## **ORGANIZING**

# Want to organize? Here's how to get started

appy New Year! The holiday season has come and gone, and whether you like it or not, you are most likely settled back into work, school and your normal routine. Many of us have likely made some type of the school of resolutions or goals for the new year. One of the most common new year's resolutions is a desire to get organized. This desire could stem from a

frustration at the ever-increasing piles of clutter or just a general lack of order



Angie Hyche

within the home or office. As an orga-nizer, I definitely applaud this goal! I have seen firsthand the immense

tne immense benefits of being organized, and I definitely believe that the bene-fits far outweigh the cost in terms of time and effort. No matter how determined you

Instair of diverging the cost in terms of time and effort. No matter how determined you are to accomplish this goal, the size and scope of the task may seem intimidating. How do you get started? If your whole house is disorganized, which room do you pick to start? Or should you try going category by category as Japanese organizer Marie Kondo suggests in her book "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up"? What if you are so disorganized and overwhelmed that you don't even know where to begin? When it comes to being organized, I believe one of the most important concepts is establishing and maintaining effective routines for regular household tasks. If you focus on those routines and get them down to a science, you're more likely to find the time for more extensive organizing projects.

Let me explain how this works in a home environment. Let's say you have a big goal of decluttering and organizing a large storage area such as your attic, garage or basement. However, you can't seem to ever catch up on your dishes and laundry, and you have piles of items covering most of your horizontal surfaces.



The biggest mistake people make with laundry is that they don't take the time to fold, hang up and put up the clean laundry as soon as the clothes are finished drying.

The biggest mistake people make with las as soon as the clothes are finished drying Any free time you have for organizing tends to be spent on those three tasks, and you can't imagine when you'll ever have time to tackle that larger project. I strongly believe that the best use of your time is to get those daily tasks under control first by establishing a routine that works for you and can be maintained. Then you can work on finding a block of time to start organizing your storage area.

In terms of daily tasks, I would recommend initially focusing on routines for dishes, laundry and daily pickup. For each of these, you will have to figure out what works best for you and your schedule. It is more important to have a routine than it is to choose a particular routine.

Just like anything in life, repetition creates habits, and after a certain point, habits become the new normal. Invariably there will occasionally be times when the routine can't be kept up for

some reason. But if you can get back into the routine quickly, you'll be back to the routine in no time.

When it comes to dishes, this principle applies whether or not you have a dishwasher. You need to choose the best daily time to load the dishwasher (or to wash the dishes in the sink) and to unload the dishwasher (or put up the hand-washed dishes). If you don't do this on a daily basis and the dishes pile up, it takes so much longer to get them under control.

I prefer to load the dishwasher When it comes to dishes this

control.

I prefer to load the dishwasher and hand-wash the dishes that don't go in the dishwasher at night and put them up in the morning, but this might not be the best schedule for you. Don't make the mistake of using your dish drainer as a storage spot for clean dishes. Get in the habit of emptying it regularly just like the dishwasher. If every dish and utensil in your kitchen has a

proper home, putting things away doesn't take long. As far as laundry, there are many different approaches. Some people like doing a load of laundry every day to keep it under control. Some have a regular laundry day where they stay at home and tackle it all at once. I tend to do laundry when the laundry beaket gets up to a certain level, which usually happens about twice a week. I think the biggest mistake people make with laundry is that they don't take the time to fold, hang up and put up the clean laundry as soon as the clothes are limished drying. Before you know it, there is a small mountain taking up space on your bed oryour couch, and you're faced with wrinkled clothes requiring extra time above the normal routine. It takes much less time to take care of each load as it finishes up than it does to wait until you have multiple loads in a big pile.

Here's a trick I use often: If I Here's a trick I use often: If I chan't get the clean clothes out of the dryer immediately, I will do a "wrinkle release." I remove all of the clothes from the dryer, then put any of the clothes that are wrinkled back in the dryer with a damp washcloth for about 15 minutes. If you get them out quickly, usually all of the wrinkles are gone, and you can put them up immediately.

Dally pickup is a critical routine. I am always amazed at how big a difference it makes to simply clean up after yourself on

big a difference it makes to simply clean up after yourself on a regular basis. When you return from a shopping trip, put away your purchases immediately.

After a trip, if a tall possible, unpack immediately and get laundry going if necessary. You may be tred, but you will always be glad if you'll just go ahead and get it done. If you get something out to use it, when you're finished, take a moment and put it back. These simple steps can go a long way toward keeping you organized.

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The whole family can get involved in daily pickup. Gather everyone together, set a timer for five minutes, and explain that during this time, everyone is going to look for anything they can find that isn't in the orrect place and put it back in its proper place. You can make it fun by playing upbeat music or introduce a little competition by seeing who can put up the most items during five minutes or seeing whose room has the least number of items out of place. The more frequently you conduct a five-minute pickup, the more adept everyone will get in the practice.

I hope that these tips are

practice.

I hope that these tips are helpful, and that 2018 will be your most organized year ever!

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