



# Organizing 101: Just the Basics

Not everyone has the organizing gene, and for those who don't have it, organizing can feel like rocket science. When you are overwhelmed by your clutter or you can't find things when you need them, it's time to get organized. Organizing saves money and time and can its benefits can help you embrace your space and achieve the life you want to live. How you do it: One bite at a time!

Let's break down organizing basics:

**Step #1.** Home Assessment-Evaluate and write down answers to these questions so you can stay focused as you proceed.

- Why do you want to get organized and what do you want to achieve?
- What are your challenges with your spaces?
- Does your family have limitations?
- What are your goals and your timeline?
- What are you willing to do or not do to make this happen?

**Step #2.** Unclutter Your Home-Before you organize your spaces, you need to sort your belongings and let go of the CRAP (Clutter that Robs Anyone of Pleasure). Schedule time and eliminate distractions.

When you are sorting a lot of clutter in one area, follow a few guidelines:

- a. Stay focused and sort first; try not to struggle or read everything.
- b. Start on the left and move toward the right; stick with one area at a time.
- c. Sort things into categories: Keep, Throw/Recycle, Sell, Donate/Give Away, Repair/Upcycle, Another Room
- d. If you're not sure what to do, put it in the 'keep' pile and move on quickly.

**Step #3.** Letting go of CRAP-With your goals in mind, go through your 'keep' items one by one and ask yourself if this item(s) is part of your life going forward. Some things will be harder to let go of than others. Assign an objective person or 'body double' to help with decisions. Here's a list of what could be CRAP:

- Hasn't been used for 2 years (guideline)
- Items you don't like or need

- Ongoing projects that are unfinished (for at least 2 years)
- Supplies/books from projects that no longer interest you
- Memorabilia that has no value or meaning now or for your future
- Things that have negative connotations or have bad memories attached to them
- Clothing that makes you feel bad about yourself
- Family heirlooms packed away in the attic
- Collections not displayed or packed away

**Step #4.** Location, Location, Location-Everything needs a home or it ends up as clutter. Keep most-used items front and center. Ask yourself:

- a. Where would it make sense to keep the item?
- b. Where should it reside so it can be found quickly?
- c. Where would you go to find it if you were looking for it?
- d. Does it belong with other items in the same category?

**Step #5.** Containerize and Corral-The key is choosing the right container to hold your item(s) and making sure it's easily accessible to all users:

- Opaque or solid? Solids hide items and opaque allows you to see what's inside.
- Lid or basket? Lids keep things dust free and no lid means easier clean-up.
- Pretty or utilitarian? Use things you already own to hold items, e.g. antique bowls, baskets or a favorite mug. Plain old plastic can also be just what you need.

**Step #6.** Maintenance-Taking a little time each week to maintain organization is critical. When life changes and it will, don't be afraid to rework the system.

- If it takes less than 60 seconds, do it!
- Don't unearth or search for anything you need.
- Keep a bag/box on each floor and put in items you and your family no longer need or want and donate regularly.
- Take out as many items as you bring into your home.

Please go to my website for tips on how to maintain your spaces and keep your home CRAP-free.

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