



When people contact me asking for organizing assistance, they sometimes indicate they have tried to get organized, but didn't get the results they wanted. In other words, short term fixes didn't lead to long-term results. Here are three recommendations to ensure your organizing efforts are long-term fixes:

1. Take the time to let go of the items you aren't using
2. Use the best organizing tool(s) for the space
3. Learn to maintain the spaces so they stay clutter-free

Let's break it down:

1. Take the time to eliminate the things that are getting in the way and causing clutter in your home: i.e. CRAP (Clutter that Robs Anyone of Pleasure). If something does not bring joy, pleasure, usefulness, or life to your home, let it go. Regardless of its value, if you aren't using the item, it's just in the way.

2. Secure the right organization tool(s) for the space; not buy more plastic. In most cases, a good purging should eliminate some plastic containers and most people already have organization containers in their home such as mugs, Longaberger baskets, antique bowls, etc. In fact, LifeGetsOrganized.com lists seven reasons to NOT buy another organizing tool:

- It's free,
- It's on sale,
- It looks useful,
- No plan how to use it,
- You didn't measure the space where to use it
- Someone else you know uses it
- It's cute!

In other words, have a plan, measure, know what you are storing, and make sure it will be useful.

3. Once you have organized your home, you'll find it doesn't stay that way for good. Life is busy and it doesn't take long for houses to fall out of order.

Organizing is an ongoing job and maintenance is the key. Here are my *Lucky 13 Tips* on how to keep your spaces the way you want them to look:

1. If it takes less than 60 seconds, do it!
2. Commitment: Continue to practice good habits; let go of old ones.
3. Maintenance: Schedule time on your calendar for maintenance: put things back in their home, hang up clothing, and throw out trash.
4. Change it up: Life changes so if the system isn't working, change it.
5. Be thankful: Encourage family members and acknowledge their contributions when they keep areas organized.
6. No digging: Don't unearth or search for anything you need; keep most-used items front and center. If it doesn't have a home, give it one.
7. Constantly purge: Keep a bag/box available and deposit items you no longer need or want; donate regularly.
8. One bite at a time: Break a larger project into smaller, manageable tasks and stay focused until completed.
9. Hire a cleaning service: A cleaning service helps you stay organized because you clear surfaces and floors before cleaning.
10. Invite company: Welcome people into your home regularly; you'll be motivated to keep your home organized.
11. Keep it simple: Bring in less stuff, spend less time taking care of stuff.
12. Learn how to say no: When you say 'yes' to others, you say 'no' to yourself and staying organized.
13. Establish boundaries: Allowing others to step over your personal boundaries can keep you from staying organized.

Clutter Quote: "*Order is never observed; it is disorder that attracts attention because it is awkward and intrusive.*" Eliphas Levi, French occult author and magician