

Bonus #1

Room by Room Ideas

Listed below, by room, you will find some items that could help propel you in pairing down as you begin the decluttering process. They can easily be disposed of (donate, toss or give away). It's giving you "permission to release them from your home." Also are some specific organizing tips to help you master control of each room.

Basement/Garage

Items to Remove

- Dried up cans of paint
- Plastic flower pots that plants came in when you purchased the plants
- Old oil cans
- Old pesticides
- Broken garden tools
- Broken "outside" toys
- Old car parts
- Tires beyond repair

Organizing Tips

- Remember the purpose for your garage is to store your cars. If there is so much stuff in your garage that you cannot store your car(s), something is clearly wrong, and attention needs to be made to make this a garage.
- Don't allow the kids to leave their sporting items thrown on the floor. Get containers to store balls, bats, cleats and any other sporting gear. Check out Monkey Bars.
- If your basement is finished, be sure to go back to the purpose of the basement. Don't let it just be a space for collecting junk.
- If you have inherited your parent's belongings but you have no need for them, consider removing. Your basement isn't for the storage of items you don't have a need or have a liking for.

Bathroom

Items to Remove

- Expired vitamins (*health issue*)
- Expired medications (*health issue*)
- Ripped or torn towels and sheets
- Makeup that is old and have not been used in years (*health issue*)
- Old Nail polish
- Old Hair products
- Old Hair tools – especially if broken
- Old Perfumes

Organizing Tips

- Put like with like.
- Have items in medicine cabinet that you need access to daily or at least very frequently. Otherwise put in the cabinet under the sink or in the linen closet.
- Keep a bucket or container under the sink or on the floor of the linen closet of cleaning products for the bathroom. This way if you have a quick clean up, the products are handy. Be sure your cleaning products are safe for your health and the environment.
- Group towels together by size, color and sets.
- Keep you counter/vanity space as decluttered as possible.
- Encourage everyone to put items away when they are done with them. Especially important if the bathroom is shared with many family members. You can label specific areas, so your family knows where to put items back.

Bedrooms

Items to Remove

- Any item that has nothing to do with your bedroom. (*But remember you were to define each room of the house and its purpose.*) Some people use a part of their bedroom for their office area. If that's the case, then remove any items not pertaining to your bedroom and office. Bottom line don't let your bedroom be a storage area.
- Broken or worn costume jewelry.
- Extra books, magazines, journals and writing supplies.
- Dirty or worn clothes piled on the floor or over furniture.

Organizing Tips

- Keep your surfaces clean, neat and tidy. Have minimal items on these surfaces.
- **Remember the degree of clutter in your bedroom will determine the level of sleep you have each night and what you wake up to each morning will set the tone for the day.**
- After you wear, wash or dry clean an item of clothing, put back in the closet or your dresser drawer. DO NOT put clothes on chairs, dresser tops or the floor.
- Make your bed every day.

Closets

Items to Remove

- Hangers that your dry cleaning was received on
- Sweaters that are pilling
- Items that are stained or torn --- TOSS!!
- Shoes that hurt, you've out grown or are really worn
- Clothes that have stains that you CANNOT remove

Organizing Tip

- Hang like with like and then put colors together.
- Consider using color coded hangers.
- Items you aren't sure you want to keep but you are ambivalent about getting rid of? Hang on the hanger and put the hanger in the opposite direction. If you wear it, then place the hanger in the right direction. At the end of 6 months or the season, if the hanger is facing the wrong direction, you haven't worn it. Consider removing.
- A great way to hang belts are on shower hooks. The ones that have an open end. Organize them by color.
- Put hats, gloves, scarves and purses in containers. The ideas for these containers are endless and depends on the amount you have.
- Command hooks work great also on the walls of your closet or on the closet door to hang scarves or purses.
- If you have clothes that have been worn and you will wear them again the next day, consider a hook on the back of your bedroom or closet door to hang those items on. Don't drape over furniture or pile on the floor.
- When deciding on what clothes to keep, only keep those items that you love, that fit well and flatter your figure.
- Organize like with like and color with color. *Example: blouses (Short sleeve, long sleeve), blazers, skirts, dresses, slacks. Within each category organize by color.*
- For every new item you bring into the closet, consider removing one.
- Clothes that you do not like, that do not fit BUT are in good shape, donate or consign.

Entry/Foyer

Items to Remove

- Umbrellas/backpacks that are broken or not being used
- Sporting equipment
- Old newspapers
- Mail

Organizing Tips

- Know this is the first visual someone has of your home. Let it be neat, tidy and inviting. If it's a dark area, consider painting it a light color to lighten the space up.
- Have this area be as clutter free as possible.

Family Room/Living Room/Playroom

Items to Remove

- Broken VCRs or DVDs.
- Trophies from YOUR childhood or if you have an abundance from your children.
- Broken toys that cannot be fixed; PLEASE DO NOT DONATE BUT TOSS.
- Outdated computer equipment or technology (movie cameras, etc.).
- Old/unused cell phones.
- Computer games, video games, floppy disks, old CDs, cassettes.
- Paper-back books that you have NO interest in reading again.
- Photos you don't love, can't recognize or are blurry.

Organizing Tips

- Use tubing to contain all the electrical cords from the technology in this room. It could be as simple as a paper towel roll or something purchased on Amazon.
- This room is for the whole family to enjoy. Don't make it too "sterile."

Home Office

Items to Remove

- Junk mail
- Old greeting cards that you will NEVER send.
- Schedules and invitations to events that have passed OR you have no plans on attending
- Instruction manuals and warranties for items that you no longer own or that are broken
- Business cards from individuals that you cannot remember who they are.
- Solicitations for donations that you DO NOT plan on giving to.
- Schoolwork that is not treasured or important.
- Brochures for vacation places you DO NOT ever plan on vacationing at.

Organizing Tips

- There is a specific attachment for how to set up your office. (*You will find it below*)
- Just remember your desk is your prime real estate. It needs to be clutter free.

Kitchen

Items to Remove

- Plastic restaurant or stadium cups
- Expired coupons
- Out-of-date menus
- Receipts from the grocery store
- Receipts from fast-food restaurants
- Recipes that are too difficult, cost too much or can be too time consuming
- Dishes you NEVER use
- Vases from flowers delivered

- Recipes book you have NEVER used or OPENED in several years
- Grocery store bags ... if you have an abundance

Organizing Tips

- Be sure items are close to where they will be used. Ex: pots and pans near the stove, glasses near the refrigerator, dishes in a cabinet as close to the table (and dishwasher if possible), etc.
- Nest your pots and pans but not too high. That makes it harder to get to the pots on the bottom. Put paper towels or plates between pots to avoid scratching.
- Put dishes you don't use often on a top shelf
- If you have small children, consider putting some dishes on lower shelves for them to access.
- Avoid using a clean/new glass every time someone wants a drink. Buy different water bottles for each family member that can be used all day. Wash clean at end of day ready for the next.
- Keep storage bowls and lids together. If you have lids but no bowls or vice versa, put those items in a bag and label "orphaned". Check the bag in 2-3 weeks. If you haven't found their partner, toss.
- Keep all your baking supplies together as well as your spices. Consider storing your flour, sugar, etc. in air tight containers. Keeps them fresh and avoids bag tearing or spilling over.
- Store your spices near the stove and in a way that works best. You can lay them down in a draw to read their labels or stand them upright and label the top of the jar.
- Install an "under the sink" shelving system. Keep your products categorized together (Ex; dish washing items, house cleaning items, etc.). Also, for your house cleaning items consider putting in a handled basket so you can "grab and go" when it's time to clean the house.
- Make your utensil draw "useful". If there are too many utensils for your draw, consider removing some and storing them for use when company comes. Have one draw for eating utensils and another draw for cooking/baking utensils.
- Try your best to not have a "junk" drawer but a "useful" draw. Put small baskets in the draw to hold categorized items. This way when you need them you are not rummaging through the draw to find them.
- Organize your refrigerator by having like items. (Ex: Have a shelf with ALL leftovers; another shelf with snack food, etc.)
- Be sure to store your leftovers properly so as not to have them go dry or spoil. Best to store in glass. Be sure if you put hot food in the glass container that it doesn't touch the plastic lid. Chemicals will seep from the lid into the food from the heat.
- Don't store "bulk" items in your everyday cabinets. Break them down into small storage units. Store the bulk boxes elsewhere.
- Section off your freezer and be sure to label everything with type of food and date.

- Create a system for your coupons. You can store them in: envelopes, wallet-sized expanding files, 3-ring binder, photo album, etc. Sort them by expiration date or product type.
- File your loose recipes. Some storage ideas: recipe box, 3-ring binder,
- Don't let your kitchen table be a "dumping" area. Create a place where everyone can walk in the door and place their keys, pocketbooks, back packs, etc.
- Try your best to have as clear a kitchen counter space as possible. Small appliances as toaster, coffee makers, etc. can be put in a cabinet (if you have room). It takes only seconds to take out of the cabinet to use.
- Do you really need 10 travel coffee mugs or 10 cold drink mugs? One per family member is enough.
- Go through food items (especially canned goods). If they have been sitting in your cabinet for 6 months or longer, consider donating ... if they haven't expired.
- Be sure to have a handy "step stool" close by for those hard to reach shelves.

Laundry Room

Items to Remove

- Old detergents that aren't being used. Remove safely
- Orphaned pieces of clothing (i.e. socks that don't have match)
- Any item that doesn't pertain to doing laundry.

Organizing Tips

- If this is where you keep your ironing board and iron, consider putting the ironing board on hooks and the iron on a shelf or in a cabinet.
- You could use an over the door shoe system to store supplies for the laundry room. This works well especially if you don't have cabinets.