

It's Never Too Late!

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In Its Place



Your New Year's Resolution to get organized faded by Valentine's Day. "Spring cleaning" time has come and gone. You've spent the last few months enjoying outdoor activities in the summer sun. And now, it's almost fall and your house is full of unfinished projects, piles of paper, and clothes. But don't panic . . .it's never too late to get organized!

Fall is a great time for taking stock of things in your life. As the weather turns cooler and your attention shifts to the indoors, consider these suggestions for getting your house in order.

Kitchen

- Clean out pantry/cabinets (as well as refrigerator and freezer) to check inventory and expiration dates. When you put cans and boxes back on the shelves, arrange "like" foods together (canned vegetables, cereal boxes, baking ingredients, etc.) and frequently used items within easy reach. Labeling shelves enables the whole family to maintain the organization and can save time when making out your shopping lists.

Garage

- If unfinished projects prevent you from parking your cars in the garage during the winter, make a list of what needs to be done and then prioritize based on urgency and the time needed to complete them. First, complete any critical repair or maintenance issues before the cold weather settles in. Then, schedule the rest on your calendar and note any items you may need to buy (or borrow) to finish these projects.

Kid's Bedroom

- In case you missed that end of summer/before school rush to sort clothes, no problem. If an item is in good condition but no longer fits, donate it to your local thrift store. If it is in poor condition, pitch it or use it as a cleaning rag. Also, make sure your child has adequate dresser and closet space. This will eliminate excuses for leaving clothes on the floor. (You can apply the same principles to games and toys as well).
- If mounds of school papers are already covering your child's desk area, help him/her sort and arrange them using desk trays or other sorters. Label the trays

by categories that are most appropriate for your child (e.g. homework to be done, papers for Mom/Dad to sign, etc.) and encourage him/her to use them everyday.

Common Areas / Hall closets

- Look through hall closets and “junk drawers” to see what you have. If something can’t (or won’t) be repaired or isn’t being used, donate it or pitch it. Return items that belong in other rooms to their rightful homes. For the remaining items, try labeling containers of various sizes based on categories (for example “gloves and mittens”) and placing them at a level where everyone can reach.
- To get the whole family into organizing mode, hold a 10-minute “speed clean” session at least once a week. With each family member holding a bin or laundry basket, set a timer for 5 minutes and have everyone pick up their own belongings that may be scattered throughout the kitchen, family room, and other shared areas. When the timer buzzes, reset it for another 5 minutes and have everyone put away the collected items in their respective rooms.
- Tired of making the shopping list yourself every week? Involve the whole family by hanging a dry erase board or large magnetic pad in your kitchen or planning area. Whenever family members notice a food or other grocery item is low or used up, have them add it to the list!

Home office/paperwork area

- If piles of mail bog you down, avoid letting them stack up at all. Designate one place in your home to deal with the mail, e.g. your desk/planning area. Junk mail should be thrown away immediately. Opened bills can go in a 31-day tickler file, bill separator, or mobile mail cart. “Action” items or things you need to think about can be marked with a deadline date and put in your “to do” tray, tickler file, or mobile mail cart.

Attic

- Fall is an ideal time to venture upward because it is neither too hot nor too cold. You can switch out seasonal clothing, organize those holiday decorations, purge anything that is broken, and finally go through all those boxes that were put out of sight!

So go ahead and get started now, and you can look forward to a more relaxing and enjoyable holiday season. And hey, even if you don’t finish by the end of the year, give yourself credit. You’ll be that much closer to keeping next January’s resolution to get organized!