



50 Quick Organizing Tips

Yes, a more organized home or office is possible. With these tips and a consistent effort, you will transform your space to the open, attractive space that is a pleasure to come home to every day!

General Clutter Tips:

Be Ruthless, not Reckless! Being ruthless is tossing all your old travel magazines; being reckless is dumping an entire box of papers and mail. I once found a \$250 check for a client in a stack of newspaper clippings.

1. The key to having less clutter is to make a decision on each item as you are holding it.
2. Thinking "I'll deal with that later" or "I'll put it here for now" is dangerous; it leads to precarious piles.
3. Deal with mail daily. Create a place for bills, school papers, personal mail. (More specifics on this follow.)
4. Newspapers are today's news, tomorrow's trash. If you are keeping them to 'catch up,' you will end up with stacks. Remember you will see this information again!
5. Stand over a trash and recycle bin as you sort your mail so you can recycle junk mail right away.

Entry Area:

This first area visitors see in your home, it needs to be inviting, not cluttered. What is the secret to an organized, presentable entryway? How do you prevent it from becoming a dumping-ground for mail, shopping, gym bags, backpacks, purses, shoes?

1. Have a designated "Home" for everything.
2. Deal with your mail daily and have a place for bills, school papers, etc.
3. Purge the things you never use, and put out-of-season clothing and shoes away (in bedrooms or the garage).
4. Put shoes away in a closet or get a shoe shelf to contain them
5. Count how many coats and bags are piling up and install hooks for them.
6. Remember to measure the space you have before buying bins or baskets for your gear.

7. Give your family a "tour" of where everything goes.
8. Repeat this at the end of each season.

Home/Professional Office:

The key to an organized office is having a place for everything. It makes work much easier when you have an open desk space. You need room to think and breathe. If this is the place you earn your living, finding information and tools quickly is especially important. Having this well-oiled office machine will lead to a productive workday, enabling you to provide well for yourself and loved ones.

1. Purge papers and projects that are no longer necessary.
2. Make it easy to file by having a filing cabinet within arm's reach.
3. Have a place for bills that need to be paid and file paid bills promptly.
4. Try a letter sorter if you need bills visible to remember.
5. For credit card bills, only save page(s) listing your purchases (eliminates 50% of paper) and shred the rest.
6. If you're saving something to read 'later,' set a deadline. If you haven't read it by then, recycle it.
7. If it takes only 5 minutes to do, do it now instead of adding it to a pile.
8. Put away everything you can and "containerize" everything else.

Kitchen Counter or Desk:

For clear kitchen counters, regular maintenance is the best recipe. Here are the rest of the ingredients!

1. Again, have a place for everything! Items that need a "Home" are the ones that pile up!
2. Establish a place for children to put their homework, events info and papers that need signing.
3. Keep 1 binder or large file for each child. Store pictures, writing, perfect spelling tests, etc. When old enough, they can be the manager of their own memories.
4. Stand up the papers in a file sorter or magazine sorter.
5. For urgent papers, keep them "in your face" on a cork board or clipped to front of a file sorter.
6. When a new magazine comes in, recycle last month's. If you must save an article from last month, take it out and file it or scan it.

7. Corral vitamins in an attractive container, or keep 1 out as a reminder and stow the rest in a drawer or cupboard. Purge bottles you don't use or are expired.
8. Have a tall central decoration that draws the eye, like a vase with bright silk flowers. It will inspire you to keep the counter clear.
9. Maintain, maintain, maintain. Pick a daily time (or less often) to put things back in your system.

Clothes Closets:

Our clothes, shoes and bags have a way of multiplying, don't they? If only our bank account had the same phenomenon!

1. Buy one, toss one.
Or:
2. Buy one, toss two if your clothes are already squeezed. This may make you think twice before you bring home a new top or bag.
3. Put like items together. For example, I group all my casual tops together and all of my professional blouses together. It makes getting ready faster!
4. Have a few hooks for frequently-worn items like your favorite sweatshirt, gym clothes.
5. Create "zones" for travel, gym and sporting clothes, hats, off season items, etc.
6. Stand up purses using wire sweater dividers. They clip neatly to a shelf.
7. Scarves can easily be corralled using a scarf organizer, which looks like a regular hanger and has 6-18 large loops.
8. Use a pool noodle cut to size for tall leather boots. It works great!

Pantry:

1. Rotate food. Whenever you buy a new can of kidney beans, put it in the back and bring the older cans to the front.
2. Label shelves. So valuable when you have little helpers, and for noticing when you are out of an item! Use a labeler or yellow painter's tape.
3. Create zones. Example: Keep baking items together, and put fresh vegetables like potatoes and onions together.
4. To save yourself trips to the store, when you need one, buy two. This has application in other areas too.
5. Make a shelf within a shelf: use a "cabinet shelf:" a freestanding wire shelf is especially useful for holding twice as many soup cans, etc.

Toys/Collections:

1. Go through the toys either with or without your child and purge the toys s(he) doesn't play with.
2. Think like a cowboy. Corral those toys. They can be a problem because they are all different shapes and sizes. The good thing is: you can find practically any storage you need in stores or online!
3. One of my personal favorites for organizing small/medium-sized toys is a wooden framework 3 "stories" high with colored plastic bins.
4. Think outside the toybox: use organizing tools that are meant for other items. Example: wrapping paper storage works for light sabers, swords and bows.
5. Games: They can be such a problem because the boxes are all different sizes. Keep them on shelves or re-container them into Clear same-size storage bins with lids. Use game label cut from box (or a picture of it).
6. For children who cannot read yet, put a picture of what is in the basket, like a car, along with the word "cars." It helps them learn reading and organizing at the same time!
7. Collections: Kids love rocks. So treat it like a scientist would: use a box with dividers to categorize rocks or other small items, or try a tackle box. If you are stuck, look online for ideas. Chances are someone out there has already found a great solution!

As with any system, the key to continued success is: Maintain, maintain, maintain!

Happy organizing!

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