



Step-by-Step Guide to *Organizing*

*Easy ways to organize your household
and simplify your life!*



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Organized by Design

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Introduction	5
Emotional Obstacles	6
6 Concepts of Emotional Obstacles to Organizing	6
Ways to Let it Go	7
Organizing Basics	9
The Answer is Not Always More Space.	9
5 Steps to Organizing Success	10
Household Organizing	11
How to Organize Your Home in 10 Basic Steps	11
10 Tips to an Organized Closet	12
Create Your Own Organized Landing Zone	13
How to Set Up a Mail Management System	14
7 Survival Tips for Organized vs. Disorganized	16
How to be organized when it comes to Home Maintenance	17
Annual Home Maintenance Guide	18
Time Management	20
How to Create Your Own Time Management Schedule	20
Weekly Schedule Planner Worksheet	21
How to use Organized by Design’s prioritized “To Do List”	22
Your “To Do List”	23
The Process of Goal Setting, To Do Lists and Time Management	24
Goals Worksheet	25
8 Steps to Save You Time and Money at the Grocery Store	27
Home Office Organizing	29
10 Tips for Organizing Your Home Office	29
3 Simple Steps to an Organized Desktop	30
Setting Up a Household Filing System	31

Seasonal or Specialty Area Organizing	33
3 Tips for Teaching Early Organizing Skills to Children	33
End-of-School-Year Organizing	35
20 Organizing Tips to Help you Pack like a Pro	36
How to Organize Holiday Decor in 7 Steps	38
Tips for Organizing Collections	39
About Organized by Design.....	40

Introduction

Through the years of helping clients organize, I've been asked many times to lay out a plan that they could follow to achieve their end goal and maintain the system. Quite often, they just didn't know how to get started.

The goal of this book is to help you overcome the paralysis that accompanies being too overwhelmed to begin. I break it down into a step-by-step simplified process that you should be able to easily follow.

The worksheets in this book were designed before the multitude of digital apps were created. Guess what? They still work! What you can take away from this book are the basic how-to's that you can take with you into the digital world.

If your current needs feel too big or too out of control, you may want to consider enlisting professional services. Whether it be in the form of a professional organizer to facilitate the process, a therapist to address any deeper emotional issues, or paid removal services, don't be afraid to reach out to any of the varied professionals available. If you do choose to enlist the services of a professional organizer to assist you, I would suggest going to NAPO, the National Association of Professional Organizers, at www.napo.net to begin your search. Look for one or more local NAPO organizing professionals near you that you can contact to meet and discuss your needs.

For some, being organized is second nature. For others, learning methods for organizing and staying organized can make all the difference in creating an organized and simplified life!

Pro Tip:

Organizing is an on-going process, just like cooking, cleaning and laundry. Mail, paper and clutter are incoming daily. Organizing and maintaining what is incoming is continuous as well. With an orderly system in place, keeping an organized space is much easier and more time efficient!

Emotional Obstacles

6 Concepts of Emotional Obstacles to Organizing

Emotional Clutter in your head can keep you paralyzed from removing your physical clutter. Recognize, understand and clear your emotional obstacles first.

1. Acknowledging there is an issue and you are ready to make a change for a better life, whether for you or your family.
2. Recognize the reasons why you are keeping items, so that you can break the cycle.
 - Do you feel a sentimental attachment? If you let go of the item, do you feel you will let go of the memory?
 - Do you feel an emotional attachment? If you let go of the item, do you feel you are letting go of a part of yourself?
 - Do you think you're being ecologically responsible by keeping it out of the landfill?
 - Do you avoid dealing with it or procrastinating by saying that you'll "get to it later"?
3. Is there a steady stream of "stuff" coming in that needs to be stopped?
 - Is there a psychological issue that you need to surround yourself with items to fill an emotional void?
 - Is there too much "stuff" coming in from well-meaning family members, a parent or grandparent that overbuys?
4. Consider changing out your thought-process in regards to gifts. Studies have shown that material gifts are quickly forgotten, but experiences, such time spent together create memories that can last a lifetime.
5. Decluttering can be an emotionally difficult task on your own. Work with an organizer or find a friend that can help keep you on track and keep the logic intact of what you are striving to accomplish.
6. Never declutter items that are not yours without the owner's permission. It can have the opposite effect and create hoarding issues for the person who has had his or her things taken from him or her.

Ways to Let it Go

Simplify Your Life
Less Stuff = Less Stress
Let it Go

- Know that too much stuff can make you feel stuck or claustrophobic.
- Realize that stuff requires space and management. Letting go is freedom from the burden of stuff.
- Know that you can let go of items while honoring the memories as keepsakes.
- Think of how better you could utilize your space if the stuff was cleared.

Questions to ask yourself as you organize and sort through your stuff.

Will you ever use it? If the answer is NO, let it GO.

1. Do you really need it or you just feel compelled to keep it? Why? Talk out those feelings. Can you let it go?
2. Would you be doing a bigger service or giving greater enjoyment to someone who may need or use the item more than you if you donate it? Then let it go.
3. Does it still function? Is it broken or unusable? If it's not usable, let it go.
4. If it doesn't make you feel good that you have this item or if it brings you sad or hurtful memories. Let it go.
5. Do not keep anything out of guilt. Let it go.
6. Does it have any sentimental value to you? If you wouldn't feel sad or heartbroken if you didn't have it, then let it go.
7. Do you think you may need it or want it someday? Consider how much space it's taking up and is it worth it? How much it would cost to replace? Could you find it if you did need it? Would it be better to let it go?
8. Do you have too many items that you feel compelled to keep from someone after they have passed on? Consider choosing something special from these items to keep as keepsakes to honor the person and letting the other items go.

9. Do you have any items your children or grandchildren have made you? Consider having the kids or grandkids go through these items with you to help you choose which items they want you to keep as keepsakes. Take pictures of the other items if that helps disperse the ones you don't need to keep and let them go.
10. Are you saving it for someone, perhaps your kids or grandkids? Think about if they would truly want it? Consider going through these items with the person and letting the unwanted items go.
11. Did someone give it to you as a gift, but you don't really care for it or need it? Consider letting someone else enjoy it or use it, and let it go.
12. You remember getting this. Is it something worthy of passing on due to family history or its just a memento that you can let go?
13. It's from your childhood. Can you select a few items as keepsakes and let the others go? This may be another time when taking digital photos may work.
14. Cards: Can you sort through and keep the special ones as keepsakes and let the others go?

Use organized ways to honor the items you wish to keep.

Consider some of the following ways to organize and honor the items you value:

- **A Keepsake Box:** This can be a plastic container or a pretty container. It can be stored away or decorative and on display. Keepsakes can be a photo box, a greeting card box, a family history box or a container of special memorable items you cherish, organized and labeled.
- **Wall art:** Do you have something that you enjoy and wish to keep framed and hung as wall art? Consider: children's artwork or family photos.
- **Fabric items** such as T-shirts, clothing, blankets: Can you make a small quilt with fabric swatches from the items? Can you put together a shadow box or other type of wall art to display these items?
- **Take digital photographs:** By taking photos of the items, letting go may not feel so final as you can still refer back to that item visually while sending the item on to its proper destination, whether you threw it away or gave it a second life through donation to someone who needs it.

Organizing Basics

The Answer is Not Always More Space.

The Answer may be Less Stuff.

Aspiring to be organized in your home, office or life? Do you feel if you buy more containers, shelves, cabinets and storage units that those will solve the problem?

What happens when your space just can't hold any more stuff, when not one more piece of paper can be jammed into the drawer?

This is a common dilemma for those who struggle with organization. "I just need another cabinet" or "I just need to install more shelves" is often their excuse. Another drawer, shelf, container, cabinet or closet is not always the answer. Sometimes it is the answer, but many times it is not. The reality is that no matter how much space you have, if you never sort or purge, your space eventually will fill up and run out.

This is the time, the moment of reckoning, when the real task of needing to organize hits you. This may be a task you've been avoiding for years. The first step is to recognize you have too much stuff — whether it is paper or household items — for the space that is available.

Enlist professional help to assist you with this process since you will need to learn how to approach this mission. Typically if you haven't been doing this on a regular basis you will need to learn new skills and should have support in learning this activity.

Realize the answer isn't always more organizing containers.

It may be time to remove the excess, sort and tidy what remains so you can find what you want when you look for it.

5 Steps to Organizing Success

Follow this 5-Step Process

1. Start

Although it may seem silly to say, the first thing you need to do is stop putting it off, stop thinking about it, stop planning and actually start the process. Yes, painful as that may sound, you have to start to finish. So let's get started.

2. Sort

Sound scary? It really isn't. Begin with the largest categories first; Trash, Recycle, Donate, and Keep. From that "Keep" pile, sort into "Like with Like" categories. Examples can be; crafts, toys, tools, photos, DVDs, etc. You can also sort into what room the items belong in such as; kitchen, office, basement, and garage. If you are sorting by room you will sort again into smaller categories once you are in the room. Or you might use a family member's name for personal items that belong to that person and go to them or in their room. You can't organize or determine what you need for storage containment until you see what and how much you have of similar items.

3. Assess the items you are keeping

Evaluate the "keep" items. Think about which items you will need to access daily, and which may be purely sentimental items that you wish to keep but can be stored away and not in your most prime locations.

Keep things you need to get to daily, within the easiest reach, or what I call your "best real estate, otherwise they most likely won't be put away if it's too challenging. Consider the concept of de-cluttering. Remove all miscellaneous items from sight and either dispose of them or put them in their proper home; such as magazines, paper, mail, drinking glasses, water bottles, clothing, etc. Open horizontal space should not be considered storage space.

You will need to determine what and where the sorted articles are to be stored in. Do they just go into a hanging closet or a cabinet or do you need some type of containment for the items? Do you need folders for paper in a filing drawer, decorative baskets for open shelves or plastic bins and storage containers for the basement or attic storage? You will also need to determine where the appropriate place is to store the labeled folders, baskets, containers.

4. Store

Get the appropriate type and amount of storage holders for your items, place the items neatly inside and label the storage holders so you and all household members know where everything is and where it goes. Once your items have been sorted by category into their appropriate housing containers, labeled and placed into their respective housing location, you have finished your project. Give yourself a pat on the back as this is a real feel good moment.

5. Maintain

Do not let all that hard work go to waste. You must maintain organization. It doesn't happen by itself. That means items must be picked up and put away in their appropriate homes. Maintaining your organized home is well worth the extra effort for the sanity and peace it will bring to you in your home.

Household Organizing

How to Organize Your Home in 10 Basic Steps

Follow these 10 steps, taking a room by room approach to organizing your home. When you have organized and completed one room, move on to the next.

1. Pick one room to organize first.
2. Start in one area of the room and begin by picking up items one by one. Determine categories as you go, sorting each item into the proper category. Work your way around the room. Do not jump from one space to another.
3. Group items into piles or stacks of similar or like items determined by your categories.
4. Keep a trash bag, recycling container, as well as a container for donate-able items available for sorting purposes also.
5. Allow uninterrupted blocks of time to work. Remember organizing is a process. It will take a little time. You cannot organize if you do not know what you have or how much space it will take up or what type of organization supplies will be needed.
6. After all items are sorted, make a list of what organizing supplies (folders, containers, bins, etc.) are needed to store the items you have in sorted categories. Purchase any supplies you need that you do not have.
7. Determine where those storage items (folders, containers, bins, etc.) will be kept, such as specific drawers, filing cabinet, closet, etc.
8. Organize the items into the appropriate folders, containers, bins, etc.
9. Label your folders, containers, bins, etc., by the category names you created.
10. Put your newly organized labeled folders, containers, bins, etc. away in the appropriate space you had determined.

PRO TIP:

Organizing is an ongoing process, just like cooking, cleaning and laundry. Mail, paper and clutter are incoming daily. Organizing and maintaining what is incoming is continuous as well. With an orderly system in place, keeping an organized space is much easier and more time efficient!

10 Tips to an Organized Closet

Looking for a calmer more relaxed start to the day?

Consider starting your day by selecting your clothing and accessories from an Organized Closet.

1. Use identical hangers — wooden, clear plastic or tubular — to give your closet consistency.
2. Return metal hangers to the dry cleaners. They are not as sturdy as other style hangers and will leave indentations in your clothing.
3. Purge, Purge, Purge. If it doesn't fit, is out style, you never liked it, no longer have a use for it or will never wear it, donate it! If it's worn beyond acceptance, even for donating, then throw it out! This includes not only clothing but shoes and accessories as well.
4. Do not hang your sweaters. Neatly fold and store, either in drawers, or on closet shelving, or neatly in containers.
5. Have baskets and/or bins available for laundry and dry cleaning to keep clothing off the floor.
6. Use shoe shelving to keep shoes organized in pairs and from becoming a jumbles mess.
7. Store small accessory items in drawers or small containers on shelves.
8. Hang belts, scarves and ties for easy viewing and access.
9. Do not store unrelated items in closets, such as kids games with your clothes, your spouse's clothing in the baby's room, kitchenware in coat closet. Keep coats in the coat closet, baby clothes in the baby's room, games with games, etc.
10. Always take the extra minute to put things where they belong, such a hanging up a coat or putting shoes in the closet.

Pro Tip:

Maintain your organized closet by scheduling either an annual or seasonal audit. Take stock of what needs purged and what needs tidied up. It will not take near as long as the first time and will keep your closet neat and orderly!

Create Your Own Organized Landing Zone

Is your home the victim of a cluttered landing zone?

You know, the place where you drop everything you just carted in the house from the car: your keys, papers, mail, purse, bags, shoes, coats, etc? The entry ways to homes tend to be the dumping grounds for all sorts of miscellaneous items in one of the most conspicuous areas of your home.

If you're nodding yes, here's how you can reclaim your space. First, determine your needs. What are you dropping in these dump zones and where should these items really go? Do you need just one landing zone for small items? Do you need separate confines for landing zone items for other family members?

- **Step 1:** Determine who needs a landing zone in your household.
- **Step 2:** Determine what items need to be addressed for the landing zone.
- **Step 3:** Determine how the items will be housed and designate the necessary area(s) for the items.
- **Step 4:** Stay with the plan. Put items away that are to be housed in other areas and utilize your landing zone for the items needed.

The idea of a landing zone is a neat and orderly way to house the items that come in and go back out each time you do.

Here are some examples of what to do with specific items:

- **Coats:** Hang up if you have a closet nearby. If not, maybe you can install wall hooks? Do not throw them over a chair or let them lay around.
- **Shoes/Boots:** Do you have a place to neatly store your shoes when you come in, such as a shoe shelf, shoe rack or boot tray during the winter months? If not then you'll want to assess what you need so shoes are not left in heaps at the door.
- **Book bags:** Determine what you would like your kids to do with their book bags. A wall hook may not be sufficient the heavier the book bags get. Is there room to install a mudroom locker? If not, should they take them to their bedrooms or desk area or where they do their homework?
- **Mail:** Designate an area for incoming mail so you know where to put it when you come in as you may not have time to go through the mail upon first returning home. Having a designated location also helps other family members to know where to put incoming mail. This way it will not get lost or clutter the home.

For the smaller items, such as keys, sunglasses, wallets, etc., you must know where they are at all times, especially when you are ready to leave the house. Sometimes a small tray, decorate plate, or basket is all that's needed to group these items together and keep you organized.

Consider if one container sufficient or do you need separate containers for other family members? Do you have an area to place whatever container you choose? The idea is to keep these items off of places like your kitchen counters or table and organized together in a suitable container for a neat appearance and ease of daily use.

By creating your unique landing zone for your in-and-out-the-door items, you will save countless hours of valuable time by not having to scramble in a frantic search for items every time you are ready to leave the house.

Starting your day organized with less stress is always a good way to start any day!

How to Set Up a Mail Management System

Set up a Mail Management System to organize incoming household mail and paper.

We are all inundated with mail and paper daily. Learning how to deal with this constant influx of paper will keep your home from becoming a cluttered mess. Follow these basic guidelines to help you set up a mail management system.

1. Designate a mail management area. This is important so papers are not left on every available horizontal space.
2. Use a file folder to hold your folders upright for easy access and easy viewing.
3. Use stackable office supply bins; plastic or mesh will do, for sorting papers or reading material such as newsletters or magazines.
4. Select a suitable place in your home to set up and use your mail management system.

There are 4 basic categories you can use for sorting your paper and mail.

1. Action / To Do

If the item requires any kind of action: paying a bill, making a phone call, etc. Sort it into your Action / To Do Folder and note it on your To Do List. Your Action / To Do Folder can be further separated into the following folders:

1. Action Folder – Note on your To Do List what you need to do regarding this item.
2. Finance Folder – Bills to pay.
3. Message Folder – Calls to make or return.
4. Project Folder - These items require multiple steps to complete.
5. Review Folder – Something you are considering; an event, product or service.

2. To Read

This is for your magazines, mail or anything that is being saved until you have the time to read. Keep these items in this basket /bin.

3. To be Filed

This is for the items you need to save but don't have time to put away correctly right now.

4. Trash / Shred / Recycle

Junk mail, articles you've read and no longer need, anything you have no use for or no need to save or information you can readily access online or elsewhere. Dispose of immediately. Keep a shredder close by and handy for anything with sensitive information and a recycling container if you recycle paper.

Make your mail management system uniquely yours.

Here are some common examples of add-on categories:

1. Each spouse, partner or adult in the home, if one or more receives mail that is unique to them beyond the basic household mail.
2. Each school age child as children often have lots of paper coming home from school.
3. Coupons, gift certificates and gift cards.
4. Receipts, as a temporary yet organized way to keep receipts until any cross-reference bank and credit card statements are checked or until it's determined a return of the item(s) will not be necessary.

PRO TIP:

Organizing is an ongoing process, just like cooking, cleaning and laundry. Mail, paper and clutter are incoming daily. Organizing and maintaining what is incoming is continuous as well. With an orderly system in place, keeping an organized space is much easier and more time efficient!

7 Survival Tips for Organized vs. Disorganized

How to have a happy home when opposites attract.

Did you ever wonder how organized people live with disorganized people? It's one thing for a professional organizer to come into a disorganized home, assess a project and reorganize a client's space. But what happens when one very organized person (whether it is their profession or not) lives with a mate who is messy by nature?

If you happen to be one of those hard-wired organized types who is short-circuiting with the contrary characteristic of your easy-going, yet higgledy-piggledy companion, take heart; you are not alone.

Here are **seven survival tips** to help you curb the chaos in your home when seemingly incompatible personality traits cohabit.

1. My first and most important piece of advice is to keep your sense of humor! No accusations, no fighting, and no resentment is needed.
2. Take some ownership that although you think your structured lifestyle is normal it may be a bit over-the-top kind of thinking to one with a less regulated existence. Quirky for sure and if they are willing to tolerate your quiriness you too must endure theirs.
3. Know that going into this you may improve the ingrained habits of your disorganized mate or spouse, but you will most likely never change them to be the most organized person on the planet.
4. Realize that yes you will do more to keep your space and home organized to the level you prefer. Life isn't always fair. If it's more important to you then you will do more. Accept that fact.
5. Set up systems to help them. For example, if you know they constantly drop their belongings in a certain area, purchase and put something there, appropriate for the size needed; like a basket, container, etc. to corral their items so at least if you can't break the habit, you can live with the neater look of the items in an aesthetically pleasing container.
6. You may also need to post small reminder notes or label certain areas. Because although you can't understand why they can't remember what to do with things to keep the home tidy, they somehow have no recollection, no matter how many times you have told them.
7. Understand they do not see things as you do. For example; a large open space is an invitation for a free-for-all storage space to them. So don't give them large areas of free rein for their stuff. Break it down into smaller areas of storage sections with labeled containers of what goes in where. And know they will still not always get it right, but it will be better than if they were left without any direction.

Value your disorganized mate for their other qualities, that bring purpose and meaning to your lives together for a happy home!

How to be organized when it comes to Home Maintenance

Is an Organized Schedule for Home Maintenance one of your goals?

If maintaining your home seems to be a foreign concept to you in what you need to do and when, take heart! Here is a handy way to keep track of annual home maintenance tasks to keep your home running in tiptop shape!

Use this **Annual Home Maintenance Guide** as a checklist to remind you of common maintenance tasks for your home. It's organized by season, with a few monthly tasks as well. Date the tasks as you take care of them. Don't be afraid to customize this basic form if you want to add or remove tasks to make the guide more relevant to your particular home.

Here's an organized way to maintain your home:

- Set up a Home Maintenance Notebook.
- Categorize the notebook by the calendar year.
- Print the **Annual Home Maintenance Guide** for each year.
- Use the **Annual Home Maintenance Guide** as a checklist.
- File Home Maintenance receipts for service and service contracts behind the correct corresponding year.

Pro Tip:

By keeping up on the care of your home, your home will provide you with a safe and sound residence. You will have an organized schedule of the tasks needed and records of when the tasks are completed.

Not only is this important for you as a homeowner, but will be an added bonus if you ever decide to sell your home. A well-cared for home that shows pride of ownership is a great selling feature!

- _____ Vacuum refrigerator coils
- _____ Install new batteries and test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- _____ If you don't have frost-free exterior faucets; shut off valves, open spigots, and drain
- _____ Store exterior garden hoses
- _____ Remove or cover any window AC units
- _____ Yard: Do a fall clean-up of leaf removal, dead cuttings, debris etc.
Prune any branches away from home

Winter

- _____ Check heating oil or propane tank:
Set up auto delivery or schedule delivery as needed
- _____ Bleed radiators if you have hot water heat
- _____ Reverse ceiling fans
- _____ Vacuum refrigerator coils
- _____ Clean dryer vent

Monthly Tasks

Check off box for ea. month as completed

Change HVAC Filters		Consult with your service co. or manual for specific instructions											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Dec													
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Clean Garbage Disposal		Rinse w/ hot water, baking soda, add ice cubes and run											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Dec													
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check Water Softener		Replenish salt if needed											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Dec													
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check that fire extinguishers		are fully charged, re-charge or replace											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Dec													
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Chapter Number Four

Time Management

How to Create Your Own Time Management Schedule

Is it a struggle for you to accomplish everything you want to get done in a week?

Are you always asking yourself “where does the time go?” Are you always running late for appointments? Instead of trying to keep it all organized in your head, start a time management system for yourself by using a calendar (digital or paper, whatever your preference), a Day-Timer, or even an Excel spreadsheet will work.

If you need other family members to be aware of your schedule or need to incorporate the family schedule, consider a white board calendar or other wall calendar so all can see the schedule. New phones have digital calendars that you can use and alert whomever you need with the schedule.

Remember school schedules? The week is scheduled by the day, classes with start and end times are filled in first and the remaining time is what you have left for the week. Start with your non-flexible commitments, such as work, and then plan the other activities or tasks by the days and times available in the space you have left. Block out the amount of time each commitment, task, or activity will take and include travel time if necessary. This will visually put your time available to accomplish your tasks for the week “at a glance” and into perspective. This is imperative for getting a handle on your time management schedule. If there are overlapping commitments and a shortage of time available to get everything accomplished, you know its time to reorganize your week.

Keep in mind, you do need to sleep, so only schedule your time during your realistic waking hours. Each day, look at and follow your day’s schedule of events to know where you have to be and when. Then when emergencies crop up and they will, you will have a much better handle on where to reschedule the lessor priorities.

Don’t overbook yourself. Be realistic, allow for travel time and most importantly don’t forget to allow for down time so you can relax and recharge!

Weekly Schedule Planner Worksheet

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6:00 - 7:00							
7:00 - 8:00							
8:00 - 9:00							
9:00 - 10:00							
10:00 - 11:00							
11:00 - 12:00							
12:00 - 1:00							
1:00 - 2:00							
2:00 - 3:00							
3:00 - 4:00							
4:00 - 5:00							
5:00 - 6:00							
6:00 - 7:00							
7:00 - 8:00							
8:00 - 9:00							

How to use Organized by Design's prioritized "To Do List"

Using a To Do List will help you stay on track to accomplish items that often fall by the wayside if you rely only on memory with today's busy lifestyles.

If using a To Do List is new to you, the following instructions will help you get started using the Organized by Design color-coded and prioritized "To Do List" on the following page.

HIGH PRIORITY – NEEDS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED TODAY _____

Write the date and the items that need accomplished today in that section.

MEDIUM PRIORITY – NEEDS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY _____

These are your mid-level tasks. Maybe they need to be addressed within the week or the month. You decide the amount of time you want to use for this section.

LOW PRIORITY – WOULD LIKE ACCOMPLISHED BY _____

Just as the title says, these are your low priority items, but you still need to accomplish them within a certain time frame. Is it within the month or 6 months? You decide. This is a way to not forget things that still need done but not today.

Most often there are more tasks that get written on the High Priority or tasks for the day than actually get accomplished. Cross off what you accomplished for the day and add whatever still needs attention for the next day. This is a way to track and be more efficient at accomplishing the things you would like or need to get done.

Your “To Do List”

HIGH PRIORITY – NEEDS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED TODAY _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

MEDIUM PRIORITY – NEEDS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

LOW PRIORITY – WOULD LIKE ACCOMPLISHED BY _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

The Process of Goal Setting, To Do Lists and Time Management

Being productive is about accomplishing what needs to get done, whether on a daily basis, weekly, monthly, annual or even over a longer period. If you are forgetting things, and feeling overwhelmed, reflect on what you need to achieve and put together a plan using the following goal setting process to help you be more productive by being more organized.

1. Make a list of all goals that you wish to accomplish such as: Objectives, Projects, Things To Do, Things To Read, Wish List, Projects, Appointments, Errands, Classes to take Calls to Make, People to Visit, etc.
 - a. If need be categorize by **Short Term Goals** (under 6 months) and **Long Term Goals** (over 6 months)
 - b. List Steps needed to complete each goal
2. Transfer the above items on to “To Do” List by order of Importance:
High, Medium or Low Priority
3. Schedule “To Do” List Items on to Weekly Planner by the hour & day you will do them
4. Also begin using Monthly Calendar so items from “To Do” List are scheduled beyond 1 week at a time.
5. Make lists for everything you need to do or purchase such as:
 - Grocery Shopping
 - Pharmacy Items
 - Pet Store Items
 - Pick up Dry Cleaning
 - Household Items you may need: batteries for smoke detectors
 - Shopping List of Personal Items: clothing, shoes, umbrella
 - Clean house
 - Wash Car
6. Update To Do List Daily
 - Check off tasks completed
 - Transfer uncompleted tasks to next day’s “To Do” List

Goals Worksheet

Short Term Goals (under 6 months to complete)

1. _____

- Steps needed to complete goal:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

2. _____

- Steps needed to complete goal:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

3. _____

- Steps needed to complete goal:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

4. _____

- Steps needed to complete goal:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

5. _____

- Steps needed to complete goal:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

Goals Worksheet

Long Term Goals (over 6 months to complete)

1. _____

- Steps needed to complete goal:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

2. _____

- Steps needed to complete goal:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

3. _____

- Steps needed to complete goal:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

4. _____

- Steps needed to complete goal:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

5. _____

- Steps needed to complete goal:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

8 Steps to Save You Time and Money at the Grocery Store

Do you run back and forth to the grocery store all week only to find you still run out of some items while continuing to over buy and overstock other items?

If so, consider changing the way you shop and use the following 8 steps for a more organized method of shopping.

1. Make a weekly menu plan.

Plan your meals by making a weekly menu. Of course you can also do bi-monthly or monthly if you feel so inspired, but if this is a new process start with a week until you get comfortable with this idea and then increase the time if you feel it would better suit you. For each day of the week, plan what your meals will be. Include breakfast, lunch, snack and beverages too.

2. Check over your menu plan recipes and make a list of all ingredients you may need.

3. Cross check your pantry for the ingredients you will need from your menu.

Check your pantry and make sure you have all of the ingredients or food items you need to accomplish your meal plan for the week. If you do not, write them down on grocery list. If you have the items, then there is no need to over buy and over stock. This way of planning will keep you organized so your meals go without a hitch through the week. No running back to the store for forgotten items or ingredients you didn't have to make a recipe.

4. Check for any grocery staples that are running low that you may need to add to the list.

Keep a running grocery list during the week for any supplies that run out or are getting low. Add these items to your grocery list. This is an especially helpful household task for when you have multiple family members. If you used the last of something, put it on the list, do not let the next person needing that item be the one to find out it's not there when they go to use it. A detailed grocery list helps you from forgetting items that you may need.

5. Make a list of all the items you need, staples as well as the additional recipe ingredients.

6. Organize your grocery list to coincide with the arrangement of the aisles at your store.

Now if you really want to save time at the grocery store take this list one step further and organize the list based upon the grocery store aisles where you do your shopping. This way you are able to cross items off the list as you go up and down the aisles. This will help you from going back and forth through the aisles as if you are on a scavenger hunt.

7. Organize your coupons to coincide with the arrangement of the aisles at your store.

Do you use coupons? If not skip this step. If you do, keep your coupons in a file or convenient to the list. This way you will take them with you to the store if you keep them with or close to your list. Organize the coupons in the same manner as you organized your list; by the order of where those items will be found in the aisles.

Check that you are purchasing the exact brand, item, size requirement, etc. from that coupon as you are selecting that item, saving you time and embarrassment at the checkout counter from choosing an incorrect item for the coupon. Also check for expiration dates on your coupons.

8. Check off items from your list at the store.

Crossing items off the list as you go will also help you if have missed an item before you leave the store.

Become an organized shopper and you will save time and money with these tips for planning your menu and grocery list in an organized manner.

Happy Shopping!

Chapter Number Five

Home Office Organizing

10 Tips for Organizing Your Home Office

Is your office the epitome of a work station or a storage facility?

If your home office isn't "working" for you, here are 10 tips to help you get your office in efficient working order.

1. Designate an incoming mail area. We are all inundated with paper daily. Do not just lay it down on your counter, desk or the first available space you find.
2. Have pre-determined and labeled bins or folders to sort your mail into.
3. When you are ready to look through your mail be prepared to sort it into the appropriated areas. Do not continue to pick up the mail, look through it and return it to a pile unsorted.
4. Keep your trashcan or paper recycling container close by so as you sort, you can toss what you do not need.
5. Keep your shredder close by if you choose to shred any junk or other mail that you feel has sensitive information on it.
6. Keep as many items as possible off your desk and in appropriate files, drawers, containers or storage areas. You cannot work at your desk if your desktop is a storage facility unto itself.
7. Keep your tools, pens, pencils, stapler, paperclips, etc, together either in an easy to reach top drawer or neatly in desktop containers.
8. Make a filing system that works for you, so you have a place to file or store paper information and documents in your office.
9. If something no longer has a purpose to you, such as expired coupons, a broken stapler or anything irrelevant; dispose of it.
10. Your office space should feel good to you. If it's cluttered and messy you won't want to use it.

PRO TIP:

Organizing is an on-going process, just like cooking, cleaning and laundry. Mail, paper and clutter are incoming daily. Organizing and maintaining what is incoming is continuous as well. With an orderly system in place, keeping an organized space is much easier and more time efficient!

3 Simple Steps to an Organized Desktop

Optimize your productivity with an organized desktop!

Does the thought of organizing your desktop bring music to your ears for the anticipation of the neat and orderly results of this accomplishment or does it bring painful groans of displeasure wondering how you will accomplish this seemingly impossible look for your desk?

As is the case with many tasks and projects; if we break it down into smaller parts than it's not so overwhelming. Of course, there is always the super easy way out and that's the complete one swipe and into the box removal technique. Quick, easy and painless, but I don't think that's really what you want to do. So let's take a look at a more organized and orderly approach.

Follow these 3 Steps

1. Assess

- Assess and take stock of what is on your desk. Consider what items you need to address such as; paper, files, and office supplies, along with any random items on your desk.

2. Store

- Next, you will need to decide how to store these items that are currently on top of your desk.
- For example: if you have piles of papers that need to be filed, it's understandable you may not be able to file them all at this moment. However if you can; go for it right now and file them away! If not, consider a folder or letter tray labeled "TO FILE" so you can organize those papers into one designated area. Now remember at some point you will need to actually file those papers.
- If you have mounds of files and are working on multiple files at one time, you may not want to put them all back in the filing drawer and that is ok. However to store those files in a more orderly fashion, you may want to consider a file folder for keeping them upright or letter trays to keep them tidy and easily available to you without each and every single file stacked high on your desk.
- How about supplies? Do you have notepads, pens, pencils, paperclips, etc, strewn about your desk? Consider a desk organizer to keep those items neat and contained yet easily accessible to you.

3. Remove

- And finally, miscellaneous items that have no relevancy to your work area on your desk should be removed. You may even find some items that are trash which is a super quick removal. Here is where the one swipe and into a box is a handy option. However, you will want to return all of those random items such as; books, magazines, empty coffee cups, etc. to their designated homes.

There you have it, 3 easy steps to keep your desktop neat and organized!

Setting Up a Household Filing System

The purpose of a household filing is to have a place to store the important papers that relate to ourselves, family members, finances, health, homes, cars, taxes and such.

The landscape of what still comes to us in paper and what we need to save is changing with on-line access and storage becoming more and more common. However learning how to set up a filing system will help you keep the papers that do come in organized and easy to reference when needed.

If you are starting from piles of paper; begin by picking up each separate piece of paper and identify it. If it needs to be kept and filed, write on a 3x5 card what the paper pertains to; auto, insurance, medical, etc. You will make piles of paper identified by their categories. This is how you will know what you have to file.

Sometimes category names need to be adjusted so they resonate with the individual if they are going to know where something is when they want to retrieve it.

From these categories make an outline. Use the outline to put together the filing system. Make a neat hand written or typed copy of the filing outline. If a filing system is a new concept to the individual it's very helpful to keep the copy of the outline in a handy place for reference filing and retrieving.

The following is only a short sampling of one way to show how to categorize items into a filing system. It is not the only possible way. Filing Systems need to resonate with each person so different labels and options need to be considered so the person will use the system. There will be crossover ways to categorize at times. Much also depends upon what type of paper individuals have or wish to keep. If the system is too complex it's typically not useful to the individual needing it. Simple is often best. With much available on-line, the amount of paper filing has diminished drastically in recent years. However you still may need or wish to utilize a simple paper filing system.

File alphabetically and depending upon what paper items you may have or wish to keep. These are some common categories that come up often.

Auto (although I have rarely had my clients use the word " auto" they much prefer we use the word "Car(s)")

Example Folders labeled:

AAA

EZ Pass

ea. car in household; (**Toyota**)

Within ea. car's folder you can keep; Registration, Service Records, Title (or keep in safe deposit box)

Career

Resumé

Documents

Birth Certificates, Marriage License, Passports, etc. (or keep in safe deposit box)

Financial

Bank Accounts (Name ea. back & acct.)

i.e. **Chase Checking Acct.**

TD Bank

Credit Cards (within ea. folder you might keep cc contact info. if lost or stolen or on-line login information and maybe last statement for records are now available on-line)

American Express

Master Card

Visa

Individual Store Credit Cards (often these are grouped in 1 folder instead of individually)

Credit Reports

Loans

- Equity Loan**
- Mortgage**
- Student Loans**

Investments

- CD's**
- Savings**

Retirement

- 401K**
- IRA**
- Roth**

Household / Home (some individual keep more here than others do)

- Appliances**
- Electronics**
- Maintenance** (contractors, service contracts)
- Warranties** (could go here but often if there are a lot, these may end up in a separate filing drawer, box or designated notebook)

Insurance

- Car**
- Health**
- Homeowners**
- Disability**

Medical (a file/folder can be made for different medical issues or a file/folder for ea. family member)

Pets (sometimes the preferred category name has been Vet)

Taxes

- Estimated Taxes / Forms**
- Real Estate**
- Current year** (to use for items needed to complete your taxes or take to your accountant)

Utilities (consider keeping only the most recent bill to make sure your account was properly credited. Otherwise you may need contact info. & your account # only for your local utilities)

- Cell Phone**
- Cable**
- Gas**
- Elec**
- Water**

Work (pay stubs or job information)

PRO TIP:

Maintain a system by filing items as needed. Your system is not set in concrete, it's flexible. Add folders, and categories as needed and delete when obsolete to keep your filing system current. Update your outline as needed to keep it current.

Chapter Number Six

Seasonal or Specialty Area Organizing

3 Tips for Teaching Early Organizing Skills to Children

Start early and make it easy!

Teaching children early to be well-organized is a valuable skill set for later in life.

1. Make it Easy

Use open storage containers when possible. The easier it is to get items in and out, the more likely children will use them. Consider canvas bins, baskets, and plastic containers that are easily stored away in shelf units or cubes.

Again, the easier it is to get the storage container in and out of the storage area; shelf unit or cubes, etc. the more likely the storage container will get put away.

Understand that if you need to stack or secure the containers with lids that you may need to help until the children can handle the lids and stacking on their own. The more steps the harder the task.

2. Make it Fun

Label the containers. Very young children are not able to read yet but are eager to learn. Teach and repeat to them what the label says and what goes in the container.

Be creative with your labeling. Use the first letter of the word “B”, along with the word “Blocks”. Or use pictures to help show what goes in the container.

Make learning the letter or words on the containers a game. Use the pictures to help.

Make it a game to pick up and put away toys. Reward children with a sincere “thank you” or “good job”. Your appreciation shows your approval to a child which in turn is a great reward.

3. Make it Colorful

Children love color. Use color when organizing.

Consider colored canvas bins or plastic containers.

Use color with the labels. Hand-made labels with colored paper or apply printed labels to colored paper for a more colorful effect.

Pictures, either cut from magazines, or drawn by the children are also colorful ways to identify the contents in the container.

The colors of the containers or bins can also complement the room or space for a more decorative look for the entire room.

Involve the children when selecting the colors to go with the labeling when possible. Use a blue square of construction paper taped to the container to go with the “B” and Blocks label for the blocks.

Organizing habits learned early on and made part of a child's lifestyle routine are skills that they can keep with them through adulthood. Whether it's the alphabet, math or organizing, whether in school or in the home, what our children are taught gives them the knowledge and wisdom to excel!

Make organizing easy, fun and colorful for your children and you'll teach them early organizing skills for a lifetime!

End-of-School-Year Organizing

As the school year ends, did you ever think what a great time this is for your kids to get organized?

Although it may be tempting to just leave all the remnants of this current school year in complete disarray in their bedroom, and begin the lazy days of summer, now is a perfect time to organize. This means going through all paperwork, artwork, and projects as well as clothing, in a systematic manner. Sort through what is needed and what is not to tidy up the room from all of the “stuff” that’s accumulated throughout the school year.

Clothing is another important consideration to purge and organize now. Have your child, or help them depending upon their age, go through their closet and drawers, pulling out all items they have outgrown, worn out or know they will not be wearing next year. This way you will have available space when you begin adding to their school clothes at the start of the next school year. Depending upon their age, your kids may need a little help and guidance from you.

Paper, Artwork & Projects into the following categories:

- **Keep / File:** Items your child may want access to for the coming years, in which case make up a labeled folder and filing system for these papers so your child has easy access to these potentially helpful items.
- **Keepsakes:** Items that have no further use for reference but are maybe art work or reports that your child would like to keep. Keepsakes can go in a container marked “Keepsakes” and the school year. Some families will keep a container for each child for each year. Others may keep one container for a series of school years.
- **Trash:** Have a trashcan ready for misc. trash items and a paper recycling container close by for paper.

Sort Clothing into the following categories:

- **Dispose:** Remove and dispose of any permanently stained, un-mendable clothing or such any items that have served beyond their useful years.
- **Donate:** Items that will have a 2nd life should go to someone else.
- **Keep:** Hang any items that need to be hung and likewise fold the items that need to be folded and stored in drawers or shelves.

A neat and tidy bedroom is a great way to start the summer and the coming school year.

Teaching your children how to sort through their items, make decisions, and take control of their belongings by putting things away properly, teaches them organizing skills to last a life time!

20 Organizing Tips to Help you Pack like a Pro

Just like other organizing procedures, planning is a key element for efficient packing.

There are a few basic components of your vacation you need to consider before you even start to pack. From that point you can begin to select exact articles of clothing and accessories that you will need. If you are traveling by air be aware of your carrier's baggage restrictions. This is the time to be efficient with your space!

1. Know the climate, weather and temperatures of the location you will be visiting as this will determine the types of attire and accessories you will need.
2. How long will you be there? This will determine the amount of clothing and accessories you will need.
3. If you are traveling by air you need to decide if you will be using carry-on baggage or if you will be checking bags. Remember this choice may affect your toiletry choices due to various airline restrictions.
4. Now put together daily outfits and undergarments based upon the amount of days plus you will be gone. Add an extra 2-3 days of additional attire for emergencies. To keep clothes at a minimum consider a wardrobe that is easily coordinated with mix and match items. For example, jeans, black, white and tan separates can make for a variety of different outfits.
5. Begin by appropriately folding these items and stacking them in piles. This will serve two purposes. One is so they are ready to be put into the suitcase, and two is to get a visual of the amount of luggage space and pieces that will be needed.
6. Next, decide if you will need any specialty items; dinner or formal attire, rain gear, sweaters or jackets for potential cooler temperatures, hiking gear, etc. and gather these items. Fold and stack them for packing.
7. Decide what types of shoes you will need. Do you need walking shoes, dress shoes, any specialty shoes such as boots, or flip flops? Do not bring all of your shoes; decide which ones will be the most universal to your needs.
8. Now you can decide if you need accessories such as additional outerwear; hats, scarfs, sunglasses, etc. and put those items with your piles of clothing to be packed.
9. Gather your necessary personal toiletry items with regard to if you are checking bags or using only carry-on and make sure you are following your airline carrier's guidelines.
10. It's a good idea to use a small travel or cosmetic bag or clear plastic Ziploc bags for packing toiletries. If the airlines do want to view these items it is easy to see them and if any would leak or spill it will help safeguard your clothing if toiletries are kept in clear Ziploc bags.
11. Once you have all of your items stacked in front of you for packing now you can see what size luggage or how many pieces of luggage you will need for the job.

12. Arrange your shoes in with top sides together but opposite each other front to back; one shoe toe should be facing into the heel of the other shoe for the best fit. Place them in shoe covers if you have them or use white plastic bags to keep the soles of your shoes from touching your clothing and your suitcase lining. Pack shoes in the bottom or sides near the bottom of your suitcase.
13. Next begin by placing your larger items in such as jeans, pants, jackets, etc. in the suitcase and taking advantage of the length of the suitcase. (some may need to slide under the shoes, you'll have to see) Know that you may need to double fold some items to fit properly.
14. Rolling clothing is another option to folding and often avoids unwanted travel creases.
15. Begin to fill in the suitcase with your pre-folded clothing or rolled clothing, filling the sides with smaller items like undergarments, socks, accessories and even those toiletry bags.
16. The trick to keeping your items neat and orderly is to put them in the suitcase neat and orderly and fill spaces with smaller items so there is less opportunity for shifting.
17. By packing the more delicate items closer to the front of the suitcase, the weight of the other clothing is not on them at least during the period you are in control of your bag.
18. Don't forget to bring along some laundry bags or mid-size plastic bags to keep your dirty clothes separate in the suitcase as you travel.
19. Do not overstuff your bag! If you can barely get your suitcase closed from the start, it will be even more challenging later. You will either need another bag or you will need to make some strategic elimination choices from your original selection of clothing and accessories.
20. Use the straps within your suitcase to help keep your clothing from shifting. Check and adjust so that everything appears to be evenly packed within the suitcase.

Now Zip, and Go! Bon Voyage!

How to Organize Holiday Decor in 7 Steps

Holiday seasons means decoration time for many households.

Pulling out boxes, bags and containers of all kinds of special treasures you've saved for embellishing your home every year and they are all marked "holiday". Where to begin, but to open them all and start dragging items out until you find what you are looking for at that moment.

Eventually you make your way through it all in time to enjoy the holidays for the family gatherings and entertaining of the season, only to be quickly followed by the dreaded post-holiday season of taking down those decorations and putting them away for another year.

But did you know the post-holiday season is the best time to organize all those decorations? Here are some organizing tips for making this a really productive organizing season too!

1. This is the most perfect time to take stock of your exterior and interior décor. Has anything served its time well and is no longer useful, looks dated or worn, or anything you would ever use again? Purge those items. If you are not going to use them next year, certainly do not take up precious space or time to pack them up again. Donate what may be reusable to someone else. Throw away anything that no longer is of use to anyone.
2. Sort your items, keeping in mind you want to keep like and similar items together. Here are some examples of how to sort depending upon what you have; exterior décor from interior décor, exterior lights from Interior lights, wreaths, garlands, holiday linens, centerpieces, collections of holiday items should be grouped together, ornaments, candles, etc. Have everything sorted into categories so that all like items are grouped together.
3. Now is the time to visually see the amount of the items you have and the size and shape of the containers you will need to store them in. There are many assorted storage containers available during this season for just this organizing event.
4. When you pack your items away remember to use a little packaging paper or bubble wrap for any breakables so they are not just loose in a container.
5. Label each container from the categories you made when sorting the items. Put the items in the corresponding containers. You may have multiple categories in one container and that's ok. Just label what is in there.
6. Now you are ready to store all your containers in their designated area until next year.
7. There is another sorting option and that is to sort all the décor for each room into its own category, for example; Living Room, Dining Room, Kitchen, Family Room, etc. This is not advised for everyone but works for some folks that don't like to think about where they are placing their decorations every year, so a designated container for each room works well for them.

By keeping your holiday décor organized and easy to access for the next season, you'll look forward to knowing where everything is when you're ready to decorate and where everything belongs when you're ready to put it away.

Tips for Organizing Collections

Do you feel you have keepsakes, memorabilia and collections that you'd like to organize?

Here are some tips to help you organize those endearing items.

Gather your items together and start by grouping like items with like items. Sort and determine category names for your items. By keeping like items together in the appropriate labeled albums, and /or containers, they are always retrievable by your labeled category. This also allows for any items coming into the home that pertain to any of those categories to now have a place to be stored, eliminating clutter and keeping those items and your home organized.

Sentimental Items

1. Start by gathering your sentimental items from around the home.
2. Is there a story that goes with the items? Type or write out the story if you want it preserved for future generations.
3. Categorize these sentimental items or family heirlooms either by the person or the event.
4. If anything can be attractively displayed in a frame or shadowbox, do so.
5. Store all memorabilia together and appropriately labeled in containers and designated areas.
6. If you don't have a deep attachment to the items, but still feel compelled to keep it, consider taking a picture of the items to save the memory.

Keepsake Boxes

1. Good for keeping misc. sentimental keepsake items that are special to that person.
2. Keepsake boxes can be made for each family member.
3. Keepsake boxes can be decorative boxes, shoe boxes, or plastic containers, whatever is the appropriate size needed to store the items.

Kid's Artwork & School

1. Pick out a few of your favorites and let your child choose a few of their favorites
2. Consider using a scrap album to save favorites by the school year.
3. Display a few pieces as framed art.
4. Keep the remaining in labeled plastic (not cardboard)

Photos

1. Gather from around the home so you have all of these related items in the same location (like with like)
2. Determine your categories and sort; theme, vacation, person, chronologically by year, unknown.
3. Make 3x5 index cards or use post it notes naming your categories.
4. Start with your loose photos and sort into your categories using your index cards, or post-it notes, to keep these photos organized in their categories.
5. The categorized photos can now be put into albums and labeled.
6. Labeled albums can be stored in labeled containers.
7. There are many available ways to store photos in acid-free albums, photo sleeves, containers etc.
8. Keep photos stored in room temperature areas of your home. Avoid attics, basements and garages, where they would be subject to heat, moisture and humidity.

About Organized by Design

Organized by Design was created in 2004 to help others improve their homes whether they want to sell, stay or simplify with home staging, home makeover or home organizing services.

When organizing clients are overwhelmed Sherry has enjoyed bringing together a plan for order and organization by using her step by step proven methodical practices to help clients get from point A to point B. By working with them to facilitate the process there is not better satisfaction than knowing you have helped someone overcome an obstacle that to them was insurmountable in not only how to begin, but to proceed through to the final finished outcome.

She was prestigiously awarded **BEST Of PHILLY 2010®** Best Home Organizer. **Philadelphia Magazine** wrote: “Sherry Castaldi’s blend of fairy godmother and powerhouse motivator quickly turns the messiest closets, offices and homes into aesthetically pleasing, functional spaces. She’ll set up filing spaces to help you stay organized, too.” An organizing honor she holds in the highest regard.

From Sherry Castaldi

I sincerely hope my step-by-step guide enables you to overcome whatever obstacles you may have been experiencing and inspires you to begin your organizing project.

Make copies of any of the templates and worksheets included in this book so that you may use them again and again to help you stay organized.

Fear of the unknown can be paralyzing. The organizing process doesn’t have to be an unknown. It’s quite often basic steps that you’ll use over and over again. The more you do it, the more comfortable you will become with the process and the easier it will be to incorporate into your life. Starting is often the hardest part but the very first step. You now have a plan and the steps to follow to achieve your goals.

Having a happy client so pleased with the results, turn to me with a big smile of satisfaction and say, “I couldn’t have done it without you!” never gets old! Helping others overcome their particular stumbling blocks to achieve a better space is why I love doing what I do!

Sherry's qualifications, designations and awards at this time include:

- Member National Association of Professional Organizers since 2004
- Awarded Philadelphia Magazine's Best of Philly 2010 Best Home Organizer™
- Golden Circle 10 Year Member NAPO
- Member NAPO-GPC Greater Phila Chapter
- Served as the NAPO-GPC Corporate Associate Membership Coordinator and on NAPO-GPC Membership Team
- DCCC Delaware County Community College Former Adjunct Faculty Instructor for "Staging Your House to Sell" and "Organize and Declutter Your Space"
- Color Perfect Home™ CCE Certified Color Expert
- HSR Certified Home Stager and Re-designer
- Member HSR Home Staging Resource
- Creator of *The Organized Approach to Home Staging* Training Webinar for HSR
- HSR Home Staging Resource Staging Mentor
- RESA 2015 Top 10 Home Stager of the Year Occupied Category United States™
- Member RESA Real Estate Staging Association
- RESA-PRO™ Designation
- SAR Staging and Redesign VPS Vacant Property Specialist Designation
- Member American Society of Home Stagers and Re-designers
- Registered PA Home Improvement Contractor #PA22648
- Awarded Houzz Recommended to only the top-rated pros on Houzz
- Awarded Best of Houzz 2016, 2015, 2014 in Customer Service
- Featured in Chester County Life Magazine, "As You Like It; All the Home's a Stage" and "Selling Your Home? Meet Your Secret Weapon" articles by Sharon Maloney Spaeder.
- Featured Home Stager in "Setting the stage for a quick sale" by Jeff Hougland, in the Real Estate in Chester County Section of the Daily Local News, West Chester, PA.

If you would like to reach out or connect with Sherry, please visit her at:

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