



Organizing Hints: For Every Room in your Home!

Why get organized? If you spend a lot of time looking for things large and small: a pair of scissors, a pen that works, the invitation to that party, or a bill that's overdue, then you need to get organized. The first step to organizing is to let go of the C.R.A.P. (Clutter that Robs Anyone of Pleasure) so let's break it down and start with the basics:

1. Have respect for yourself and your time by uncluttering and maintaining that organization. Organizing means finding a "home" for everything so your home stays clutter-free; after all, you deserve a calm environment when you come home.
2. Stop buying needlessly and compulsively. When you go shopping, ask yourself, do I really need this? Will I wear this? Can I replace something else with this new item? Do I want this item more than I want a new car (or new kitchen, or vacation...)?
3. Use the seasons to unclutter:
 - a. Fall-fall clean-up
 - b. Winter-donate items before Dec. 31 for tax purposes
 - c. Spring-spring cleaning
 - d. Summer-unclutter gardens, garage, garden shed
4. Don't think of uncluttering as getting rid of stuff, think of it as listening to your own voice instead of advertising and retailers:
 - a. I know who I am,
 - b. I know what I like, and
 - c. I know what I want...and it's not all this stuff!

Organizing can bring beauty and a sense of calm to your home. Uncluttering allows you to surround yourself with the beautiful things you love, not with clutter; surround yourself with things that make you smile, not with things that make you feel claustrophobic.

Let's go room-by-room to organize and let go of the CRAP:

Bedroom

- Furniture
 - Dresser top: decorate and organize by using beautiful things to hold your jewelry, hair accessories, watches, bracelets (e.g. pretty pottery, antique mugs, etc.)
 - Nightstand: put only what you need on top: tissues, pen and tablet, Chapstick, earplugs, reading glasses, water glass and small pitcher. Put things in pretty containers.
 - Dressers: use antique furniture to hold your television, decorations, out-of-season clothing. For example, sewing machines, wood secretaries and Hoosiers.
 - To look less cluttered, store nothing under furniture with open legs.
- Clothing
 - If you buy something new, donate something else.
 - Wardrobe: go through your clothing at the end of the winter and the end of the summer.

- If you didn't wear it this season or it still has a tag on it, consign it if it's still in style.
 - If it doesn't make you feel good to wear it, if it's worn, faded, "pilly", or out of style, donate it.
 - Ask yourself, why don't I choose this when I get dressed?
- Pajamas: old sweatshirts, guy's sweatpants and ratty t-shirts don't count as pajamas- buy beautiful pajamas!
- Underwear and lingerie: replace stretched out or stained lingerie, you deserve nice things.

➤ Jewelry

- Do you wear all the jewelry you have? Do you have to wade through your jewelry to find the piece you want? Narrow it down to a manageable amount by handing some down to relatives.
- Fine jewelry: always in style, wear it often and for all occasions.
- Costume jewelry: goes in and out of style, go through and purge often.

➤ Accessories

- Belts: do they all fit and are they still in style?
 - If you've lost weight, get a new hole punched in the belt.
 - If they are too small, donate them.
- Scarves: try new ways to use them (e.g. scarf on a purse); build an outfit around it; or donate the ones you don't use. Store scarves on a coat rack or on the cubbies of fabric shelving that hangs from the closet rod.

➤ Shoes

- Replace the heels on high-quality shoes.
- Need new laces? Get them!
- Store shoes with dryer sheets in them to smell fresh.
- Store shoes without boxes-boxes take up too much room.
- Sneakers-arches break down, replace often.
- If shoes hurt your feet, don't wear them!

Kitchen

- Bags: store them in "useful" places by type of bag.
 - Paper grocery and department store bags-use to recycle newspapers, catalogs, and magazines
 - Plastic grocery and department store bags-use to carry recycling outside and throw out smelly trash. Recycle the rest by taking them back to the grocery store.
 - Reusable bags-use at the grocery store instead of getting more plastic
- Utensils: If your drawers are too full, pull out the gadgets you never or rarely use (one sharp knife will do the job of five+ kitchen gadgets).
 - Keep the '5 basics' from Rachael Ray: a good sharp knife, huge cutting board with rubber feet, big deep-sided skillet, good wooden spoon, bowl for garbage by the cutting board.
 - Sharpen knives that don't cut.
 - Keep a measuring cup with the flour or sugar or dog food.
 - Keep things you use daily on top of the counter in a pretty container.

- Cups and mugs: you only need so many cups and mugs, stacking them causes chips and cracks (think 5 mugs and 5 glasses per person).
 - Resist the free mugs and water bottles that are given at sporting events, fundraisers, etc. Just say No thank you!
 - Use the “good stuff” when you drink tea or wine; what are you saving it for? You are as good as company!
- Plastic food containers
 - Keep similar sizes together. It’s a luxury to store the lids on the containers; what a concept!
 - Resist the urge to have every size and every color of Tupperware (how much food are you storing and why?)
 - If you give a lot of food away at the holidays or make it for others, store those containers in a different location.
- Pots and Pans: keep the good stuff and only what you use; polish copper bottoms to look like new. Five high-quality pots and pans is plenty for the average kitchen.

Home Office

- Office Supplies: throw out pens that don’t work
 - Keep a small “office” in bedroom or kitchen (pad, pen, scissors, tape) or on each floor.
 - Donate excess supplies when you have too many.
- Mail: touch only once means don’t flip through the mail, put it down, pick it up again later.
 - Sort mail close to where it comes in the door.
 - Tear credit card offers and junk mail in half and shred.
 - Bills to pay: store them where you pay them
 - To-do items: invitations, papers with deadlines (not bills), etc., store in one place
 - Papers to keep in one basket near the filing cabinet and file later (June and December-get ready for tax time)
 - Catalogs and magazines: get one container to hold them all, store alphabetically and when the new issue comes, replace it with the old one.
- Memorabilia
 - Memories and pictures: use a display rack or ‘gallery’ wall to enjoy the notes and cards you receive. Each season put them in a drawer to go through at the end of the year to discard it or take a photo of it.
 - Display children’s art on cork or magnetic strips and recycle often. Hanging it all over the house makes it feel like clutter. Don’t make sentimental decisions to keep or throw away on a daily basis.

Bathroom

- Medicine cabinet
 - Throw away expired medications and prescriptions, suntan lotions, or cold remedies that didn’t work.
- Shampoo/conditioners/body wash
 - Use only one bottle of each at a time in the shower-store the rest.

- Little bottles from hotels-donate to emergency shelters and stop bringing them home.
- If you don't like it or it isn't working as promised, get rid of it.

➤ Make-up

- Keep on counter only those things you use every day.
- Use pretty containers or trays to keep orderly.
- Throw out old make-up that is 2 years or older.
- Resist the 'free' make-up kits; don't allow advertising to suck you in

Children's Rooms

- Big laundry hamper and big trash can.
- Think zones: homework area, toys, games, bookshelf, etc.
- Toys: go through toys and clothing after each birthday and holiday when kids find it easier to give up their stuff. Take your children along when you donate their stuff.
- Containerize (preferable without lids) and categorize belongings to make it easier for kids to clean up their room.

Seasonal Items

- If you decorate for different seasons-make it manageable.
 - Keep things that have meaning, i.e. gifts and mementos from travel and friends and family.
 - Keep in clear containers with labels-one box for each season (Christmas might be the exception).

Living Room/Family Room

- CD's and DVD's: go through as the kids grow and your tastes change.
- If you stream all your movies and music, donate it all!
- If your music is on your computer or phone, store the CD's in one large album (without jewel cases) or let them go completely.
- Books: keep only the ones that have special meaning for you or that you'd like to reread. Donate excess to local libraries.

Attic

- Wedding gifts: if you haven't used them in 5+ years-donate, regift it or sell it. Wedding gifts should be enjoyed, not kept in the attic or basement.
- Antiques and family heirlooms: use them, display them, repurpose them, or hand them down, in other words, enjoy them and don't store them.

Garage

- Think zones: work bench, gardening, auto supplies, sports equipment, camping supplies
- Garden tools: store on pegboard, drill holes in handles and hang
- Tools: keep a few essential tools inside the house in an open tool box with a handle
- Hang ladders and lawn furniture on the walls or up on rafters: think 'up'.
- Leave room for a car or two!