just a sampling of the many things you can store on your computer. Make sure you keep a backup of all your information in a safe place.

Here are additional organizing accessories that will help you control the clutter in your office and keep you so organized you will never pay bills late or become frustrated because you can't find an important paper.

Accordion file folders with multiply dividers can be used to organize a variety of papers and documents. Some of them have a pocket for each letter of the alphabet and some have the months of the year. You will find they are ideal for keeping magazine and newspaper clippings organized and easy to find as well as for typical office documents.

If room allows, a bulletin board saves desktop space and allows you to display important information that is readily available. They can be decorated to be a colorful addition to the home office or simply a place for those important phone numbers, daily reminders and family and school schedules.

Cable clips and ties are a must for managing your desktop computer cables as well as other cords and cables in your home office. They will eliminate unsightly

clutter. There are many to choose from, such as simple twist-ties and wall-mounted clips to cable clips that conveniently organize up to twelve cables or cords. ID labels for easy cable identification are also available with some products.

A computer cart may be a consideration if you don't have enough space on your desk to hold your computer and its peripherals. A computer cart with wheels will give you the flexibility to roll the cart out of sight when company comes.

Desk organizers come in an array of choices. If room allows, a lazy Susan type of organizer for the desktop provides multiple organizers in one unit. Drawer organizers are also helpful to manage small but important office gadgets and supplies.

Metal or wooden file cabinets are standard fare in a home office. They can be standard metal cabinets or more attractive wooden cabinets that will blend with the rest of your furniture. My favorites are the cabinets that have a frame that hold hanging folders. They are more versatile than standard manila folder cabinets.

Keyboard trays can maximize desktop space by taking the keyboard off the desk surface and fitting it beneath your desk. It is a shallow tray that slides out for work and back under your desk when not in use.

Every office as well as other rooms of the house can make use of magazine holders. They are made of cardboard or plastic and store magazines upright. They are so versatile in that they can not only hold magazines but other publications that need to be organized and yet accessible.

An organizing tip you might not have thought of is to hang a shoe caddy on the back of a closet door that can be used to store office supplies as well as to set up

a system for your mail. They can also be used to keep bills to be paid and correspondence that needs to be acted upon handy and more visible.

When organizing your home office, you also want to create a space that is easy to utilize. Purchase drawer organizers for use inside your desk drawers as well as desktop organizers. Put items that you do not need on a frequent basis inside the drawers, while items that you use more regularly should be kept on your desktop. Don't try to cram all of your pencils and pens into the desktop organizer. Remember, the key to following organizing tips is to make things easier to find, so keep the desktop uncluttered and make items easy to access.

There are many different storage devices and organizational items for the home office. By purchasing organizational accessories and utilizing these simple organizing tips, you can reclaim your home office and make it a functional component of your household once more.

Make a rule that at the end of each day you will clear off your desk by putting papers in your in/out baskets or filing them in your file cabinet or other filing system so they are readily accessible.

Handle each piece of paper only once and never more than twice.

### **Organize Your Bedroom**

The more you have in your bedroom, the more disorganized your bedroom may become! If your bedroom is a multipurpose room which might include an entertainment center, a study, a storage area, an office or a dressing room, it is more of a challenge to keep it neat and organized. Invariably, you will have more

things to organize, keep track of, and clean. Most rooms in the house can be multipurpose, but not the bedroom. Make it a refuge for rest.

Hopefully, your bedroom is used for the intended purpose of relaxing, sleeping and renewal of self and relationships. Analyze what is in your bedroom and if there is something that causes you worry or stress, remove that item from the bedroom. If something brings comfort to you, leave it in the bedroom.

The larger your family, the greater the chance is that your bedroom is the only room in the house that is uniquely yours. That being said, protect this special room!

Make sure you have adequate drawer space in your bedroom or have an adequate closet for clothes. An armoire is useful if your closet storage is limited. A bed with built-in drawers can hold folded clothes, linens, and other items unable to fit on closet shelves or in your chest of drawers. A low chest with a flat top or a bench with storage capacity can do double duty for either seating or holding clothes or shoes. Consider the areas under windows and in corners for shelving units.

Do you have a small bedroom? They can become quite uncomfortable. After all, your bedroom is the one place where you want to be able to relax and to unwind. If you feel cramped and claustrophobic in your bedroom, you certainly will not be very successful at accomplishing that task! These tips for organizing small bedrooms will make your bedroom feel bigger even if it really isn't!

One of the first steps you need to take when organizing a small bedroom is to eliminate clutter. Knick-knacks and other items lying throughout the room will break up your line of vision and make the room seem smaller than it really is. In addition, a clutter free space is commonly associated with spaciousness. After all, when you shop in a high-end store, aren't the aisles spacious and clear?

When shopping at a discount outlet, on the other hand, the shelves are crowded and the aisles are difficult to maneuver. Keep the same concept in mind when organizing your bedroom.

When organizing small bedrooms, you should make use of mirrors as much as possible. Since mirrors reflect the images from the bedroom, they will create the illusion that the bedroom continues in the other direction. By adding a full length mirror to your closet door or to the back of the doorway leading out of the bedroom, you can create a more spacious look while also giving yourself a tool to help you when getting dressed in the morning!

A nightstand with at least one drawer is essential in the bedroom. It will hold a lamp and alarm clock on the top and the drawer will serve as a place for books, magazines, hand cream or anything else you might need before you go to sleep or throughout the night.

A folding screen is an option to use in a bedroom. It adds a decorative flair to the room and can also be used to section off a dressing area in the room. You can also hang your clothes for the next day on the back of the screen where it is hidden but can be easily retrieved the following morning.

Accessories and storage ideas for bedroom closets are included in the next section.

Be discerning when it comes to knickknacks and décor in your house. The more you display, the more you dust!

### **Organize Your Closets**

Is it time to organize your closets and get rid of the chaos that is lurking inside them? No one likes the idea of tackling a messy closet. Yet, sooner or later, it

will have to be done. If you are ready to dive in and finally get your closet under control, keep these three closet organizing tips in mind so you can achieve the best results.

**Create Piles** - The first of the three closet organizing tips is to divide everything inside your closet into five piles: giveaway, storage, projects, trash, and closet. The giveaway items are those that you will be donating to charity or giving to a friend, so they should still be in good shape. Storage items are those you won't need for a while but still want to hang onto, such as clothes for special occasions. The projects pile should consist of those items that are in need of repair while the trash pile is made up of those that cannot be repaired. Finally, the closet pile is made of the items you will be putting back into the closet.

**Categorize Your Items** - Once you have established which items will go back into the closet, the second of these organizing tips is to categorize the items according to their function. For example, you might have a casual section, a special occasion section, a career section, and a sportswear section. Then, divide these sections into categories such as pants, blouses, skirts, and jackets. Finally, group these categories by color.

**Utilize Organizers** - The last of the closet organizing tips you should follow is really quite simple: purchase and use pre-manufactured closet organizers. Wall hooks, over-the-door organizers, and multi-level rods can go a long way toward getting you better organized, particularly if you have a limited amount of space. Before you know it, you will actually enjoy opening your closet door rather than dreading it!

## **Entryway Closet**

An easy organizing tip to begin with is to redistribute any items from the hall closet that would be better used in other rooms in the house. Donate outdated and outgrown coats to charity which will leave room for coats and jackets for you and your guests. Make use of open and closed storage bins to keep smaller items, such as gloves, mittens and hats under control and easily accessible. You are now ready for those quick exits as your family heads out the door.

**Narrow Shelving** – This type of shelving is great for hats, gloves and scarves on doors or walls for easy access.

**Plastic Drawers and Containers** – These are perfect for storing each family member's assortment of gloves, mittens, and hats. Larger containers work well on higher shelves for storing supplies of any kind.

**Hallway cabinet** – This may be a solution to a crowded hall closet and can be used to store temporarily those items that are going out the door, such as, clothing to be altered or to the cleaners, items going to the repair shop, or packages and letters that are to be mailed.

**Checklist** – As a last minute reminder for family members, a checklist of what they need to take with them works wonders! You might want to laminate it and attach it to the inside of the hall closet door.

## **Linen Closet**

Even though they are called linen closets, in many homes they would be more appropriately called “catch-all” closets. An easy home organizing tip for this closet is to put linens “front and center”. Move belongings that are used less

often into the sides, top and bottom of the closet. Use clear plastic bins or linen bags to store out-of-season linens and other odds and ends.

If you have limited space for your linens, store them on a closet shelf in their respective bedroom or convert a dresser or armoire into a linen closet. If you do have a linen closet, consider labeling the shelves for Twin, Full, Queen, and King-sized sheets.

Make coordinated sheet sets by folding pillowcases and the top sheet inside the bottom sheet which can be grabbed easily from the closet. You may choose to roll the sheet set into one tidy roll. Rolled sheet sets stack better on your linen closet shelves and can be grabbed easily without messing up the rest of the linens.

Save space by rolling towels instead of folding them; you will find they will have fewer wrinkles. Towels may be stored in the linen closet or in the bathroom in an attractive three-shelf rack. You will find decorative three-shelf racks in wicker, wrought iron, or wood that will go with most bathroom décor. Decorative wall hooks can also be used for towels.

Hanging tablecloths on sturdy hangers is a popular way to store them. Covering them with dry-cleaning or garbage bags will keep them from getting dusty. Another idea is to hang tablecloths on towel racks that have been mounted on the back of your linen closet door.

Plastic bins – These are always ideal for items, such as, sewing supplies, medications, bath products and hair accessories. Choose bins with drawers or a lid depending on your needs.

**Add A Shelf** – Purchase several wire shelves to use in your closets. They work especially well in the linen closet to provide more space for storing towels, washcloths and hand towels.

**Shelf dividers** - They are very useful in linen closets to keep stacks of towels and other linens in place.

### **Master Bedroom Closet**

A basic organizing tip for the master bedroom closet is to designate a section of the closet for each partner where they can pull together a day's outfit fast and easy. Carefully select clothes and shoes that are worn out or outdated that need to be purged from your closet to free up precious closet space.

If your closet doesn't have adequate shelves and hanger space, visit an organizing store or big box store for ideas. Use clear plastic bins for organizing accessories and for storing items on higher shelves in the closet.

**Wire Shoe Racks** – One of the best ways to keep your shoes neat and orderly is to purchase wire shoe racks. They attach to the wall and have a brace to keep them at a slant. If you don't have wall space to spare, shoe bags that hang on the back of the door or a shoe rack that sits on the floor or a closet shelf also work well. Seasonal or very dressy shoes that you seldom wear can be stored in their original boxes in the back of the closet or in a store room.

**Shelf Dividers** – These are excellent for keeping stacks of sweaters or purses in place. One available source is the Lillian Vernon catalog and website.

**Add A Shelf** – Do you need another shelf in a small walk-in closet? A unique home organizing tip is to put a shelf inside the closet above the door for items that you seldom use.

Hat boxes – Even if you don't wear hats, hat boxes work well for accessories and bathing suits as well as other small articles of clothing. Plus, they are decorative!

Movable plastic dressers – These are ideal to put in the space under short-hanging clothing. They provide more drawer space and are quite roomy.

Battery-operated light – One of the greatest objects to simply attach to the wall in any closet in your home is a battery-operated light! Buy one for each of your unlit closets!

### **Organize Your Bathroom**

Is it time to organize your bathrooms? You will find that a bathroom is one of the most difficult rooms to organize because it is one of the busiest rooms in the house as well as being one of the smallest and most crowded. This is a true test of your organizing skills!

Before we get to the actual bathroom organizing tips, decide what is working well for you at this time. Are the toothbrushes color-coded for each member of the family? Is there a hook on the wall for robes? These are just a couple of organizational tactics that may be working for you at this time. Also, decide what items are essential for you to use in the bathroom on a daily basis for grooming, bathing, first aid, medicine, cleaning, and laundry.

It is also time to ask yourself why you want to get organized and what is causing the problems of bathroom disorganization and clutter. Do you have more things than storage space? This means that some items have no home because space is limited. You may also be sharing the bathroom with uncooperative partners who sabotage your current system of organization.

Suggestions for solving your bathroom organization problem areas include:

\*Keeping only those items you use on a regular basis or in an emergency in the bathroom.

\*Using a shower caddy for bathing supplies such as, shampoo, shower cap, soap, and bath gels.

\*Using storage containers or baskets under the sink which will more than double storage capacity.

\*Installing a tall cabinet or hooks on the wall near the tub or shower for towels and robes.

\*Using a medicine chest or wall-mounted cabinet for grooming supplies which include tooth care, shaving kit, hair products, nail care and cosmetics.

\*Keeping cleaning supplies under the sink or in a linen closet in the bathroom.

\*Storing first aid supplies and medicines in a hallway linen closet or in the kitchen so they are away from the dampness of the bathroom.

\*Adding shelves or cabinets in the space above the toilet.

\*Installing high shelving in the bathroom for towels or decorative objects to not only save space but to also enhance the look of the room.

\*Using a hallway linen closet or a spare dresser drawer for clean towels.

\*Keeping extra supplies bought in bulk in a nearby closet or storage room.

## **Your “Toss” List**

What do you keep and what do you throw away?

\*Medicines with expired dates and any extra bottles of medications you seldom or never use. (Yes, there are different opinions on whether expired medications are still useable and effective; you will need to make that decision!)

\*Half-used bottles of shampoo and other hair care products that have been opened but are not being used. (This shampoo can be used for soaking combs and brushes in the sink.)

\*Color cosmetics that you no longer like or use. (You will find more information on how long to keep cosmetics in the next section of this ebook.)

\*Toothbrushes are to be replaced every 3-6 months. Toss the old ones or use them for cleaning tasks around the house, such as, cleaning the grooves in windows during the window washing process.

\*Tubes of ointments, toothpaste, or any other cream that is bent, twisted or clogged. They are really not very appealing!

\*Frayed or stained towels make great cleaning rags.

\*Items that have outlived their worthiness, such as cloth bandages or hair accessories that have become stretched, rusty nail clippers or tweezers, or hair accessories that you no longer use.

\*Extra blow dryers, curling irons and hot curlers. Keep one backup blow dryer and curling iron. The rest are just taking up space; how many do you really need?

## **Finally, an Organized Bathroom!**

Now how are you going to keep it that way?

Get in the habit of spending 3-5 minutes every day in routine maintenance. Every couple of months schedule 30 minutes for a mini organizing session. Throw out any cosmetics or other products you no longer use, as well as any other items that have outlived their usefulness. An ongoing rule of thumb is to refrain from buying any new products or supplies for the bathroom until the old ones are used up.

## Practical Storage Tips

Do you need help in getting clutter under control? Practical storage solutions are key components to being successful in your quest to be organized. The following storage organizing tips will help you get started with your organizing plan.

\*Before you store items, eliminate those possessions you no longer need. Consider items such as kitchen gadgets, office files, linens, toys and sports equipment. An organizing tip to use on a regular basis is to discard or give away any belongings that are broken, outgrown, or not used. Store your things in the best possible condition.

\*Convert space under the bed into storage space for out-of-season clothing, accessories and other belongings. They are easily accessible and free up space in your closet for those things that are current and in-season.

\*Store small items, which tend to clutter an area quickly, in baskets or decorative boxes which can be set on a shelf instead of on a counter-top or desk.

\*Select end tables in the bedroom, living room, or family room that provide drawers or storage behind cabinet doors.

\*Choose trunks, chests, bins, and decorative boxes that have a dual function as tables or nightstands.

\*Use vertical space. Purchase a tall, rather than a short, bookcase which takes up the same amount of floor space, yet provides double the storage.

\*Buy an armoire rather than a dresser because it provides much more storage and also takes up the same amount of floor space.

\*Be generous with see-through storage boxes and labels. They can be used in every room of your house and are adaptable in that they can be moved from room to room as needed.

According to professional organizers, the most easily reached storage area is located in the space that matches up with the area between your shoulders and your knees. Thus, objects used only occasionally should be stored above eye-level and below knee-level.

**Practical storage solutions are key components to being  
successful in your quest to be organized.**

## Time Saving Tips to Use Today

You want to be more organized but where do you start? Here are a few organizing tips to implement today to get you on the road to a more organized life.

What about a gift that you received but do not love? Well, after you say thank you, you are the new owner, and it is your choice to do with it as you choose. The giver of the gift would want it to be used which means that you could “re-gift” or just give it to someone who will love it and make use of it. Don’t let it add to your stress by becoming a “clutter” item—an organizing tip to use on a daily basis!

What about items that belong to family members that have been left for you to care for and store? This might be a child who has moved out or another family member who has simply asked you to store something on a temporary basis. Since your home is not a storage facility, set a date with the person to get the items or send you money to have it shipped to them. After that date you can (without guilt) take the items to charity where they will really be used.

What about those items that at one time interested you? Remember, our tastes and interests change with age, time and experiences. A basic organizing tip is to live in the present and buy and keep only those things that interest you at the current time.

What about all of those books that won’t fit on the shelves? Box some of them up and store them away. Make a note in your daily planner a few months ahead to remind yourself to rotate the books. It will seem as though you have a new collection of books!

What about all of the photographs you want to display? To keep your tabletops from becoming cluttered with photo frames, an organizing tip is to hang photographs on the wall in attractive arrangements which will free up space on the tabletops and make them look less cluttered.

What about the magazines and newspapers that clutter the living room? An organizing tip for any home is to use a small basket near the couch to store your current reading material as well as the TV guide. The TV remote can also be placed in the basket when not in use.

These organizing tips will help you start the process of getting your life organized and are just a few of the endless suggestions that will help you accomplish that goal.

**A basic organizing tip is to live in the present and buy and keep only those things that interest you at the current time.**

## **It's Time to Begin - A Home Organizing Review**

Bookstore shelves are full of books on organizing the home. They offer ideas for maintaining incoming and outgoing paper, filing systems, recipes, clothing, books, CDs, toys, kitchen gadgets, jewelry, coin collections and canned goods, among other things. Virtually any home can become more orderly with the implementation of just a few easy concepts.

You can read this handy ebook and any good organizing book from the bookshop and still do nothing. You just think about what you will do. Implementation is the key, and in thoroughly disorganized homes, getting started is the least favorite of any job at hand.

Especially if the home has been disorganized for a long period of time and the same tactics for keeping the disorder out of sight have been employed for some time, it is difficult for the homemaker to know where to begin.

Following are a few basic pointers in taking that first step toward a more orderly life.

### **1. Start anywhere in your home, but with just one problem area.**

Choose one single area to work on at one time. Incoming paper is a big problem for some families, for example, and by getting that under control, a lot of clutter will be eliminated straight off. Decide where to start based on the answer to this question: "The thing that bothers me most of all is..."

### **2. Choose an organizational system that you know you will be able to work with easiest.**

Simple is generally best; anything too complicated might become overwhelming after awhile. Remember that if paper management (or whatever area you are trying to improve) was easy for you, you would not be in this bind in the first place.

### **3. Put together the items needed in order to implement the system.**

Organizing paper might require file folders, an in-box, a shelving system, etc. Label folders, establish a family mail center, install in-boxes, and carefully follow all other directions in implementing your new system.

### **4. Decide where items should be placed**

Decide on a suitable place for items you have accumulated over the years, which are waiting to be sorted, filed or acted upon.

Do not try to do all of your organizing before implementing your new system. Simply gather your collection of papers, deposit them in the designated place, and work on them as you can -- even 10 or 15 minutes per day will work down the pile in no time.

### **5. Begin using your system immediately.**

This will prevent the disorganization from spreading into other rooms.

### **6. Analyze and adjust**

If you find that the system you are using does not address a particular need, such as what to do with school assignments, make a decision about this right away.

If you simply cannot decide, then allocate a single place for school papers and make sure they all end up there. You can change your system at any point and reorganize things, so do not wait for the perfect idea before you try something new.

### **7. Use the system like clockwork.**

Make no excuses. That is the only way any system will work well for you.

Implementing these organizing tips will get you started on the road to a more organized, peaceful and enjoyable home—a home that will “work” for you!

A disorderly home can become just about too much for anyone who means well but does not know where to begin. The good news is that you can begin right now, from wherever you are. All you have to do is take that first step and with this handy ebook, you have the tools you need.

**Organization is not an option; it is a fundamental survival skill and distinct competitive advantage – Pam Wood**