



TOP 10 BEST ORGANIZATIONAL TIPS

Definition of Clutter: Anything you do not use or love; that is untidy or disorganized; that exceeds the space available; that is broken or unfinished. We all have a lot of clutter!

The Hanger Trick: Your closet is jam-packed but you still have little you want to wear. Switch the orientation of your hangers so the hook comes over the bar from the back rather than the front. When you wear something, re-hang it the normal way. At the end of the season, donate or discard anything that hasn't been worn. Don't rethink it or make excuses - just get it out of your house.

A To-Do List versus A Project: These are fundamentally different. A to-do is something that is short and simple - returning library books, picking up dry cleaning. A project is multi-stepped and generally longer term - organizing photos, cleaning out the attic. Don't put projects on your to-do list. They'll never get done and just make you feel inadequate.

Junk in the Trunk: A coupon or gift card holder and a "to-do" container will go a long way toward keeping your car organized and saving you time. A small accordion file with a secure closure is a great home for all your gift cards and coupons. When you're out and about, you need them with you - not sitting on your kitchen counter. Likewise, a basket or box in your car is a great place to put items that need to be returned or otherwise dealt with. You can do them in the course of your normal commutes, not as a separate, special, time-consuming trip.

Honor Your Keepsakes: We all have things we love that are not on display. Some are intrinsically valuable and some are purely sentimental. Honor your keepsakes by storing them appropriately. Photos, christening dresses and love letters don't belong in a moldy cardboard box in the attic or basement. Archival storage supplies are readily available and sturdy lidded plastic containers work well for many items. Label boxes for easy retrieval.

Nip Procrastination in the Bud: As the ancient saying goes, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." And the first step is often the hardest. Procrastination is a habit that you learned and it can be unlearned more quickly than you think (in 3 to 4 weeks). Set a modest goal and congratulate yourself on your success. Small successes lead to bigger victories.

Tame Snail and Email Monsters: Don't check email - deal with email. Delete junk, send a quick reply or move to a folder for particular action. Sort snail mail when it comes in the house. Much can be trashed or shredded immediately. Set up a system for items that need action - RSVPs, bills, appointments to schedule, etc. Wait until you have time to execute whatever action is necessary before you touch the pile again. Note dates on your calendar and file important papers and paid bills before you consider the task completed.

Gifts, Glorious Gifts: The best gift is you - your time, your talents. This will mean more to friends and loved ones than anything store-bought ever could.

Last but not least, remember S-I-M-P-L-E: When you decide to get organized -

Sort It! - Group like items together. Categorize by color, season, shape, and/or function.

Identify It! - Create four piles of items to be kept, donated, sold, or discarded. Keep only cherished or frequently used belongings. Do not leave the room until finished. Anything that belongs elsewhere should be placed in a bag or container outside the room.

Map It! - Decide or diagram the location of each category.

Put It Away! - Place each belonging in its designed location. Store infrequently used items on a high shelf or under the bed.

Label It! - Identify contents of each container, shelf, or drawer.

Enjoy It! - Celebrate this efficient system for locating and easily accessing belongings. As interests and belongings change, continue to update the systems. Maintaining it is key!