



My Top 10 Organizing Tips

The first 3 tips are chore related. Just by keeping up with these three tasks it will help your home run more smoothly.

1. Do the dishes daily. Period. Empty the dishwasher in the a.m. This *should* only take 5 minutes or so. And it is well worth it. If you are unable in the morning, then unload the dishes before cooking dinner. You will save time and hassle while cooking instead of constantly looking in the cabinets and dishwasher for dishes. Directly after dinner, load the dishes (also load while cooking--while waiting for water to boil, microwave to finish, etc.). Finish up the kitchen – include the counters and sink – each evening. This will make the kitchen a pleasure to come to in the morning and much easier to begin the cycle again.
2. Sort mail immediately. Ditch the junk mail right into the recycling bin, pass along paper that is for someone else, and then separate the bills and other action items from paperwork that needs to be filed. File the “to file” and place actionable items in one visible area, a place of their own. Their own “home”. Then begin working each paper, figure out the next step and ACT.
3. 5-15 minute pick up every night. Start with just 5 minutes, okay, even just one minute will help. Sometimes just getting started is the hard part. Set a timer, turn on some music and go. No cleaning, no sorting. Just pick up what doesn't belong and put it away. Do your best with your situation.

The next 3 are tried and true organizing principles & techniques.

4. Like with like is a favorite organizing motto. Store like items together. You may own 8 pairs of scissors, but can never find a pair when you need them. You can go two ways. 1) Store all 8 together. If they are all similar in size and function, you may choose to narrow it down to only 4-6 pairs, keeping only the best ones and storing in one place so you always know where to find a pair when needed and can easily return them to their home when finished. 2) Or you may see you have sewing scissors, 2 pair for kids, a nice pair for the office and some you like to keep with gift wrap. Like with like also works in this way: Sewing scissors would go with sewing supplies, kid's scissors with kid's art and craft supplies, a pair in the office and one with gift wrapping. This makes more sense than all eight pairs ending up wherever.
5. Things need "homes". Stop before you lay anything down just anywhere. You could set the glass on the dining table while passing by or take a few more steps and place it in the kitchen sink or better yet, place it in the dishwasher. Ask yourself, "Does this belong here?" If you can't find "it" a home, reevaluate if you need the item. If so, find it a place to store it while not in use.
6. Condense. Do you have two bottles of the same body wash in the shower with a little in each? While showering turn the one with the least upside down and let drip into the fuller bottle. By the time you are finished showering the body wash will be ready. Recycle the empty one and enjoy one less thing in the shower to clean around or knock over. Condensing also means reducing excess packaging. Take toilet paper and paper towels out of their packages and stack neatly on a shelf or place in a basket. Then you will not have to fight with packaging every time you need to get out a new roll. The plastic won't end up on the shelf waiting to be tossed. Remove it, toss it and stack the paper. You won't have to fuss with the plastic wrapping again. How can you use this principle in your own home?

The next 4 deal with good health & a positive open mindset.

7. Be loose. Be open. Be creative. Organizing is problem solving and creativity. Have some new ideas and think outside the box to solve your organizational dilemmas.
8. Get enough sleep. So you can deal with life and have the energy to do the routine maintenance tasks that need to be done daily – dishes, sort mail, quick pick up, etc.
9. The root of clutter is clot. Determine what is clotting up your home, time and mind. Keep a time journal to see where you are spending your time. Make a note of what you enjoy spending your time on and what you could do without. Walk through your home and begin to make note of the things you really enjoy using, looking at or just like being there. Then move out anything that does not serve you – not beautiful, useful or meaningful. What is cluttering up your mind? Write everything down. Use a Mind Dump to dump all the ideas, thoughts, goals, to-do's, etc. running through your mind. Get it out of your head and down on paper or a document on your computer.
10. Be mindful of consumption. How much are you buying at stores, online, at yard sales, etc. Do you really need this stuff? Pay attention to how many cups you use in a day, towels in a week, and articles of clothing on your bedroom floor. The more you consume at home, the more you need to clean it up, wash it, put it away, etc. Can you slow or eliminate some of the usage? If you don't have the space to keep 3 extra bottle of laundry detergent, let the store, *store* them for you. Could you make your own laundry soap that would last 2-3 times as long eliminating your need to stock up?

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