

# Organize Your Home for Safety and Health

When you organize spaces for elderly family members or yourself, safety and health are top concerns. Keeping environments simple is crucial. Let's break it down:



1. Kitchen
  - Throw out expired food from pantry and clean out the fridge—no one wants food poisoning and stock piling food makes you lose track of what you have
  - Place items used every day on the kitchen counter for easy access; everything else in the cabinets. Say “no” to digging for what you need or to double stacking mugs, plates and plastic containers in cabinets. Keep it simple.
2. Medications
  - Dispose of expired prescription medications (at local police stations) and keep current medications front and center on a tray or in a basket. Organize a daily pill container.
  - Go through other medicines (cough, cold, etc.) and dispose of expired or old meds.
3. Containerize
  - Use trays or containers to corral stuff; makes it easier to clean—just lift and swipe
  - Visually easier to locate similar items and easier for a cleaning service to clean
4. Floors
  - Keep floors free of throw rugs, shoes and clutter.
  - No piles on the floor, use containers to hold items (baskets, end tables, etc.)
5. Mail, Magazines, Catalogs, Newspapers
  - Paper is the biggest culprit of clutter, dust, and frustration. Place bills to pay in one location; place bills on autopay and go paperless
  - Recycle all old magazines, catalogs and newspapers; keep only the minimum
6. Steps and entry ways
  - Clear all steps and entry ways of clutter. Install handrails and grab bars if needed.
  - Make sure lighting is bright and easy to access.
7. Bedroom and Bathroom
  - Clear a pathway to the bed and to the bathroom
  - Place only essentials on the end table by the bed; keep bathroom toiletries simple (1 of each item, all other bottles in a cabinet or closet)
  - Install safety equipment if needed by the bed and in the bathroom
8. Your Front Door
  - Be stingy about what you bring through the front door. Don't allow advertisers to convince you to buy items you don't need, can't afford, and that will end up as clutter.

Finally, seek advice from the elder care network agencies in your area on how to assist you or your loved ones in organizing a safer and healthier home. Life is more enjoyable when there is less stuff to get in the way.

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