

Home Matters

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The chaos that can dominate – and usually complicate – our lives is personal and unique to each of us. As such, the organizational process that eliminates the unruly cannot be categorized into a one-size-fits-all approach. In fact, there is no right or wrong way to get organized. Organization is about creating and maintaining systems that work for you – each day. Living an organized life is a lifestyle choice you make.

Eliminate Chaos: The 10-Step Process to Organize Your Home & Life

BY LAURA LEIST

Organizing is a process, not an event. The chaos and clutter you may experience did not magically appear yesterday and unfortunately will not disappear tomorrow. The good news is that the clutter that took many years to acquire can be eliminated more quickly than it was accumulated! Because organizing is a process, you will need to work at it each day to help keep the clutter away. Organizing is not going to be a quick fix to a lifestyle of chaos and clutter. Instead, the daily maintenance that you work at will be the most important step in any organizing system. Without it, the system will break down and your once organized kitchen, closet or garage may quickly become cluttered again.

Many times individuals are so overwhelmed by their surroundings that they do not know where to start, so they never begin. You can start with a small project or in an area that has been bothering you. Either way you choose, you want to see your progress and have a feeling of accomplishment. Starting small is a great way to feel a sense of accomplishment, and it's better than doing nothing at all. Below are 10 steps to help you begin your progression and work your way to an organized life.

The 10-Step Process

1. Dedicate time: If you simply say, I'll get organized "someday," someday will never come. You need to plan for this and schedule the time.

2. Gather supplies: No, this is not the shopping step; it is the step where you grab the garbage cans, recycling bins or boxes and fill them with items you will be eliminating!

3. Establish a staging area: If the area you're working in is small, spread out into another area where you can temporarily use the space for the next step.

4. Sort: Your goal is to sort your items into groups of "like" items so that you can see the quantity in each area.

5. Eliminate: During the sorting process, you will more than likely run across items you no longer treasure. Eliminate them.

6. Group "like" items together: Most likely you started this already while sorting.

7. Examine your space: Is there enough space for what you are organizing? Do you need to take measurements of the area so you can look for organizing products or systems?

8. Shop: And you thought you'd never get to this step! The best part of organizing! Don't forget to take a list with you, including measurements!

9. Install product: This can be as simple as putting things in a new container, or it can be slightly more time consuming, especially if you will be installing a new closet or garage organizing system.

10. Maintain: To ensure you don't have to work your way through the first nine steps again you must maintain your organization. Put in 5 to 10 minutes each day to ensure

your new organizational systems continue to work for you and your family.

This process works whether you want to organize one junk drawer, a stack of papers, one room or your entire home. When you are done, treat yourself to a movie, lunch with a friend or a massage. Notice I didn't list anything that would add any additional clutter!

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