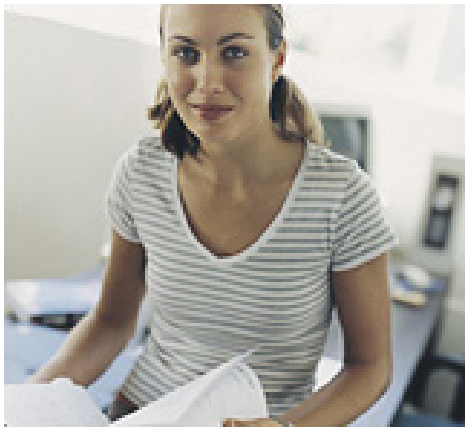
Organizing your home: Figuring out what to toss and what to keep



Organizing your home will greatly reduce your stress levels and give you more time to spend on enjoyable things. You have probably thought about organizing your home and realized that this is a very big task to get started on. The trick to properly organizing your home is picking a place to get started and just do it!

Stop being overwhelmed by the clutter in your life. Why do we all seem to keep things that we don't need and don't use? It's not because you're indecisive. These simple guidelines to organizing your home will help you get started.

Ask these questions before organizing your home:

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME I USED IT?

When organizing your home ask yourself which items you haven't touched in the past 12 months. Chances are that you're not going to use it in the next 12 either (tuxedos or punch bowls, aside). Of course, it's natural for people to have a hard time letting go of the past. And if an old outfit or a bowling ball really means that much to you, then put it away with your keepsakes. Better yet, take a picture for your scrapbook and then donate it. Just don't take up valuable space in active storage areas with items you don't use regularly. Organizing your home is really about using the space you have effectively.

WILL I EVER NEED THIS AGAIN?

Be honest about this one! At what point will a green shag toilet-seat cover be crucial to your survival? As you are organizing your home storage space, ask yourself a few "reality check" questions:

When would I need it?

If you can picture a specific, concrete instance when you will need that bank statement from 1973 in the foreseeable future, then by all means keep it. However, "I might need it someday" isn't a good enough rationale. Figure out when and if that someday will occur – if you can't come up with a solid answer, it's out of here!

Why would I need it?

Are you keeping clothes that no longer fit, appliances that don't work, or 16 pairs of scissors when 2 would suffice? Why? A good rule of thumb is to only keep an item if it is, "beautiful, useful, or loved". Otherwise, what purpose is it serving in your life? And what would it take to make a broken toaster useful or that scratched-up chair beautiful again? Are you willing to invest the time and effort?

Who would ask me for it?

People often hang onto stuff because they are afraid someone will ask them for it "someday". If you're talking tax paperwork and the consequences involve the IRS or the police, keep it. If not, think twice. Hanging onto an ugly lamp that Aunt Martha gave you just in case she comes to visit isn't a sign of respect – it's creating clutter.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I GET RID OF IT?

Sometimes organizing your home will make you feel anxious about discarding an item. Try to picture the worst thing that would happen if you got rid of it. Let your imagination run wild. Your "worst case scenario" probably isn't that bad. Will the world end if you toss out that ring binder you haven't used since college? Nope

Organizing your home is stressful at first, but worth it in the end. Picture how much better your life will be without the clutter. Organizing your home will provide you with more space, less stress, and less mess. Suddenly, the decision is easy!

by Ramona Creel