

Stress Less, Save Money: Follow “The Golden Rules of Organizing”

“Your existing organizational systems can come to a screeching halt during major life changes, such as childbirth, divorce, or the diagnosis of a chronic illness,” notes Bridges Connor, owner and founder of **Get Organized With Bridges**. Unfortunately, these organizational lapses can lead to frustration searching for lost items. And for patients with fluctuating thyroid hormone levels, memory and concentration issues can compound the problem. While Bridges notes that organizing requires a customized approach for each person, she offered the GDATF’s Scottsdale, AZ support group a few tips, dubbed “The Golden Rules of Organizing.”

1. Delayed decisions create clutter in your life. Do you walk in the door at the end of the day with an armful of stuff, dump it somewhere – and then repeat the same process day after day? Instead, set up a “landing area” that you know you will revisit before the end of the day. Bridges also suggests having a “staging area” where materials can be prepared well in advance of when you need them. Do you have lab work scheduled in the morning? Put your purse/wallet, keys, directions, and lab slip together the night before – then you are all set to head out the door the next day!

2. Everything in your house needs to have a home! Store things as close as possible to where you use them – and keep like things together. This saves not only time, but money as well. “Once we start an organizing project, it’s common to realize that someone has purchased five rolls of Scotch Tape – all scattered in different parts of the house,” Bridges explains.

3. One in; One Out! If you buy something new, “purge” something else via consignment or donation. “People use only about 20% of what they own,” Bridges notes. “Instead, all the things in your life should be beautiful, loved, and useful.”

4. Stow as you go. If you use a pair of scissors, put them back as soon as you are finished.

5. Vertical is visible; horizontal is hidden. Finding that slip for your next set of labs is easy if

it’s in a neatly labeled hanging folder — but not if it’s buried in a two-foot high stack of loose paper!

6. Do it right away! If postponed, small tasks can pile up and eventually become overwhelming.

7. Have a “lids off” policy. Bridges notes that placing a lid on a storage container is basically an invitation to stack more stuff on top – rendering the items in the lower boxes inaccessible.

8. Look—REALLY look—back at your surroundings before you leave a room. Clutter can become invisible over time. One unusual trick is to view each room through one end of a toilet paper or paper towel roll. Focusing on one tiny area at a time often brings problem areas to light.

Bridges encourages the organizationally challenged to take advantage of “little minutes”. If you have five minutes before you have to leave for work, is there one quick thing that you can accomplish to reduce clutter? This small investment of time can really add up over a period of days and weeks.

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