Get Organized: Get Revitalized

80 Quick and Easy Tips to Get You Started

by Stacey Anderson
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Getting organized is tough isn’t it?

Did you know that people spend 55 minutes a day looking for things we know we have, but can’t find? I don’t know about you, but I can think of at least 100 ways I would prefer to spend an hour rather than rummaging through the half crushed cardboard boxes in the garage. Studies also show that we receive approximately 34 pounds of junk mail each year. Wow no wonder we are overwhelmed! The challenge for most people is that it’s hard to know what to do, when to do it and how to do it. The key is to start small. Keep it simple.

Working as a Professional Organizer I have come to realize there are 4 basic secrets to getting and staying organized:

1) Have a home for everything and label that home
2) Create the habit of putting things back in their home
3) Set limits for what you are going to keep
4) Do it now

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4 basic secrets to getting and staying organized:
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2) Create the habit of putting things back in their home
3) Set limits for what you are going to keep
4) Do it now
It seems simple enough, but busy work and families can often overwhelm us. That’s why I decided to write this book. To help keep people motivated and educated. I don’t believe that books need to be 300+ pages long to be effective. Sometimes it is nice to have easy-to-implement suggestions you can do quickly and painlessly. I based this book on a series of organizing tips I send to my clients each week. They are simple, easy to follow tips that don’t add stress and guilt to your current clutter situation. Feedback from people who have signed up for my tip of the week email at www.organizedinnovations.com has been so positive I wanted to find a new way to share all of the tips with more and more people. This book includes many of those tips.

Organizing and de-cluttering is possible. I know you can do it! I have faith in you. Start small, commit to doing it and reward yourself when you make progress.
Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going. ¹

You will never find time for anything; if you want time, you must make it. ²

Don’t think, Just do. ³

¹ Jim Rohn, ² Charles Buxton, ³ Horace
Garage

Look up!

Consider an overhead storage rack for out of season storage (great place for Christmas decorations).

For the walls use shelves or storage cabinets. For small items such as nails and screws consider a tackle box. Get as many items as you can off the floor by installing hooks for bikes, shovels, rakes, etc. Make sure that storage bins are weather proof. (Don’t use old cardboard boxes for storage because they are unstable and can deteriorate easily). Be sure to label the boxes with the contents, especially if the bins are not see through. Mark the date on boxes as well.

Important Documents

It is a good idea to make a copy of your important documents and keep them in a safe place and in a different location than your regular files. If your wallet is ever stolen or your home is burglarized, you will have the information the credit card company needs to replace/cancel items that were stolen. (Make sure to copy the front and back side.)

- Social Security card
- Marriage license
- Credit cards & debit cards
- Birth certificate
- Passport
- Adoption papers
- Driver’s license
- Insurance cards (medical and car)
- Department store credit cards
Garage
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- Social Security card
- credit cards & debit cards
- passport
- drivers license
- insurance cards (medical and car)
- department store credit cards

- marriage license
- birth certificate
- adoption papers
Drawer Organizers

Drawer organizers are not just for your office and desk!

They are useful in so many ways. Assign specific items, specific places in the organizer. That way when you have a quick 5 minutes, you can put things away with ease, because everything has a home.

**Kitchen:** Organize your junk drawer or make a spice drawer

**Bedroom:** Separate your delicates and socks

**Bathroom:** Organize cosmetics, hair accessories, medications, etc.

**Nightstand:** Organize jewelry

**Desk:** Organize pencils, paperclips, tape, sticky notes, cords etc.

**Kids rooms:** Organize small treasures, pens/crayons, game pieces
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Kids rooms: Organize small treasures, pens/crayons, game pieces

Desk Tips—For Home or Work

A desk is a place to get work done, not just to store your “stuff”. Raise your computer monitor off the desk with a shelf or monitor riser to give added room. Only store the necessary items on your desk: stapler, pens, tape, in/out box, phone and the like. Files, books, magazines and reference materials should be filed in drawers or proper shelving. Knickknacks should be kept to a bare minimum, remember you are there to work. Take the time to tame electrical cords so that you have a clean workspace near your feet and desktop. Extra office supplies should not take up space on your desk—find a drawer or cabinet to contain them. For extra storage and space consider shelves on the wall.
Electronic Files

When creating files in your computer use the same principles and system that you use for your paper files. Start with a major topic or heading. That is your main file folder. Then simply save your related documents under that main heading. If you have several items that are similar under that main heading create sub-folders to further separate your items for easy retrieval. Make sure that you pay attention where you are saving your document. It is often best to use the “save as” option so that you can pick the correct folder for the item to be saved in. When you are done, create a master list of your files and print it so you have an easy reference guide.
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Under the Bed Storage

Did you know there is about 30 square feet of storage under a queen size bed? Make use of that space!! But remember that it will be dusty so be sure to use the proper storage containers. They should close tight (or even zip shut) and be made of a sturdy fabric or heavy plastic. Woven wood baskets wouldn’t be my first choice as they are more likely to get dirty or get musty. Make sure they are easy to access and fit well in the space— you shouldn’t have to struggle to access them. If storage containers won’t fit under your bed you can use bed risers (as seen above).
How many times has the power flickered while you are working on your computer and you instantly freak out and hit “save” for whatever you are working on? Imagine that your entire computer goes on the fritz and everything is lost! I can’t express it enough: **Back up your computer on a regular basis (weekly or monthly)!** You can do this on CD/DVD, with an external hard-drive or a professional online service. And be sure to check with your employer to see that your work computer is being backed up, don’t just assume they back up what is on your local desktop.
Computer Backup

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Paper Filing System

Have a specific space to create your filing system—whether it is a portable box, a filing cabinet or a desk drawer. Make sure to have the proper supplies: hanging filing folders, manila file folders and plastic filing tabs for the hanging folders. Begin by sorting the papers you have into BROAD categories. Too many small ones and you will forget where you filed them. Once you have the basic categories, label your hanging folders with the plastic tabs. You can use the manila folders to create any sub-categories. DO NOT create a miscellaneous folder—each paper should have a spot to be filed.
Door Storage

When you are looking for additional storage in your home don’t forget to use the space behind your door. Shoe racks have great storage capacity. Hooks can be used for coats, hats, scarves and more. They even make behind the door storage for DVD holders or spice racks for the back of the pantry door. The newest door storage is an organizer for your keys and cell phone so you won’t forget them on the way out!
Phone Calls

When you are leaving a voicemail for someone be sure to include: why you are calling, the follow up that you expect, your phone number and when you can be reached. Don’t assume they have your number.

When you are taking a message be sure to write the date and time of call, the person’s full name, phone number, the information they are requesting and when you need to get back to them.
**Kids Artwork and Schoolwork**

Can’t bear to throw it away?

When they first come into the home, proudly display art and schoolwork on the fridge or special bulletin board for one week. Then store in a storage bin (one for each child). At the end of the year sit down with your child and pick out the very special ones that can be kept, or take pictures of them to put in an album. Label the ones you keep with the child’s name, year and grade in school.
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Lower Cabinets

Often wasted space– make your lower cabinets more useful by installing pullout drawers, a flexible shelving system or even a storage bin. They can be used under the sink in the bathroom, kitchen or laundry. Pull out drawers are great for spaces that are hard to get to or that are very deep. They will allow you to get more storage area and help to use the vertical space more effectively.
Plan Your Next Workday

► Save the last 15 minutes of your day to create a to-do list for the following day. Review your appointments, calendar and necessary phone calls.
► Re-file any papers still out on your desk into the proper folders or your action file for the next day.
► Tidy up your desk— put away any books, folders, projects, office supplies. Check to see if you have all that you will need for your tasks the next day.

If you do this everyday you are more likely to stay on top of your filing and tasks, which will help you from being overwhelmed during your busy times.
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No More Slip-n-Slide

Are the items in your drawers always sliding to the back, making it near impossible to find anything you need?

Consider placing a drawer liner inside—the ones that ‘grip’ are best. They come made of plastic, cork, suede and other fabrics. Just make sure it has some ‘stick’ to it… don’t just use a paper liner. (They actually make drawer organizers with the non-stick surface already inside—pictured above.)

Use them in: clothes dresser drawers, office desk drawers, junk drawers, kitchen drawers, bathroom, file cabinet drawers—anywhere!
Paper—Keep it or Toss it?

Can’t decide what to toss or keep? Ask these questions:

- Is it still timely and accurate?
- Do I need to take any action on it?
- Is it a duplicate?
- Do I have a specific intention to use it?
- Would it be difficult to obtain if needed again?
- Are there tax, legal, or policy guidelines for retention?
- What is the worst thing that can happen if I don’t have it?
Color Code Your Calendar

Colors help us to visually distinguish things that are different. Our calendars can often become overwhelming so consider color coding to help make it easier to read. Here are some topics that you can make different colors in your work and/or home calendar:

Work activities, personal activities, phone calls, meetings, each child’s activities, can’t miss events– or any other activity you do on a regular basis.

For example on my calendar: red= clients, green = sports, blue = fun/personal, black= meetings.
Work Time Management

You may have heard the advise to only check your email and voicemail at specific times during the day, so that you are not constantly distracted from your work. Consider taking that a step further and setting a timer to go off at the top of each hour. Use that as a signal to ask yourself if you are using your time in the best possible way right then. If not, then take that as a chance to re-shift your focus. This will allow you to stay on top of your most needed tasks.
Filing Drawer Space

Stop trying to cram as many papers and folders as you can in a drawer. 😊

Leave at least 4 inches in the drawer so that you can access what you need, when you need it— with ease. If the space is getting full, it is time to purge or consider another filing space.

Also consider all of your file folder options. Some have places to store CD’s, others have deep pockets with sides, while still others have built in tabs to make the filing process easier.
Tools for organizing your papers

When organizing your papers be sure that you can see them. Consider a desktop filing system that is raised or tiered, not one that you simply dump things into. Also consider color coding. If it is too overwhelming to color code all of your files—code the most urgent, frequently used, or most missed items so that you may find them in a hurry.
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Give Yourself Permission

Sometimes it just takes having someone say—“It is okay to throw it out!” Here is a short, quick list you can give yourself permission to toss today:

♦ Keys you have no idea what they go to
♦ That combination lock with no combination to be found
♦ Those gift certificates that have expired long, long ago
♦ Your prom dress
♦ The cotton candy maker (or other appliance) that seemed like such a fun thing to buy at the time (or that are completely broken and don’t work)
♦ Unopened mail from a year ago
♦ The “I think I am going to get/buy/do this” list from a year ago

You may have some others to add.
Storing Items in the House

- Clear containers are best so that you can see what is inside.
- Before you buy the box/bin—measure what needs to fit inside of it to be sure it will work. Also measure the space you have for the bin to be sure the bin will fit.
- Realize that your storage items will probably increase, so consider purchasing extra bins, or one slightly larger than needed at the time.
- For items that you will need to open on a regular basis, make sure the containers are easy to access.
- Consider making a ‘map’ or list of storage bins: what is in them and where they are located. Also be sure to label each container with the date and content items so that they will be easy to find and purge when necessary.
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Make a Note

We often handle our paperwork more than once because we don’t know what to do with it or have forgotten why we kept it in the first place. Ideally, you should take action immediately. If you can’t, make a note on the paper/file with a sticky note or on the file folder itself so that you remember what you need to do, or why you have kept it. Be sure to date it.
Avoid Interruptions at Work

► If you are interrupted and you can deal with it in 5 minutes or less, then go ahead and handle it. If it will take longer, schedule time in your calendar for later in the day. You will be better able to handle that task and what you are currently working on.

► Set regularly scheduled meetings with your colleagues and co-workers. This way it is a reliable appointment, multiple issues can be discussed at one time and the ‘key’ players will be present—saving time. You can also keep a running list of things you need to discuss in the regular meeting.

► Send out a weekly project update to co-workers, staff and supervisors. This will help avoid dual work and may prevent complications and unnecessary interruptions throughout the week.

♦ All of these same tips could be used at home.
Printed Photographs

Many of us are overwhelmed by our massive amounts of photos that are not in albums or scrapbooks. Don’t feel you have to do it all now. Create a system that will work starting today moving forward. The easiest storage is decorative photo boxes, where the pictures are sorted by index cards or in envelopes. Be sure to mark the date and the occasion each time you put your pictures away. Then, slowly, work on your past photos, and give yourself permission that not all of them need to be in fancy albums or scrapbooks. They can just as easily be enjoyed in a photo box. Try to get rid of duplicates or less than great pictures, which will decrease the volume you have to work with.
Your Car

Who says you have to keep the car manual in the glove compartment? Put it in the trunk, and use that space for more needed items (pens, tissue, notepad). Also make a habit of cleaning your car each night. Take 5 quick minutes to toss trash in the liter bag, take your papers inside and the kids equipment/clothes/shoes in. If you need to restock the car—do it now. It will make getting started in the morning much easier. Have a bin in the truck that stores necessary items like water, snacks and a change of clothes for your kids. Also consider a car organizer from a company like Case Logic [www.caselogic.com](http://www.caselogic.com).
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Old Clothes? What to do..

I am sure you have heard the advice: “If you haven’t worn it in a year, time to get rid of it” The end of the year is a great time to purge your clothes.

Go through all of your clothes. If they fit and are in good shape then keep them. If they don’t fit then donate them. If they need mending do it now or decide to donate them. If they are in bad condition just throw them out. Other options for clothes that are in decent shape, but you feel bad just tossing out:

- Take them to a consignment store
- Sell them on www.ebay.com or www.craigslist.org
- Have a clothing swap party with your friends or church
- Donate them to a charity or non-profit
- Give them away on www.freecycle.org
Teens and Organizing

I recently mentioned to someone that I don’t do ‘ambush organizing’- which is when the person is surprised or forced into it. Think about this with your teens. Sure we can go in, clean up the room and be done with it, but that is a form of ambush organizing. One reason your child may not have an organized room is they need to develop those skills. Next time, take a few moments and ask your child, “What could we put in place or buy to help you stay better organized?” Perhaps they need a different closet system, perhaps they need a bulletin board. Try asking them about the problem area and offer solutions rather than getting frustrated and doing it for them or yelling at them.
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Make an Appointment With Yourself

Many of us have the typical TO-DO list; items that we need to get done at some point. For example we have a few errands to run, gifts to mail, clients to re-connect with. A to-do list is very important, but it isn’t very specific. Each week take the top 5 items and assign them a very specific date and time to complete. For example—next Tues. from 3-4pm write in your calendar to go to the watch repair, art store and get your car lubed. When you make an appointment with yourself you are more likely to complete the task. And don’t rush—fill out appointments over the entire month so you know you will have time to do them and won’t feel overwhelmed. Or each week set aside a specific time to complete tasks. (Example: each Thursday from 1-3pm call clients you haven’t talked to in the past month.)
Post-it Notes

Don’t let them get out of hand! Enough said.

You know who you are 😊

You can’t possibly read them all and use them all if they are everywhere. They become like decoration after awhile and you don’t even ‘see’ them. Instead use a notebook to contain them, or to jot your notes in. Again, you can’t possibly use all the notes if your office/desk looks like this!!
People often don’t realize the importance of lighting in a space. When you can’t see what you are working on, you can become frustrated more easily. A dark living area can seem depressing, dingy and cluttered; therefore making you less likely to spend time in there. Make sure that each space in your home or office is well lit. It will make the day just that much brighter.
Donations

Be mindful of what you choose to donate. While it often makes us feel better to give our unwanted items to “someone who can use them”- we need to be thoughtful. If it is not something that you would willingly give as a gift to a friend or family member, then the item is trash. Please remember that donation locations spend a lot of their money throwing away unwanted/unneeded items. It is also a good idea to check with them on what items they take and do not take. While I know this can be hard, please be mindful of what you are donating.

♥ Please also be respectful to those receiving your items by donating clean clothes.
Don’t Fight Yourself and Your Habits

If you are a paper piler—don’t fight that. If you tend to drop everything on the kitchen counter at the end of a long day—don’t fight that. Instead organize AROUND it. Learn your own patterns and develop systems that work with your habits. The more you can work within your own tendencies the more successful you will be. Make paper piles, but label and color code them for easier access. Still unload in the kitchen but make a command center that handles papers, homework, purchases, etc. This philosophy works great with spouses and children. Try to work with their habits and they will be more likely to use the systems you set in place.
End of the Year—Shred It!

The end of the year is the perfect time to go through your files and purge them. For items that you need to keep for tax reasons—label them with the year and store in a box. Then at the end of each year shred what you can: anything you no longer need (receipts, bills, etc.) You can also shred your bank statements and tax supporting documents that are more than 7yrs old*. This may give you a lot of shredding to do so be sure to have a good shredder.

Protect your identity all year long and be sure to shred things with any of your information on it.

* Make sure to consult with your accountant or financial advisor.
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Know Your Biological Organizing Clock

Are you the person in the gym at 6am every morning or the person who is typing emails at midnight? When you work on an organizing project make sure to do it when you are most energized and willing to do a project. If you work best in the early morning don’t wait until late afternoon to start organizing or you will get tired, frustrated and more apt to give up and feel defeated.

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Easy or Hard things first?

When you are starting an organizing project, ask yourself this question:

“Do I complete the easy items first to get them out of the way quickly

< OR >

Do I complete the harder items first so that I don’t have to worry about them later?”

There really is no right answer. You just need to know your own style of confronting projects. And if you are working with a spouse or child, ask them the same question. That way you know how the other person is thinking before tackling the project.
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What Was Delegated?

Have you ever delegated something to a co-worker or family member only to find out later it wasn’t completed? Make a list of the tasks you have delegated, who you delegated it to and the date. Then put a follow up date so that you can be sure the task was completed. This should also help eliminate assigning the same task to more than one person.

**EXAMPLE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Follow up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2008</td>
<td>Plan PTA meeting</td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>2/21/2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I.C.E.—In Case of Emergency

Consider entering a new contact in your cell phone—I.C.E. This will be your “in case of emergency contact person” and will help emergency people, such as doctors and nurses, find your contact person faster. If you have an emergency, they can quickly look in your phone to see who you want to have contacted. Instead of spending precious time searching your contact list for Mom, Dad, Uncle Joe, etc.
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It is OK to Say “NO”

Part of what causes us to be behind in our filing and organizing is a lack of time. Learning to say “NO” can help. There is only so much time in a day; decide what is important to you and stick with that. You may need to say “no” to make time for what you ‘need’ to do instead of what you ‘want’ to do. People will respect you more for saying “no”, rather than being late and disorganized on the project they needed help with.

“No, I am sorry I can’t help you with that right now.”
Date Your Children’s Artwork/Homework

When you save those precious school moments don’t forget to date them with the month and year! And it is also helpful to put their age and the grade they were in. Over the years your memory won’t be great as you think it will be, and this information will prove quite helpful (especially if you have more than one child).
The key to being organized is that everything must have a home. If you put something away in the exact same place every single time it is used, you will be able to find it when you need it. You may need to de-clutter and assign homes, but create a place for everything you have. Remember though, it takes 21 days to create a habit. Don’t give up if you misplace something or put it back in a different place. Simply keep working on this skill until you have success. And if you have others that use your space consider labeling where things go and giving them encouragement to return items where they belong.
Back Up Your Laptop

I bet that many of you take your laptop to the local coffee shop to do work. I bet that many of you have children who use your laptop at the kitchen table.

What are the chances that something could be spilled on your laptop and you would lose ALL of your data? Don’t forget to back up your laptop with an online service or an external hard drive so that you don’t have to ‘cry over spilt milk’!
Run Your FREE Credit Report Annually

Clutter can often cause financial concerns by paying bills late, or not at all. You can get your FREE credit report by logging on to www.annualcreditreport.com. This will also help you to know if you have been the victim of identity theft. Remember to shred all documents with any of your personal information on them!
Hula Hoop Your Way

Fun tip to help your kids get organized:

Toss a hula hoop on the floor. They now need to pick up everything in that circle and put it away. Then toss the hula hoop (or better yet, let them toss it) to another area and have them clean that section next.

Organizing is easier when it is fun, simple and concentrates on small areas.
Creating Your Filing System

When you are creating your filing system (whether from scratch or re-doing it) write down **all** of your headings before you actually label the folders. Start with all the major headings, then add any sub-headings. Label things with the very first words that come to mind, as that is how you will recall them later. And remember less is more. The fewer headings you have, the easier it will be to find things when you need them.
It’s Never Too Late For a Fresh Start

People often think they can’t start a new way of doing things mid-stream or mid-year: not true. If your filing system isn’t working for you, don’t stick with it just because it is what you have been doing so far. Start a new one that does work for you. At least from this date forward you will be more organized. You can deal with what isn’t organized later, but starting fresh and new is important. If your bills and paperwork have piled up, start a new system now to deal with them as they come in so you won’t continue to be overwhelmed. Don’t let the past control your future. Start a new way of doing things and enjoy being more organized starting today.
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One at a Time

When you are getting ready to tackle your To-Do list, here is something to think about:

Work on only ONE task until it is completely done. People often find they get distracted when they try to do multiple tasks. Sometimes the task we choose to do has so many steps and items to it, takes a long time to complete, making us discouraged. My advice is to stay with one task until it is completely done. If you can’t complete it right away, then only take on one additional task and make sure they are both completed before taking on any more.
Reward Yourself

If you have kids, you know about sticker charts. For each great thing the child does they get a sticker with the promise of a great reward. We as adults often forget to reward ourselves. Create a system to reward yourself for the hard work you do organizing. It can be as simple as taking 20 minutes to read a book or treating yourself to that something special....

♥ Take a walk
♥ Play with your pet
♥ Call a friend
♥ Have some ice cream
♥ Rent a movie
♥ Get a manicure

Or whatever will put a smile on your face!
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Organizers Are Human, Too

Let me set the scene: a 3 day weekend and I spent it doing chores—cleaning, organizing, task after task. Tuesday morning when I came downstairs for breakfast there was still ‘stuff’ all over the kitchen. It is an ongoing process and organizers have clutter, too! You just have to do the work and know there will always be ‘stuff’.....

No one is perfect >>> so don’t strive for perfection or you will drive yourself crazy!
Too Bulky to Keep?

Do you have an item that is just too precious to part with, but too bulky to realistically keep? Take a few photos of the item; write down the story that goes with it or the sentimental value and put it in your scrap book or photo album. Then donate, sell or toss the large item.
Change the Subject Line

How often have you received an email with a vague subject line like “HI” or “following up”?

Before responding to that email, or when you save it, change the subject line so that you can better understand what the message is about. Perhaps add the date, topic or other specific details in the subject line. And when sending an email make the subject line as specific as possible.
**Beware of Scams!**

NEVER give out personal information when someone contacts you. If someone calls, emails or faxes you and wants ANY of your personal information—do not give it to them.

Instead, if you think the request is valid, you contact them. Find the phone number yourself and call them. Or “Google” their website and contact them. Find out when you call if indeed, they need your information. This way you know the source is valid.

Remember— they are good at these scams and the emails look very real, even with the company logo. But do not give ANY personal information if someone contacts you. You should always initiate the contact.
Grab-N-Go File

There have been many fires around the country lately. If you had to get out quickly could you grab all your important papers immediately? If not, you should create a Grab-n-Go file. This would have copies of all your important documents in it, including bank account numbers, insurance information, copies of credit cards, drivers license, etc. Basically all the info you would need should your house be a total loss. The best place to keep this would be a safe or locked cabinet. Try not to label it something obvious for criminals, just in case your home is broken into. But you need to be able to continue your life should the worst case scenario happen to you.

Be prepared.

Note: This tip applies to your home and your business. You should consider a Grab-n-Go file with all your important business information in it for your office.
Pick a Number

Are you having trouble getting rid of things in either your house or office? Well then pick a number! This will be the number of things you will get rid of each day for the next month. This can include clutter, files, junk mail, clothes, reference materials, anything at all! Make sure it is a reasonable number so that you can reach the goal each and every day. Remember it only takes 21 days to create a habit. You might just create the habit of being organized!

What’s your number??

Pick a Number

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Email Overload

Are you overloaded by jokes, store ads, blogs, subscriptions and newsletters from various organizations?

Much like junk mail that comes via the Post Office, you can have ‘junk email’. Just as you can take your name off the junk mail list— you need to UNSUBSCRIBE to emails that you receive, but just don’t have time to read. No longer feel guilty that you can’t get to them and have them filling up your inbox. Simply choose the top 5 (or less) you want to receive and unsubscribe from everything else.

And do it today 😊
Over the Door Shoe Organizer

There is really no limit to what you can use an over the door shoe organizer for:

- bathroom supplies
- cleaning supplies
- mittens, gloves, socks, shoes, etc.
- maps, travel guides, pamphlets
- craft supplies
- bills, receipts, magazines, papers, etc.
- diapers, baby clothes and supplies
- office supplies
- jewelry
- and oh yea— Shoes!

And so much more! — — How could YOU use it?
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And so much more!

——

Paint Yourself Organized!

I think that many of you may know that there is ‘chalkboard’ paint available. All you do is paint the wall with the special paint, and it becomes an instant chalkboard. But did you also know there is ‘magnetic’ paint and ‘dry erase’ paint?! You can make any surface magnetic or a dry erase board. So consider using the back of your pantry door as a dry erase board— or paint a wall in your office magnetic (then paint over it with any color paint and you will never know it is magnetic). They can be purchased at major hardware stores.
Clothing Closet

There are 2 ways to organize your clothes:

**By type:** You should hang like types of clothes together (rather than just hanging items randomly). Instead group like with like: t-shirts, short sleeve shirts, long sleeve shirts, sweaters, pants, skirts, etc.

**By type and color:** Once you have the clothes separated by type, you can take the next step and separate by color– all blue short sleeve shirts together, all white ones, grey pants together, black pants together, etc.

**This will not only make your closet more organized and pleasing to the eye, but will make getting dressed much quicker and easier!**
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This will not only make your closet more organized and pleasing to the eye, but will make getting dressed much quicker and easier!

Mail… An Extra Step

You should remove yourself from junk mail mailing lists (you can do this at www.organizedinnovations.com/resources.html). And you should open your mail over a shredder and garbage can and get rid of advertisements and junk mail right away.

But here is one extra step to take to reduce paper. When you receive a bill or statement in the mail, open it and remove the extra paper the company has added to the envelope. Toss it or shred it immediately so that all you have left is the bill/statement and the billing return address envelope.

☼ My recommendation: Don’t go to the mailbox and pick up your mail unless you have the time to quickly sort it and get rid of what you don’t need. Don’t just ‘plop’ the mail on the countertop.
Teach Your Kids To Donate

Start as early as you can to teach your kids the value of donating. After you have completed an organizing session or have helped cleaned their room, take them with you to the donation center. They will be able to see the whole process and trust that items are going to someone in need, rather than just feeling like you wanted to have them clean their room.

** I don’t recommend ‘ambush’ organizing your children’s space. Meaning to go through with a garbage sack and taking out what you don’t think they need. This may actually cause them to hoard more and have issues with getting organized. Make sure they are involved in the process.
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Make Space for Your Shoes

To make more room in your closet for shoes try this:

1. Buy a shoe organizer of any kind—get the shoes off of the floor.
2. Store the shoes heel to toe, rather than heel to heel like we tend to do. This will take up less space.

These rules apply to men’s, women’s and children’s shoes.

** Also, if you tend to kick off your shoes at the back door, store them neatly by getting a shoe organizer or basket to better contain them.
Checklists

Checklists seem simple enough, but they help insure we get things done. Most of us use a to-do list or a grocery list. But consider using checklists for a variety of other things:

✓ what to pack  
✓ your kids school bag contents  
✓ a morning routine  
✓ things to stock in your car  
✓ things to do at the end of each day to prepare for tomorrow  
✓ what to take when you travel for business  
✓ what to have in each client folder  
✓ phone call questions for new clients  
✓ chore chart  
✓ babysitter checklist  

….and MORE.

What kind of checklist do YOU need?
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- your kids school bag contents
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- what to have in each client folder
- phone call questions for new clients
- chore chart
- babysitter checklist
- …and MORE.

What kind of checklist do YOU need?

Recycling Your Technology

Do you have an old cell phone, MP3 player or laptop lying around because you don’t know what to do with it? Here are some options for you that not only offer free shipping but may actually PAY you to recycle your old electronic items. Check them out:

www.gazelle.com
www.venjuvo.com
www.myboneyard.com
www.myboneyard.com
www.mygreenelectronics.org

Search the internet—there are many other options out there. Your computer manufacturer may have a program of their own.
Clean/Organize Your Fridge and Freezer

When was the last time you cleaned out your freezer or fridge? I mean pulled out that mysterious package from the very, very back? The end of the year is a great time to clean out your fridge, freezer and pantry. Toss anything that is outdated or you can’t identify. Consider putting things back in groups (meats, breads, soups, vegetables, etc.) I recommend taking a pen and marking the date on items for both fridge and freezer. Even though you think it was just a few months ago, you would be surprised at how long it really has been in there. You can actually buy food labels for your plastic containers that are dishwasher safe and allow you to know just how old those leftovers really are.
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Simplify Gift Wrapping

I know it is hard to resist the sales and the beautiful colors, but here is a tip to make gift wrapping quicker, easier and less expensive: Decide to have only two colors of gift wrap – gold and silver (or 2 colors you like the best). Then decide to have just a few colored ribbons. With the right combination you could make your gift right for the holidays, a birthday or even a baby gift. Gift wrap can easily become clutter if you aren’t careful. And make sure that the bows and ribbons are contained in a plastic bin or bag so they are easy to access.
Date Your Pictures

I work with a lot of people organizing their old pictures and photos. One of the toughest parts of the process is to determine the year the picture was taken. I am sure that many of you received photos for the holidays. Take time to mark the date (month and year) on the back so that you don’t have to figure it out 10 years from now. You may also want to mark the event and the names of the people in the picture.

At the very least, mark the year on the back of each picture you print out. And make sure when you save them in your computer to have the date somewhere in the file name.
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Start Early

First thing each morning set yourself up for success for the rest of the day: do one small task that you need to do right away! It could be as simple as emptying the trash, calling and booking airline tickets or cleaning out the junk drawer. Once you have a taste of completion and success, it will help carry you through the rest of the day.

So what are YOU going to do first thing tomorrow to start your day off with a success?
Make Space on Your Desk

Consider making more room on your desk by purchasing a monitor stand and/or shelf. This will allow you to raise your computer, printer, and other items up off the desk and give you more actual work space. Also consider buying an under the desk keyboard tray if you don’t already have one, so that your key board is off your desk. In addition, you can purchase wireless computer equipment to cut down on those hard to tame electrical cords.
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Don’t Be Afraid To Experiment

Perfection—while we all strive to attain it, is often not a reasonable goal. When you are getting organized don’t be afraid to try a few things before settling on the final solution for your organizing dilemma. It can take some successes and failures to really get the system that is right for you.

Which solution fits YOUR style?
End of The Year File Clean-Out

It is the end of the year and time to clean out your files so that they are not packed full for next year.

1. Do one file at a time. Go completely through it to decide what you need to toss, keep, shred.

2. If you do NOT write it off on your taxes you can toss/shred *

3. If you do need to keep the document for tax purposes, you will need to keep it for 3-7 years:
   - Take everything out of the current file.
   - Use an envelope or plastic bin to contain the papers.
   - Mark them with the year.
   - Get a box and put the paperwork inside.
   - Mark the year on the outside of the box.
   - Put the box in the garage or somewhere away from your current filing system.

4. You should have empty or near empty file folders left. If you need a new folder made, this is the time to make it.

*check with your accounting professional
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4. You should have empty or near empty file folders left. If you need a new folder made, this is the time to make it.

Think of Foster Kids First

Do you have an old suitcase that you are thinking of donating or selling at a garage sale? Or a gently used coat? Consider, instead, donating it to your local foster family center. Kids who are constantly in transition often need bags to carry their items when moving from home to home, and warm coats for the winter.

*check with your accounting professional
From Your Pantry To Theirs

Donations are a great way to clear your clutter while being able to give help to someone in need. Take the time to clean out your pantry. Toss anything that is expired. Anything that is still good, but you know you won’t eat– donate to your local food bank. When putting things back in your pantry be sure to put them back in categories (fruits, veggies, snacks, cereals, etc.)
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Hooks, Hooks Everywhere

Not quite sure how to solve your organizing dilemma but it is driving you nuts? Hang a hook or two to get started. Hooks are a great way to get things off of the floor. They can be used as a permanent solution, or as a temporary one until you have a chance to figure out what you want in that space.

Great for things like:

- purses
- clothes
- kids backpacks
- sports equipment
- hats
- dry cleaning
- jewelry
- belts
- ties
Mark Your Puzzle Pieces

Have you ever dropped a puzzle box or had your kids mix up the pieces to different puzzles? Take the time when you buy the puzzle to mark on the back of each piece the same number or same letter. That way, when you are working on a puzzle the back will all have the same number or letter. If you mix up the pieces you can easily sort by the information on the back of the piece.

Ok so this tip works best on small puzzles not those 1000 piece ones!
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Ok so this tip works best on small puzzles not those 1000 piece ones!

One Small Spot for Yourself

Do you live with someone that has a different organizing style than you? Perhaps it is your spouse, your roommate or even your child. Do you constantly struggle with getting them to be more organized because it causes chaos and stress for you? Consider a compromise. Together decide on one spot in the home where they can be messy and you won’t care. This way the clutter is contained to one area, but they get to be themselves and not worry about it. Everyone needs to be free to be who they are, so work together to find a way for your two styles to co-exist.
Have a Purpose For The Paper

Paper is the #1 issue among most people that I work with. And many times we keep something “because I may want that, may need that, may decide to do that”. While these thoughts are great for planning ahead, it can overwhelm you in paper. Have a purpose for the papers you keep. If you need to keep something make sure you file it in the right spot. Also, be sure to actually read everything you keep—don’t just assume you should keep it just because of who it is from.
I can’t say enough about turntables! They can be used almost anywhere:

✓ laundry room
✓ under the sink in kitchen or bathroom
✓ cabinet or closet
✓ refrigerator
✓ garage
✓ craft room
✓ food storage

and more!
Organizing With 3 x 5 cards

To-do lists are tough to deal with aren’t they? Your list may become too long or too messy. It’s hard to read and hard to actually do anything. You may want to try using 3x5 index cards to make your lists. That way when you are done with something you simply throw the card away. One way to organize the cards is with a 3x5 action folio from www.levenger.com (see picture).
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Bedside Caddy

Your bedroom can often become a catch-all for items. Keep it organized by having a bedside caddy or basket to keep items in. Keep a notepad and pen available so you can jot notes and reminders when you think of them.
De-clutter Using the Library

Instead of buying books, CD’s and DVD’s—check them out from the library. You will have the same great entertainment without the clutter. You will also be given a deadline to return them, so you will be sure to get them out of the house.
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Plan for Guests

Need a kick in the pants to get going on your organizing and de-cluttering? Send out invitations to have a party, dinner or invite family to visit. Nothing will motivate you like having the deadline of your mother-in-law coming for a visit. Even if it is just a play date for your kids, knowing that someone is coming will help get you going.
Stacey Anderson has worked for over 10 years as an office manager working with medical offices, non-profit organizations and children’s groups. In 2006, she founded Organized Innovations, LLC a professional organizing and consulting company that specializes in organizing homes and businesses.

Stacey is passionate, informative, humorous and provides specific tips and solutions for you to implement right away. She takes the time to really listen to her clients’ needs and yet guide them with that steady hand that will get them the desired results they are looking for. She has great patience and understanding for what her clients are facing and doesn’t force them in any one direction. Her seminars are packed with great ideas to get you on the road to success, while sharing real life stories of working with hundreds of clients.

Stacey offers:
♦ Hands on organizing
♦ Phone consultations and organizing
♦ Home organizing parties
♦ Trainings and seminars

About the Author

I sincerely hope that you have found these tips to be helpful and energizing. You now have a few basic ways to jump start your organizing and de-cluttering.

If you would like to receive my FREE tip of the week email, simply visit www.organizedinnovations.com and sign up. I welcome your feedback and ideas. If you have an organizing tip please share it with me. Also feel free to share your organizing stories, jokes, dilemmas and helpful hints. It is fun to learn what works and doesn’t work for those who are trying so hard to get organized in this very hectic world we live in today.

I wish you all the best with your organizing!

Remember-
♣ Start small
♣ Finish one thing at a time
♣ Take a break when you need to
♣ Consistency pays off
♣ Reward yourself for your hard work
♣ Hang in there – it will get better
♣ There is no such thing as “perfect”
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Thank you to Mom, Dad, Chad and Candace for all the love and support that you give to me each and every day. You make me feel anything I want in life is possible.

Thank you to Whitney and Mayna, there is no way this book would have happened without you. Thank you so much for your support and contributions.

Mayna Sgaramella- Personal stylist extraordinaire 
www.closetfly.com
Whitney Keyes- Marketing and publicity guru 
www.whitneykeyes.com
I want to thank Kathy Jenkins with Organized A to Z.com for allowing me to use her product pictures in this book. To me, products are a very important part of getting organized, and as a fellow Professional Organizer, Kathy carries only the best. Please visit www.organizedatoz.com for great organizing products.

Page 6: Sock/hosiery drawer organizer, Natural wood expandable cosmetic drawer organizer, expandable silverware tray
Page 12: Vinyl over-the-door shoe organizer, Over-the-door 5 hook rack, Door organizer
Page 15: Chrome pullout cabinet organizer, Under sink chrome sliding organizer, Zia medium grips basket
Page 17: Silverware tray five compartment
Page 28: Zippered cargo tote, Entertainment organizer
Page 58: Canvas over the door shoe organizer
Page 67: Acrylic 2 drawer organizing cube
Page 71: Capiz white magazine holder
Page 75: Photo hook, Over cabinet hook, Perfect curve cap rack
Page 79: Acrylic lazy susan spin tray, Lazy susan twin turntable 10”, Endurance stainless steel turntables

I would also like to thank Todd Mansor with Overhead Solution for sharing his product pictures. Overhead garage products are a great solution to space concerns. Please visit www.overheadsolution.com to see their products.

Page 4: OHS 750
To purchase additional copies of
Get Organized: Get Revitalized– 80 Quick and Easy Tips to Get You Started
or for more information about other products and services by Stacey Anderson, please contact her directly.

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Today there are many new demands on our time. As our daily duties increase and our available time decreases, it is crucial to learn smarter systems and techniques to mastering the day to day challenges we face. It may be hard to know where to begin, what supplies you will need and how to stay motivated once you have started. As a Professional Organizer, Stacey will help guide you through the process by providing a professional and personalized approach. She is committed to helping you put solutions in place to help you reach your goals.

“As a Mom, Florist and business owner, I have found Stacey’s tips to be very useful. I’ve been amazed at the way a straight forward tip can transform a drawer, a closet, and my desk! It’s really provided the boost I need to jump start different projects!”

Sheila Shriner

“Getting organized isn’t easy for everyone but Stacey makes it fun and simple. I rely on Stacey’s e-tips every week to help me run my business and she’s now made them even easier to access in this collection of her best advice and tips. This book is a valuable guide for anyone needing quick, actionable ideas and inspiration.”

Whitney Keyes

“Stacey’s Tip of the Week is something that actually makes me feel more at ease and encourages me with valuable information that I can immediately put to use. With this book, I have an actual hard copy of all her Tips of the Week from the past that I can refer to whenever I need a nugget of organizational wisdom.”

Mayna Sgaramella