

51 Ways to Organize Your Home

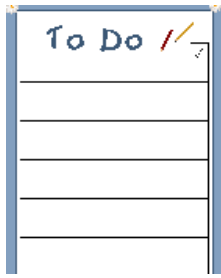


Your home is supposed to be the place where you feel the most comfortable. Keeping it organized and clutter free is important. For many of us, though, this is a challenge. This ebook is intended to make it a bit easier to organize your home and help you enjoy being there.

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MAKE A PLAN

Organizing your home can be overwhelming if you don't have a plan. This first set of tips will help you know where to start.

1. Master List

The first thing that you need to do is make a list. Get a pen and paper and go through every room in your house. Write down everything that needs to be organized. Don't worry if your list is really long, you'll break it down later.

2. Prioritize

After you've made your master list, it's time to prioritize. Sit down with your list and decide what needs to be done right away versus what can wait. You can do this by using a letter or number system. For all the things you want done right away, put an "A" or a "1" by them. If the job can wait a week or two, put a "B" or a "2" by it. If it can wait even longer, place a "C" or a "3" by it.

3. Daily List

Once you've prioritized, you can make your daily lists. Get a big piece of paper and write the days of the week across the top. Then look at your prioritized master to-do list and start writing all of the "A" projects under a week day on your paper. Be careful to put not more than two or three projects on one day, otherwise you may get overwhelmed. You now have a daily list of projects to get done ("A" projects, then "B" projects, and so on). Keep doing this every week until you get all of your projects done.

4. Don't Get Distracted

When you start carrying out your daily projects, it's important to *only* concentrate on what's on the list. Chances are, as you start doing one project you'll see ten other projects that need doing. You'll be tempted to do them, but don't. You'll wind up getting overwhelmed, and possibly not even finishing the first project. If you notice an additional project you need to do, simply write it on your master list and continue with what you were doing.



BATHROOM

Whether your bathroom is big or small, keeping it organized is important. This next set of tips will help you keep your bathroom organized.

5. Throw Out

Before starting to organize your bathroom, go through and throw out anything that's outdated or no longer needed. Things like:

- Old scissors or razors
- Expired prescriptions
- Any make up over a year old
- Throw out empty and almost empty bottles

6. Making More Storage

It's easier than you think to create more storage in a small bathroom. Here are some ideas:

- Put a magnet strip inside your medicine cabinet to hang razors, scissors and tweezers.
- Make a simple fabric skirt to put around free standing sinks to hide things underneath your sink.
- Roll towels instead of folding them.
- Give each family member a square, see-through container for his or her personal things.

7. Keep Cleaners Handy

Keep cleaners in their own portable container under the sink so they're accessible when you need them. It's also a good idea to label your cleaners by room. Take a permanent marker and write "bathroom" on all of your bathroom cleaners so that you don't take them out of the bathroom and have to hunt them down later.

8. Guest Items

If you have a guest bathroom, make sure you have plenty of extra things that they may need. Here are some ideas:

- Soaps
- Toothbrushes
- Shampoo
- Hair products

9. Use Small Containers

Small containers or baskets can organize otherwise cluttered bathroom drawers. Here are some things that you can divide into these smaller containers:

- Jewelry
- Make-up
- Floss
- Soaps

10. Avoid Clutter

It's easy for clutter to build up in your bathroom. Here are some tips on how to organize bathroom items so that clutter won't sneak up on you:

- Store only items that you use daily on your counters.
- Empty the trash can daily.
- Have a hamper for dirty clothes
- Keep a toy bag in the tub for bath toys.



CLOSETS

Keeping your closets organized can be frustrating, because it seems like everything winds up there. This next set of tips will give you some ideas on how to keep the clutter out of your closets.

11. Clear Out

Start organizing that cluttered closet by clearing out everything that you don't need in there. Here are some helpful tips:

- Throw away or donate any clothes that don't fit anymore or are out of style.
- If you haven't worn it in a year, get rid of it.
- Go through shoes and throw out any too old to wear.

12. Categorize

If you have a lot of clothes, it helps to categorize them. There are many ways to do this, you just need to choose the right one for you. Here are some ideas:

- Hang full outfits together.
- Categorize by season.
- Categorize by style.
- Use rod dividers.

13. Storing

The secret to having an uncluttered closet is knowing how to store. It's best to store things in clear plastic containers so that it's easy to see what's in them. Shelves are also very useful for storing shoes and extra folded clothes.

14. Baskets

It's a good idea to keep a couple of baskets in your closets. You can use these baskets to keep clothes that need mending, or clothes that you're donating to charity.

15. Hooks

Hanging hooks in your closet can eliminate a lot of clutter. Here are some ideas:

- Belts
- Coats
- Umbrellas
- Bags

16. Shoe Storage

Organizing shoes can be a challenging job. Here are some ideas:

- Put a shelf in your closet for only shoes.
- Hang a "shoe bag" on the back of your closet door.
- If you have a big enough closet, you can store your shoes in their original shoe boxes.

17. Shelves

Shelves can be a big asset in your closets. Here are some great things you can store:

- Folded clothes
- Blankets
- Slippers
- Hats



KITCHEN

The kitchen is used several times a day. It's very important to organize it so that it will be easy and efficient to use. This next set of tips will give you some great ideas on how to arrange your kitchen for optimum use.

18. Activities

Before you start to organize your kitchen, be aware of all that goes on there. There are five basic activities that you do in the kitchen. They are:

- Food preparation
- Food storage
- Cleaning
- Cooking
- Serving

19. Triangle Theory

The triangle theory states that your time in your kitchen will be more effective if you set it up like a triangle. As you pay attention to how you move in the kitchen, it can be described as going from the sink to the stove to the fridge, or some variation of that. Following the triangle theory, if you make the stove, sink and fridge the “points” of your triangle, your time spent in your kitchen will be more efficient.

20. Fridge

Keeping your fridge organized can be a challenge, but here are some tips to keep it clutter free:

- Go through and throw out bad food at least once a week.
- Store leftovers in clear containers.
- Go through condiments, and check expiration dates.
- Have a shelf for leftovers, a shelf for beverages and a shelf for store-bought foods.

21. Pantry

It's important to organize your pantry so that you always know what you have. Here are some tips:

- Group like foods together, i.e. fruits, vegetables, soups, etc.
- Label your shelves.
- Use containers or baskets for smaller items, such as gravy and Kool-Aid pouches.
- Alphabetize your spices.
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22. Cupboards

Organizing cupboards and cabinets is important, because we open and close them several times a day. Here are some ideas:

- Put glasses and cups in a cupboard near the sink.
- Give each thing its own shelf, i.e. plates, bowls, containers, etc.
- If you don't have a lot of cupboard space, sort through all your kitchenware and put what you can live without in storage.

23. Creating Extra Storage Space

If you have a small kitchen, it may be very hard to organize it the way you want to. Here are a few ideas on how to make more space:

- Install mug hooks under your cupboards.
- Use square containers instead of round ones.
- Line up lids vertically.
- Get “rolling” drawers that you can just pull out when you need them.

24. Grocery List

Keep a magnetic pad on the fridge to write down things that you need on your next grocery trip. Then, before going to the store, check your list against your pantry, fridge and freezer to avoid buying duplicate items.

25. Custom Design

Organizing tips are great, but the bottom line is that you need to organize your kitchen to best fit *your* needs. For example, if you don't cook much, alphabetizing spices may not be a necessity. On the other hand, if you entertain often, the use of your serving space will be very important. So decide what you need from your kitchen, and organize accordingly.



MEDIA

We all have magazines, books, music and movies in our homes. This next set of tips will show you how to best organize your entertainment.

26. Throw Out

The first thing you need to do is go through all of your magazines and newspapers and throw out everything that you've already read. If you're saving a magazine just for one article, tear out the article and throw the magazine away.

27. Categorize by Subject

It's best to categorize your magazines and books by subject. Put cooking magazines together and entertainment ones together, etc. Do this with your music and movies also.

28. Labeling

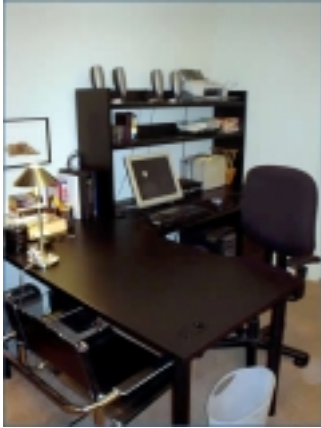
Labeling is a great way to keep all of your media where it needs to be. You can get white sticker labels at the store in white, or you can color code them to make finding what you need quicker.

29. Magazine Storage

Storing magazines can be tricky, because they don't stack very well. A great solution to this is to get plastic, vertical magazine holders. Each one will hold ten to twelve magazines. You can also label them by years.

30. Notebooks

What do you do with the magazine articles that you tear out of those magazines? Put them in a three-ring notebook, and store them with your books. You can also get notebook dividers to store articles on different subjects.



HOME OFFICE

More and more homes these days have a home office. Without proper organization and upkeep, however, your home office can become cluttered and unproductive. This next set of tips will help you organize your home office so that everything runs efficiently.

31. Desk Position

The position of your desk can make a big difference in the efficiency of your office. Arranging your desks or tables in an “L” shape or a “U” shape is best. This allows you two or three work areas.

32. Supplies

Office supplies are important to keep handy in your home office, but be careful not to hoard them. Keep only what you need in desk drawers, otherwise clutter will start to build up.

33. Control Paper

It seems like the flow of paper in your home office never stops. Handling this paper problem on a daily basis is important. Make sure you allow yourself time every day to clear off the papers on your desk and put things where they belong.

34. Folders

Folders are a great way to organize your home office. Even if you don't have a filing cabinet yet, using folders can really help organize. Here are a few ideas of things you can put in these folders:

- Bills
- Budget
- Research
- Records

35. Filing System

When you are ready for a filing system, make sure that you get one that best fits your needs. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Make sure to get a quality filing cabinet that has easily sliding drawers.
- Use both hanging files (for broad categories), and manila folders for subcategories.
- Make sure that all of your files are labeled well.
- Maintain a consistent alphabetical system.

36. Calendar

Having a master calendar is important for organizing not only your office, but your life as well. Make sure your calendar is big enough to write all of your important activities, and that it's put in a place where you'll always see it.



GARAGE

Organizing your garage can be a challenge, because it seems everything that we don't want in the house winds up in there. This next set of tips will help you keep your garage clutter free and manageable.

37. Shelves

Shelves are great to have in your garage, because they keep things off the floor and give you more room for your car. Make sure you have a good variety of different shelves to best fit your needs.

38. Pegboards

Pegboards are great in garages. You can hang almost anything on them. Here are some ideas:

- Tools
- Ladders
- Garden hoses
- Wood

39. Gardening Tools

Storing gardening tools can be tricky. It's a good idea to put them all together in a bucket or basket so that they're easy to transport. Store them near the front or back door of your garage.

40. Car Supplies

Make sure you have shelf space devoted to car supplies and tools. If they're all in one spot, it'll be easier to find them when you need them. Don't forget to include:

- Car washing supplies
- Tools
- Gas can
- Car vacuum
- Car fluids

41. Toys

Whether you have kids or not, a portion of your garage should be devoted to outdoor toys and recreational activities. Muck buckets are great for this, and you can fit quite a bit in them.



KID'S ROOM

A child's room is fun, but without the right organization it can become so messy that not even the kids can have fun in there. This last set of tips will give you some ideas on how to organize your little one's room so that it's fun for everyone.

42. Divide Up the Room

The first thing you should do is be aware of the different needs of your child for his or her bedroom, and make sure there is a spot for each. Here are some examples:

- Sleeping area
- Reading area
- Homework area
- Play area

43. Closet

Make sure that the clothes rod is low enough for your child to reach. You can put stackable baskets in his closet as well for shoes, gloves, etc. The higher shelves in the closet can be used for blankets or seasonal clothes.

44. Buckets and Containers

Buckets and containers are great in a kid's room. Muck buckets work great as toy boxes for bigger toys. For smaller toys, see through containers or empty five-gallon ice cream buckets work great.

45. Shelves

Shelves are great in a child's room. For safety, make sure that they are no taller than your child. Here are some things you can store on shelves:

- Books
- Stuffed animals
- Small toys
- Crafts

46. Rotate Toys

If your child has too many toys, it's a great idea to rotate them. Go through them and thin them out, but keep the ones you take out in a bag in the garage. Every few months, rotate these toys back into your child's room, taking others out. This will give him variety and let him enjoy his toys more.



ATTIC

Many people use their attic for extra storage space, but if you're not careful, your attic can become a disorganized mess. This next set of tips will help you make the most out of your storage space.

47. Throw Out

Like you've done in other rooms, the first step to organizing is to go through and get rid of things you don't need. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is it broken? Can it be repaired? If not, throw it out.
- Am I ever going to use it again? If not, get rid of it.
- For sentimental items: Will I love this as much, or more, in ten years? If not, get rid of it.

48. Storage

It's important how you store things in your attic. Clear, airtight containers are best. If you're using cardboard boxes, make sure that they're sturdy. Tape them up well, and label them specifically on all sides.

49. Shelves

If your attic is big enough, putting shelves in is a great idea. That way you can store smaller items. It's still a good idea to store them in airtight see-through containers.

50. Stacking

As you're stacking things in your attic, be careful *how* you stack them. Make sure you put the biggest and heaviest things on the bottom. If you're using cardboard boxes make sure that they're sturdy enough to stack.

51. Climate

Be very aware of the climate of your attic and store accordingly. Here are some factors to consider:

- Cold
- Hot
- Wet
- Bugs
- Mice