

De-Cluttering And Organizing Tips

There are so many benefits to getting organized, such as:

- * having more space
- * having more time
- * living a less chaotic life
- * being more efficient
- * not being embarrassed when visitors drop in unexpectedly
- * being able to find your keys when you need to leave the house
- * being a positive role model for your children.

Essentially Organized has put together this very handy e-book which outlines tips for organizing the:

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We hope you find this e-book helpful and motivating. Happy organizing!

Essentially Organized

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De-Cluttering And Organizing Tips

ORGANIZE YOUR BATHROOM

Clean out your medicine cabinet and throw out any prescriptions that are past their use by date.

Throw out any make-up or beauty products that are outdated or you know will never be used.

Drawer organizers help keep small items like cotton buds and bobby pins neatly arranged.

Do you have ample hooks or hanging space for towels? Encourage all family members to not leave towels on the floor, by providing each person with their own hanging space.

A hook on the back of the bathroom door is ideal to hold bathrobes or clothes, while showering.

Wipe down the shower after you have used it. This only takes a few minutes and prevents the soap scum building up and needing a major clean.

Store hair dryers, straighteners etc. where they won't get wet or be touched by young children.

Give every family member their own basket to store their bathroom items such as brushes, hair accessories and razors. These baskets can be stored in the bathroom or in each person's individual room and taken to the bathroom when needed.

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ORGANIZE YOUR BEDROOM

Use under bed storage for out of season clothes, linens and blankets etc. Clearly label all storage boxes so it's clear what's in them.

Shoe racks keep pairs together and can separate dress and casual shoes.

De-clutter your dresser top by using small containers or attractive trays to organize make-up and perfumes.

Keep all jewellery in a jewellery box.

All clothes should be hanging in wardrobes or neatly folded and placed in drawers. If you are short on hanging space consider adding another rod below the existing one, for shirts/blouses.

When clothes are taken off they should be immediately hung up or put into the laundry hamper. Clothes thrown on the floor or over a chair, have a habit of staying there.

Clean out your wardrobe regularly. Pull everything out of your wardrobe and only put back clothes that fit, that are in wearable condition and that you enjoy wearing.

If you haven't worn it in the last year, get rid of it.

If you can't decide what to keep and what not to, try storing all your clothes somewhere else temporarily. When an item is worn, washed and ironed, it goes back into the wardrobe. You will soon see what gets worn and what doesn't.

Clothes can be divided into seasonal wear then further categorized into skirts, pants, shirts, suits etc. Each category can then be colour co-ordinated.

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Have all clothing and hangers facing in the same direction.

If you are sharing the hanging space with a partner, keep your clothing separate. Consider using different colour hangers for each person, for easy identification.

Attach hooks within the wardrobe to hang belts, scarves, ties, handbags etc.

Ensure there are enough coat hangers.

Ensure your wardrobe is not so cramped that you can't see what clothes you have. We often need a visual reminder before we think of wearing that particular item. If you can't see it, you are unlikely to wear it.

Donate any clothes that don't fit. If they are too big then by keeping them you are giving yourself permission to put on weight - is this something you want to do? If they are too small they are a constant reminder that you are not at the size you once were - is this a reminder that you want?

For clothes that are missing buttons, have a broken zip, are stained or need altering, ask yourself honestly if you are going to make those repairs. If yes, make them now and start wearing those clothes again. If no, get rid of them.

For special occasion outfits such as a wedding dress, formal gown or tuxedo, which you know you will never wear again, can you bear to part with it? The photographs of you wearing the outfit can be your special reminder so you don't need to keep the actual outfit. If you do keep it, can it be stored in an out-of-the-way area rather than taking up space in your wardrobe?

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ORGANIZE YOUR GARAGE

The garage often becomes a giant storage area for junk that is not used or needed, while the car sits out in the elements.

Is there room for the car in the garage? If not, it needs to be cleaned out.

The same principals apply as when de-cluttering inside the house

If you don't use it then get rid of it.

If you don't need it then get rid of it.

Use shelves or cheap storage units to store items.

All stored items should be neatly stacked and clearly labelled so you can see at a glance what is there, and you can find what you are looking for.

Keep all tools in one area. Whether you use a pegboard, tool box or other storage containers, ensure items can be easily found, especially those you use regularly. Ensure all tools are out of reach of children.

Remove all food wrappers, drink bottles, papers etc from your car as soon as you get home. Inside your car should not be looking like a rubbish bin.

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ORGANIZE YOUR HOME OFFICE AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

Remove all clutter from your desk. Having a clear and clean area to work in will dramatically improve your productivity.

Keep pens, pencils, scissors, erasers and other small items you use regularly, nearby but tidy, by using a tray or desk caddy.

Store computer discs in a storage unit, where they can easily be located when needed.

After saving data, take a few seconds and label your computer disc. This will save you hours of time and a monster headache when next you need to locate that information.

Create computer templates for all the documents you use regularly. This is far more efficient than starting from scratch each time.

Avoid using post-it notes. While they may seem convenient, they have a habit of falling off or sticking to unrelated papers and then becoming lost forever.

Set up a computer file or use a notebook where you list everything you would previously have used post-it notes for. Keep all this information in one central, easy to locate spot.

When working to a deadline, close your office door or put up a 'do not disturb' sign to let your co-workers know that now is not the time to stop and chat.

Set up a workable filing system and maintain it daily or weekly, depending upon your needs. If you file paperwork as it is completed you avoid important papers getting lost and filing does not become an overwhelming job.

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Use easily identifiable names for categories in your filing system so you know at once where papers need to go and where to find them later on.

If your current filing system is overflowing, have a good clean out. Get rid of anything that is out of date and no longer needed.

Did you know that we only use 20% of the paper we keep? Are you keeping documents, either on your computer or a hard-copy, that you will never need to refer to again?

Clean up your work area at the end of each day, putting everything back in its rightful place. The next morning you will arrive to a clean and clutter-free work space and can get right down to business.

Be sure to stop for lunch and eat away from your desk. Many people eat and work at the same time, believing this to be the most efficient way but is it really? You will receive far greater benefit from leaving your work area and allowing your brain to turn off - even if it's only for 10 minutes - then returning to work feeling refreshed and ready to go again.

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ORGANIZE YOUR KID'S STUFF

When keeping hand-me-down clothes for a younger child, store them in an out-of-the-way place but make a note for yourself of what clothes are there and at what age they will be suitable. So often you forget about these items until the younger child has also outgrown them.

Kid's rooms need to be practical. Can they reach their toys and items stored in drawers and hung in wardrobes? They can't put items away if they can't reach the storage areas. Look at their room from their height and perspective.

Ask your child what problems they have with keeping their room tidy and what would make it easier for them. By involving the child, they are more likely to keep it neat and organized on their own.

For a boy who loves basketball, place a laundry hamper beneath a basketball hoop and putting his dirty clothes in the hamper becomes a game.

Store toys in a toy box, in baskets or on shelves. Ensure the child's favourite toys are easily within their reach so they won't be climbing up shelves or drawers to reach toys you have put up too high.

Go through your child's toys with them and have them donate any toys they no longer play with.

Throw out all broken toys.

Over the door shoe organizers can be used to store toys, hair accessories and other small items.

Ensure your child has a place to store their artwork and precious mementos.

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ORGANIZE YOUR KITCHEN

When de-cluttering the kitchen tackle one cupboard, drawer or shelf at a time. Take out all items and ask yourself if you need it and use it. If so, keep it, otherwise donate it or trash it. If you are hesitant about throwing it out, ask yourself when it was last used.

How many dinner sets, cutlery sets, glasses, mugs, plastic storage containers etc. do you own? How many do you use and really need? Donate the excess.

Free up your bench space and your kitchen will be far more workable.

How often do you use the appliances on your kitchen benches? If you only use them occasionally, store them in a cupboard instead of on the bench.

Place hooks under cabinets to hang mugs.

Hang saucepans or utensils if you do not have enough drawer space.

Store items where they are used.

The cutlery, crockery and glasses that you use every day, should be easily accessible.

Store large serving dishes and items you only use occasionally at the back of cupboards.

Use stackers in the cupboards and pantry.

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Stack plates so the dinner plates, bread and butter plates, bowls etc, are all separate and easily accessible and you don't have to move one to reach another.

Stack items in the pantry. This maximizes space and also allows you to see at a glance what items you have.

Would adjusting the height of cupboard or pantry shelves make the area more practical? Would adjusting the shelves in the fridge make it more user friendly?

Remove everything from your pantry, throw out products that are past their use by date, wipe down shelves and return the items you are keeping, in a neat and organized way.

Ensure pantry containers for sugar, flour, baking soda etc. are clearly marked.

Store spices in a spice rack.

Are you a gadget or novelty appliance collector? Do you use the gadgets and appliances you have? If you don't need it, use it, or love it, then it needs to go.

Use drawer organizers to separate cutlery and utensils.

Consider pre-planning menus so you know what groceries to buy and are prepared come dinnertime.

Avoid using round containers as they waste space. Stick with square or oblong containers that are stackable.

Clean out the refrigerator. Throw out any expired food and return the rest, keeping similar items together.

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ORGANIZE YOUR LAUNDRY

Keep detergents and cleaning products that you use regularly, within easy reach - but out of reach of children.

Products that you only use occasionally can be kept at the back of the cupboard or shelves.

Keep up-to-date with the washing. It is less overwhelming to do a load regularly, than let it build up and then try to play the catch up game.

Clean out your linen press. Throw out any linen and towels that are worn out and donate any that are still usable but you no longer need.

For linen and towels that you are keeping, fold them neatly and they will take up less space.

Organize your sheets into summer and winter sets. Keep the sets appropriate for the current season, in the most accessible spot.

Use a laundry sorter to separate whites, dark colours, towels etc.

Make each person in the family (who is old enough) responsible for putting their dirty clothes into the laundry sorter. If it is not in the laundry sorter then it does not get washed.

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ORGANIZE YOUR LIVING AREAS

Organize your CDs on shelves or in a cabinet. They can be arranged by title, artist or within categories such as rock, pop, country, classical etc. There is no right way to organize them, just use a system that makes sense to you and enables you to find within seconds the particular CD you are looking for.

Apply the CD principal to your DVDs as well, sorting them by title or categories.

Ensure all CDs and DVDs that you have made yourself are stored in cases and clearly labelled. For those not already labelled, take some time to listen/watch and discover what is on them. If it is worth keeping, then label it immediately, if not worth keeping then store it with those that are to be re-used.

Organize books in your bookcases by height, title or author.

Store kid's toys in plastic storage containers or baskets. Encourage your child to put away the toy once they have finished playing with it and have all toys packed away each night before bedtime.

If you have a lot of magazines, store them in a magazine rack or basket.

Do you collect magazines but find you never actually read them? If so, cancel your subscription.

Throw out any old magazines and papers you no longer need. If there is a recipe or article you want to keep for future reference, tear out that page and store it in your recipe file or other appropriate place where you will be able to find it again, and recycle the rest of the magazine.

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The dining room or kitchen table is for eating off. Ensure the table top is clear of clutter. Don't be eating your meals surrounded by piles of paper and junk.

If you have a formal dining room that is never used, consider converting it into a study, craft room, kid's room or computer room, which will be used.

If you have a china cabinet/display cabinet, use it to proudly display your precious dishes, crystal, collectibles etc and remove any clutter that does not belong there.

If you have a lot of ornaments consider implementing a rotating system where some are displayed and the rest are stored. Then swap them over every few months.

Have a coat rack or hooks near the front door so everyone leaves coats, hats, scarves, umbrellas etc. on their own hook. These items are then easy to find when needed again and are not cluttering up the living areas.

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MOVING HOUSE TIPS

PACKING TIPS:

- * Ensure the bottom of the box is securely taped.
- * Pack heavy items in smaller boxes and lighter items in bigger boxes.
- * Ensure boxes are not too heavy to easily handle. Keep to below 20kg.
- * Use smaller boxes to pack crystal and glassware. Each item should be individually wrapped in plain paper, then placed in a box with a layer of squashed up newspaper at the bottom, along the sides and between layers. Place another layer of squashed up paper at the top of the box, for extra cushioning before sealing.
- * Glasses should be packed standing upright.
- * Pack dinner plates and bowls vertically rather than horizontally.
- * Many movers offer portable wardrobe storage, which keeps clothes hanging and saves them becoming creased.
- * With chest of drawers, remove breakable, loose and heavy items but clothing can stay.
- * Remove light bulbs from lamps.
- * Clearly label each box with what items it contains and what part of the house it pertains to.
- * Mark if fragile and which way up the box is to go.
- * Anything wrapped in newspaper is likely to require cleaning after unpacking due to transfer of ink. You are better off using un-printed paper or tissue paper.
- * Pack on a room by room basis, keeping contents from separate rooms in separate boxes. This makes unpacking much easier.
- * When packing books and paperwork, do not use large boxes as they are heavy to lift and the bottom can easily collapse.
- * Pack a first night survival kit, just in case the movers are held up or there isn't time to unpack for the first night. Include items such as change of

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clothes, pyjamas, toiletries, some games to play or books to read,
pen and

paper, non-perishable foods, can opener, plastic plates, cutlery
and cups,

torch (with fresh batteries), matches, towels, sheets, blankets,
pillows,

tissues and toilet paper.

* Keep a tool kit handy, including a hammer, screwdrivers, nails
and hooks.

* Be sure to check outside and make sure items such as the hose
reel haven't
been overlooked.

* If items are to be stored for a length of time, pack everything with
mothballs or a similar product. Remove batteries from all items.

Wrap

silverware in non-acidic tissue paper to help reduce tarnishing.

Moving House - 6 Week Plan

6 WEEKS TO GO:

* Book your removalist or organize to hire a truck if doing it
yourself.

* Before you move is the perfect time for a big clean out of the
entire house.

There is no point packing items to take with you, when you don't
need them

and won't use them again. Throw them out NOW!

* Have you made appropriate arrangements for children
transferring schools?

* Draw up a floor plan of your new home and think about where all
your

furniture will go.

* Keep an eye on how much frozen food is in your freezer and eat
as much as

possible before moving day.

2 WEEKS TO GO:

* Organize connection of the telephone, electricity and gas to the
new house.

* Have your removalist deliver packing cartons and materials. Have
ample

packing tape and paper for wrapping delicate items. Have ample
marker

pens so all boxes are appropriately labelled.

* Dispose of items you won't be taking with you, such as paint and
chemicals.

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- * Have Australia Post hold your mail or redirect it to your new home.
- * Notify all relevant people of your change of address.
- * Begin to dismantle furniture that easily comes apart and isn't required between now and moving day.

1 WEEK TO GO:

- * Ensure all DVDs and library books have been returned.
- * Pick up any dry cleaning or items you have ordered or have on lay-by in the local area.
- * Organize the electricity and gas meters to be read and for the telephone to be disconnected at the old house.
- * Cancel or re-direct any home delivery services that you use.

2 DAYS TO GO:

- * Remove batteries from all devices.
- * Write a note for the new occupants, including your forwarding address and telephone number.

1 DAY TO GO:

- * Have a box for essential items you are likely to need tonight and over the next couple of days. Take that box in your car tomorrow so it will be with you as soon as you reach the new house.
- * Defrost your refrigerator so it will be dry for tomorrow.
- * Finish off all perishable food.

MOVING DAY:

- * If you will be cleaning your house once the furniture is removed, remember to leave out the vacuum cleaner and cleaning products.
- * Before leaving the old house, double check the gardens, garage, shed and under the house to ensure nothing has been left behind.
- * Turn off the power.
- * Drain the water heater.
- * Ensure the house is locked securely when you leave.

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AT THE NEW HOUSE:

- * Ensure someone is at the new house to let the removalist in and instruct them where items are to go. It is far better to have the furniture positioned correctly now, than for you to have to re-arrange it all once the removalist has left.
- * Turn the power on.
- * Turn the hot water system on.
- * Ensure the telephone, gas and electricity have been connected.
- * Ensure all relevant people have a key to the new house. You may elect to have the locks changed.
- * When unpacking, have a bucket and sponges handy for wiping down surfaces.
- * Don't begin randomly unpacking, instead, develop a plan as to who is responsible for what.
- * Put everything away neatly and in its new, permanent place.
- * Enjoy your new home!

Keep in mind that there are items that removalists are not allowed to carry, so must not be packed. These include: Lighters, aerosol cans or pressure packs, explosives or ammunition, chlorine or chemicals, opened bottles of alcohol or foodstuff, fuels, paints, turpentine, methylated spirits, pesticides and weed killer.

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GENERAL ORGANIZING TIPS

If you don't love it or use it, then it's clutter and it needs to go.

To clear the clutter from your home gradually go through each room of the house, assessing each item individually. If you don't need it or use it then throw it out, donate it to a charity or sell it through an online auction site or at a garage sale. If you do love it and use it, decide on the most logical place to keep it.

Every single item in the home or office needs to have a designated home. Whenever it is not being used, it should be in that home. Items that do not have a home, have a habit of becoming lost and "temporary" homes for items also have a habit of becoming permanent. By allocating a specific home to every item, you can then find whatever you need - instantly.

When you finish using something, put it away NOW!

If you always place your handbag, briefcase, keys, mobile phone etc in the exact same place, you will always know where to find it when you need it. Think how much time and stress that will save you every single day.

If you struggle to find a home for each item ask yourself if your storage space is insufficient or just ineffective. Can you make better use of the space you have? Try looking at your environment from a new perspective and question whether there is a better way.

Have one notebook or if you prefer, establish a computer file, where you list everything you need to do and remember. Keeping all this information in one spot, means it is easy to refer to it daily and you always know where to find it.

Only use one diary for all work and personal commitments. Using more than one runs the risk of scheduling conflicts and missing appointments.

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Keep a notebook by the phone, where all messages are recorded, including who the call was for, the name of the caller, the time and date, plus a brief message. All family members can look for messages when they arrive home.

Having a written to-do list takes the pressure off you having to remember all you need to do plus you get that fantastic sense of accomplishment when you complete an item and get to cross it off the list.

Every piece of paper should be handled just once. Read and deal with it now rather than leaving it on the desk or bench for later.

Organizing and cleaning on a daily basis only requires a small amount of time each day and is less overwhelming than having to do several hours of work all at once.

Get the family involved with de-cluttering. Give each person a specific task to do, and once it's done, you can all do something fun and rewarding.

When shopping, think before you buy. Is this item something you need and are truly going to use? It is better to think about it for a few days then go back and buy it, rather than buy on impulse and then realise you don't need it or have nowhere to store it.

When buying gifts, consider things such as a gift certificate for a manicure or massage, tickets to a movie or sporting event, or treat the person to a special dinner. These are gifts that don't add clutter. Ask your family and friends to do the same for you.

We all love our sleep, but consider waking up a little earlier each day to avoid the morning rush. You'll feel calmer and be able to carry that feeling through the day.

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You can also avoid some of the morning madness by preparing the night before. Decide what outfit to wear and have it pressed and ready. Have your bag/briefcase/school bags packed and in their designated home. Make lunches the night before.

When are you at your most productive? Are you more alert in the morning or in the afternoon? Tackle the most difficult and important jobs when you are at your most productive and save the smaller and easier jobs for those less energetic times.

You don't need to say YES to every request. Learn how and when to say no and avoid the risk of running yourself ragged. Say no graciously e.g. "I'm sorry but my schedule is really booked right now. Maybe next time."

Make the most of your driving time by listening to educational or motivational CDs.

You save time by not wasting time. Identify all the small and big ways you waste time every day and implement new time saving strategies.

Download photos regularly and do it immediately after a special occasion such as a birthday or wedding to ensure these treasured memories don't get lost. Be sure to back up your photos regularly too.

When cooking, prepare enough for two meals. This takes very little extra time right now and will save you a lot of time later on by not having to cook another night. Either freeze the meal or eat it again that same week.

There's no point putting off a job you don't want to do. When you don't do it, it continues to hang over you and this constant reminder can be more stressful than the job itself. Get it done and out of the way then move on to something you do want to do.

De-Cluttering And Organizing Tips

Use waiting time before meetings, appointments or when on hold on the phone to catch up on reading or planning.

Email makes it extremely convenient to send and receive messages instantly, but it can get out of hand. Manage emails the same way as paperwork. Delete any unimportant emails immediately. If it can be answered quickly, then respond immediately so it's dealt with. Create folders in your email system to store important emails which you will need to refer to again.

Store email addresses in the 'contact' area of your email system to save typing them out each time.

With web sites that you have subscribed to that frequently send information or newsletters, is this information useful? Is it worth your time to read it? If not, then unsubscribe.

Think twice before printing an email and creating more paper clutter.

Keep all bills to be paid in one designated area and work out a system where you note when the bill is due and the amount due. As soon as the bill is paid, note on it the date and method of payment, cheque or receipt number, then file appropriately.