



Organizing Hints: For Every Room!

Why Organize? Do you spend too much 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?? The first step to organizing is to unclutter! Here are a few basics to uncluttering:

1. Unclutter with reckless abandon! Have respect for yourself and your time by uncluttering and maintaining that organization. Organizing just means finding a "home" for everything, after all, you deserve a calm environment when you come home.
2. Stop buying needlessly and compulsively. When you go shopping, ask yourself, will I use this? Will I wear this? Can I replace something else with this new item? Do I want this 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-outside uncluttering, garage, garden shed
4. Don't think of uncluttering as getting rid of stuff, think of it as
 - 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. Organizing doesn't have to be boring or ugly! Uncluttering allows you to surround yourself with the 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 unclutter...

Bedroom

- Furniture
 - Dresser top-decorate and organize by using beautiful things to hold your jewelry, hair accessories, watches, bracelets, etc.
 - Night stand-put only what you need on top: tissues, pen and tablet, Chap Stick, 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 that season, donate it if it's still in style.
 - If it's worn, faded, "pilly", or out of style, throw it away.
 - If it still has the tag on it and you haven't worn it in one year, donate it! If it was a mistake, donate it and move on.
 - If it doesn't make you feel good to wear it, get rid of it.
 - Ask yourself, why don't I choose this when I get dressed?
 - Pajamas-old sweat shirts, sweat pants and t-shirts don't count as pajamas-buy beautiful pajamas!
 - Underwear and lingerie-replace stretched out or stained lingerie, you deserve nice things.
 - Pantyhose-keep different colors of hosiery in separate Ziploc bags. Takes less time to find them and they don't snag.
- 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 is always in style, wear it often and not just in the evening.
 - Costume jewelry goes in and out of style, go through and purge every year.
- 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 flat in Ziploc plastic bags with air pressed out; takes up less room.
- 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.

Kitchen

- Plastic Bags-Store them in "useful" places by type of bag. "Hide" your recycling!
- Paper grocery bags-use to recycle newspapers
 - Small shopping bags-use to recycle catalogs and magazines
 - Plastic grocery bags-use to carry recycling outside and throw out smelly trash. Recycle the rest by taking them back to the grocery store.
 - Better yet, use reusable bags to shop and recycle the plastic bags.
- Utensils-If your drawers are too full, pull out the gadgets you never use.

- 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 cup measure with the flour or sugar or dog food.
 - Keep things you use daily on top of the counter in a pretty container.
 - Gadgets aren't as useful as the basics, consider donating them.
- Cups and mugs-you only need so many cups and mugs, stacking them causes chips and cracks.
 - Resist the "free mugs" at the gas station, sporting events, etc.
 - Use the "good stuff" when you drink tea or wine, treat yourself!
 - Plastic food containers
 - Keep similar sizes-store separate according to lids and bottoms so they are easier to find.
 - Resist the urge to have every size and every color of Tupperware.
 - Pots and Pans-keep only what you use; polish copper bottoms to look like new.

Home Office

- Office Supplies-throw out pens that don't work
 - Keep a small "office" in bedroom or kitchen (pad, pen, scissors, tape).
- Mail-touch only once means don't flip through the mail, put it down, pick it up again later.
 - Tear credit card offers and junk mail in half and throw away.
 - Set up a quick filing system-use baskets or drawers; sort close to where you bring the mail into the house:
 - bills to pay-store them where you pay them
 - papers to file later (June and December-get ready for tax time)
 - catalogs-get one container to hold them all, store alphabetically and when the new issue comes, replace it with the old one.
 - dated items-invitations, papers with deadlines (not bills)
- Memorabilia
 - Memories and children's art, etc.—Use a display rack to enjoy the notes and cards you receive and each season put them in a drawer to put in scrapbooks once a year. Don't make sentimental decisions to keep or throw away on a daily basis.
 - Display children's art on cork or magnetic strips and cycle often.
 - Pictures—Use a display rack to enjoy pictures and each season put them in a drawer to go put into albums once a year.

Bathroom

- Medicine cabinet
 - Throw away expired medications, suntan lotions and tubes
 - Throw away cold remedies that didn't work or expired

- 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.
 - 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.

Children's Rooms

- Toys-Go through toys and clothing after every birthday and holiday when kids find it easier to give up their stuff.
 - Get them in the habit at an early age to donate toys to other children.
 - Donate clothing that is too small or give to a neighbor or friend.
 - Containerize and categorize belongings.

Seasonal Items

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

Living Room/Family Room

- CD's, DVD's, and VHS: go through as the kids grow and your tastes change.
- Invest in an MP3 player to store CD's and cut down on clutter.
- Books-keep only the ones that have meaning for you. Textbooks-unless they are history books, things have changed!! Donate the rest to community libraries.

Attic

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

Garage

- Garden tools-store up on pegboard, drill holes in handles and hang.
- Tools-keep a few essential tools inside the house in an open-type tool box.
- Hang ladders and lawn furniture on the walls or up on rafters. Think 'Up'.