

Simplicity Newsletter – November/ December 2009

HOLIDAY SURVIVAL FROM SIMPLICITY

You know the old adage: People can't take advantage of you unless you let them. The same is true about holiday stress. It is your perceived expectations and your need to make the holidays perfect that create stress. The good news is that YOU are in control, despite what the media tell you. You can decide how much hustle and bustle and holiday merriment suits you and your loved ones.

If you're looking for ways to take control of your time, your pocketbook and your sanity, Simplicity offers these tips. Follow a couple and we guarantee you'll feel relief. Follow them all, and holiday nirvana will be upon you!

Purchase "consumable gifts".

Homemade goodies and gift certificates are obvious choices. A gift of your time or talent can be a real hit.

Tap your outside resources.

Hire a sitter so you can shop or plan, or even stay in another part of the house working. Hire a teenager to run simple errands for you. Let the store where you shopped wrap/ship your gifts. Purchase one of The Purple Martin & Co.'s Holiday Notebooks to keep all of your information and data organized. The best part about the Holiday Notebook is that you can use it year after year!

Delegate to your family and friends.

Let family members and visitors contribute to the shared holiday meal (and clean up). They will be glad to have an opportunity to participate.

Kitchen savvy.

Plan your menus and holiday baking well in advance. Make a grocery list to avoid unnecessary trips to the store. For things that freeze well, make them in advance. Double batches of casseroles can be a huge time saver. Let your children help with age-appropriate tasks in the kitchen.

Draw the line on spending.

Determine your family's holiday budget and stick to it. Drawing names for gift giving and setting spending limits within your family are good ways to stretch your budget. Remember, it really is the thought that counts.

Make a "break date".

Call a friend and set a firm time for coffee or lunch during the holiday season. No phones, no texts, no children- just a chance to catch up with someone whose friendship you value. What a gift this will be for both of you.

Just say "no".

Deciding what you are NOT going to do this holiday is just as important as deciding what you are going to do. Reflect on what has made you crazy in the past and give yourself permission to let it go. Maybe it's overly elaborate decorating, or parties the week of Christmas or a card list a mile long. Remember, you don't have to do everything!

Learn from the past.

Keep records of what you do this year- your gift and card list, how many dozen cookies you baked for the office staff, where you bought the best poinsettias... you get the idea. If you keep the information well-organized and handy, you won't have to reinvent the wheel next year.

Set "task times".

You'll get more done when you schedule a set time to do a task. Forced productivity beats no productivity. Set a hard start and stop time and before you know it, your holiday "chores" won't seem so overwhelming after all.



Photo courtesy of SterlingPear.com

Divide and conquer decorations.

After the holidays, don't just stuff all your decorations into the same tattered boxes and bags. Take some time to purge the items you really never liked and those that are tired and broken. Invest in clear plastic containers with secure lids for storing the keepers. [Simplify](#), a Charlotte-based organizational supply company, sells ornament storage containers and offers free delivery in the Charlotte area with orders over \$25.00.

Before storing your treasures for next year, label the containers with enough information to be helpful.

Simplicity has years of experience in taming holiday decorations. Undoing all the decorations isn't nearly as exciting as putting them up. All those willing family helpers seem to vanish when the "take-down" begins.

Simplicity offers a [special holiday service](#) that can be as comprehensive as you'd like. Typically it includes putting away ornaments and other decorations, removing the tree and other greenery and clean sweeping the dropped needles. Ornaments are stored in appropriate containers and labeled for easy access next year. If you know you want this service on a particular day, please contact us early to avoid disappointment.

👉 DECK YOUR HALLS WITH ORGANIZATION AND STYLE



The Holidays are here and can be overwhelming even before the "decking of the halls" officially begins! One of the most stressful parts of the holiday season is the additional amount of "information" we are responsible for on top of our daily routine.

We pile additional shopping lists, decorating ideas, holiday card lists, gift ideas, additional meal preparation, party planning, event hosting, travel arrangements, preparation for house guests and much more on top of our already full daily work-life balance. All of this can feel like piling another "full time job" on top of our existing "full time job" and we simply don't have the additional hours in the day to keep up.

Keeping track of all of this additional information in an organized manner is **THE KEY** to maintaining a sense of "peace and calm" in this season of "hustle and bustle." One way to keep all of this extra information pulled together is in a "[Holiday Planning Handbook](#)".

[The Purple Martin & Co.](#), founded by Lori Martin, has created a holiday planning handbook to meet all of your holiday "information management" needs. These handbooks can be customized to meet your specific planning needs or you can pick from a menu of "common holiday planning tabs" to include in your planner. These handbooks are decorated with gorgeous specialty paper and personalized with a name or monogram of your choice. To tame all of that holiday planning "paper" the handbooks include multiple types of pockets, sheet protectors and photo pages to keep your information & ideas contained.

After all, it is impossible to stay on budget or keep track of what we have already done in our holiday planning, let alone remember whom we have already purchased gifts for, if we don't keep our holiday information organized.

A plan of action before each holiday season does take some effort, but organizing your "plans and ideas" in a "Holiday Planning Handbook" will payoff in much smoother holiday season, a well balanced budget and the ability to know where you left off for next year!

What's in a "Holiday Planning Handbook?" (Yours can be customized to meet your specific planning needs.) ...

- A family needs assessment.
- A detailed budget (groceries, family gifts, teacher gifts, neighbors and friends).
- A detailed gift list (Shop for impact, think local & stay in budget.)
- Meal plans for family gatherings are established weeks ahead of time to give myself time to shop the sales (and clip those coupons.)
- A pre-planned grocery list.
- Contacts for my holiday card list.
- Magazine clippings of gift and decorating ideas.
- A record of all receipts to accurately track against my budget. Receipts are also important for exchanges, broken items, missing parts, etc.
- A gift log so I can avoid repeats next year & add to collections I have started for my children and godchildren.
- A section for Christmas morning to store user manuals for the "new gifts and toys".
- Packing lists for holiday travel.
- I also savor the memories by keeping one holiday card I have sent throughout the years plus one photo of the children with Santa and store it in my binder to cherish for years to come.

Holiday Planning Handbooks start at \$50. For your "Holiday Planning Handbook" contact Lori Martin with The Purple Martin & Co. at (704) 724-9108 or thepurplemartin@bellsouth.net.

Simplify for the Holidays - Seminar & Shopping Event!

Simplicity, Simplify & The Purple Martin & Co.

Carson Tate, Laurie Martin & Lori Martin
invite you to a "Holiday Shop & Learn" Event
Tuesday, December 1, 2009
Begins at 7:00 p.m

Come "learn" some new tips for "Simplifying For the Holidays" & then "shop" for your solutions over drinks & appetizers!

Do you often feel stressed and overwhelmed during the holidays? It is easy to lose sight of the meanings of the holidays, when you have a house to clean, food to cook, cards to send, and gifts to wrap.

Now is the perfect time to allow this event to help you simplify this holiday season!

This event perfect place to shop for a unique gift for friends & family!
Gift cards available too!

Get a head start on cleaning out for the holiday & bring gently used clothes, toys & books to be donated to worthy causes around Charlotte!

Product Sales Will Include:

The Purple Martin & Co's Customized Handbooks:
Family Handbooks
Recipe Notebooks
Bride Notebooks
Vacation Home Handbooks
"On the Go Handbooks"

Simplify Storage Solutions:

Storage Containers
Christmas Storage Containers
Drawer dividers
Coat Hangers

Simplicity Home Organizing Gift Cards

Give the Gift of Time!

Whether you are new to organizing, or a current client there will be something for everyone!

To see the evite and RSVP, click [here](#). We hope you'll join us!

Happy Holidays from all of us at Simplicity!

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE



Gift certificates are available for all Simplicity services. Give the gift of organization to someone special in your life. For more details visit the [Simplicity website](#) or contact Simplicity today.

All our best!

Your Simplicity Team of Organizers

Simplicity is...

We are a professional organizing company dedicated to helping you make your life easier — simple. How? Our company believes Simplicity is about making life easier — more balanced, more peaceful.

We evaluate your current situation, develop customized organizational solutions and systems — tailored specifically for you and your individual needs — teach you how to maintain your new systems and offer on-going support services as needed.

We have a team of professionals who can help you find your balance again and live the life you want to live. After we complete your Organizational Needs Assessment, we will match your specific needs to the skills and expertise of one of our organizing consultants. Then you are on your way to Simplicity.

Our Mission

Simplicity is committed to changing homes and lives by creating customized and maintainable organizational systems.

Our Values

Confidential. Professional. Committed. Knowledgeable. Trustworthy. Methodical. Hard-working. Informative. Respectful. Punctual.

Simplicity Services

- [Home Organizing](#)
- Home Office Organizing
- Organizing [Moves & Relocation](#)
- [Rightsizing Your Life](#) Program
- [A Year of Simplicity](#) Program
- Organizing Your [Memories](#)
- [Simplicity Kids](#)
- Organizing for Guest Arrivals and Parties
- Post-event and Holiday [Decorating Wrap-up](#)
- Garage, Attic & Storage Unit Organization (Spring and Fall months)
- Virtual (Telephone/Email) [Coaching](#)
- Motivational [Speaker](#)