



everything has a place

Take that New Year's resolution to get organized, and make it happen with these tips

By Linda Goldman

As a professional organizer, people often ask if my home is "very organized." I always respond honestly with a resounding yes ... and no. Specifically:

Yes, I have a place for everything in my home.

No, I don't waste time looking for things.

Yes, my family members can turn any

organized space into one that looks like something recently exploded. (And in an impressively short amount of time I might add!)

The truth is that no matter how organized we may be, life, as well as our families, can be messy, and maintaining a home can be a real challenge.

Here are the practices I use to make sure that—no matter what—order can

be restored in my house quickly, painlessly and without the assistance of a disaster relief agency.

HAVE A PLACE. Having specific places for everything in your home is essential to staying organized. When you and other family members know where things belong, getting your home back in shape is much easier.

PUT THINGS AWAY. To keep your home under control, try to spend at least 20 minutes a day putting things directly away or back into the rooms where they belong.

DEVELOP ROUTINES. It is always easier to do any task when there is a process to follow and a designated time to do it. By identifying certain days, times and methods for household work such as laundry, paperwork and cleaning, you'll take the guesswork out of how things get done and ensure you stay on top of these tasks.

CONSISTENTLY PURGE. Holding onto items that you no longer use, need, want or enjoy makes keeping your home organized much more difficult and it uses up valuable storage space. So always be on the look out for things to give away or sell and

Photo of spice drawer by Erik Davis

Linda's favorite tools

FRANKLIN COVEY CALENDAR

While PDAs are a fantastic tool for many people, I find

that a paper based system still works best for me and for many of my clients. This calendar is unique in that it has both month at a glance and daily pages with space for appointments and tasks. Available at www.franklinplanner.com.

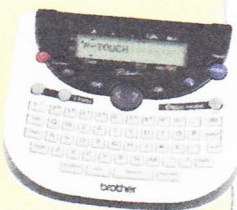


THE CONTAINER STORE'S CLEAR PLASTIC BOXES

Clear containers help you to remember what's stored inside. These boxes are easy to see through, sturdy and stack nicely. Located in the closet section at the Container Store.

BROTHER P-TOUCH LABEL MAKER

A label maker is great for labeling containers, files and shelving. And labels help you identify where things go, making it easier to keep yourself and others on track. Found at most office supply stores.




up an area to collect these items.

ASSESS THE MESS. If clutter continually builds up in specific areas of your home, try to figure out why. Ask yourself: Is there a place for each item, and does my family know where the place is? Is the place convenient and accessible to where the items are used? Are there excess items that need to be urged?

■ Would additional storage containers help?

After determining why the clutter builds, make the necessary changes and then reassess.

While I can't promise you an explosion-free future or a home that's always in perfect order, you can attain a sense of control over your space and, hopefully, a sense of calm to go with it. 



MEET THE AUTHOR

Linda Goldman,
Highland Park
Linda is a Certified
Professional

Organizer and the owner of Altogether Organized. For more than eight years, she has helped others to bring order to their lives and learn the skills needed for lasting change. See www.altogetherorganized.org to learn more.

 makeitbetter.net/meet-our-writers