

Organizational Tips from an Organizational Enthusiast

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Yes as much as I hate to admit it, I am an organizational enthusiast. I love being organized, the act of organizing, helping other people get organized and most tasks associated with becoming organized. I don't particularly like filing papers, but I do it because of the end result. There is much freedom and power to be gained in becoming more organized.

I can't remember not being organized, yet my own mother seems to remember my room being messy. Ah, sometime between adolescence and college I got organized and have been that way ever since. This is a simple tip sheet to get you started or energized to get going and get organized. Remember Rome was not built in a day nor are you going to go from disorganized to highly organized overnight. Each little bit adds up over time. As long as credit is given as listed above, the contents of this document may be freely shared on websites, blogs, and in publications. Credit constitutes the copyright symbol along with the author's name, title and website address as listed above.

1. Make a commitment to being organized and doing whatever it takes

It is easy to start out committed on any project or new idea. What it takes is remembering the benefits when you want to quit. Here are some of the benefits of being organized:

- Saves you a lot of time
- Saves energy and frustration
- Saves money
- Leads to increased productivity
- Allows for more free time
- Provides freedom and power

Remember this list when you want to throw in the towel.

2. List out areas that could use some organization

What areas in your life could use some organizing? Your home, your car, your office, your planner are some of the places to consider. Make a list of the areas that could use some work. Which are the most important areas? Which would be the easiest to organize?

3. Pick one area and start

Pick one area and begin organizing. I recommend that you clean when you are organizing – it just makes sense. You don't have to start big you can start small, say with your car. The important thing is to simply begin!

4. Be resolved that this is an on-going practice

If you have a lifetime of being un-organized, recognize that this is going to take some practice. Once you have your office desk cleared off, don't be expecting that it

won't fill up again with papers. It takes self-discipline and practice to keep things in order. If you have children, yes they will mess things up. It is YOUR job to train them to keep YOUR stuff in order. If you don't teach them to respect YOUR stuff, do you think they will take care of their own stuff any better? Not likely.

With children and families, you will have to train them to the new policies. If you make a decision to keep your car clean, you will have to train them over time not to leave their stuff, garbage, etc. in your car.

5. Ask for help – trade services if needed

If you have a lot to organize or you just don't think that you can do it, why not trade services with someone who is really organized. There are lots of people who are good at organizing. What could you offer them in exchange? Think outside of the box.

6. You can store things for later sorting

Put papers, junk, memorabilia, knick-knacks, and other items in boxes with the contents clearly listed. You can sort out the contents of the boxes at a later date. The important thing is to clean up the space and get it organized. The fine-tooth sorting can be done later.

7. Adopt a “handle it once” and “do it now” methodology

This statement seemingly contradicts the previous recommendation that you can store things in boxes to be sorted later. What this means is as new items, new papers, new objects come into your home, office or your possession – handle them once. Decide where they should be stored or what to do with them. Do not add them to a pile. Many tasks only take a few minutes if you just take action.

8. Reassess the value of your belongings

As you get organized really think about whether or not use will ever use a particular item. Most of us have way too much stuff. Over the last 5 years we have continued to part with many items. This gives us freedom and power. There is less to clean and dust and manage.

9. Use FreeCycle.com or Goodwill for gently used items

Don't toss items that still have use. Freecycle.com is one way to find homes for items that have some use to someone else. There are rules to the Freecycle.com program so be sure to read and follow the rules. Goodwill is another option. Just remember that someone could probably use what you don't need.

10. Have Fun doing it

I believe in having fun no matter what. You will find long forgotten treasures and other important seemingly 'lost' items while you get organized. Enjoy the journey and have it be an important, but fun adventure.