

# ORGANIZING

## How to organize your bathroom

**H**ow organized is your bathroom? And if the bathroom is such a small room in the house anyway, why should you even care? We all spend the first and last part of every day in the bathroom getting ready for the day or getting ready for bed. The level of organization in your bathroom can make these two time periods either quick, easy and peaceful or slow, complicated and stressful. I know that I would definitely prefer the former to the latter, and I'm pretty sure you would too.

Before you answer my question about how organized your bathroom is, take a moment to go and look. What does your bathroom sink look like? How many items are on the bathroom counter, and how many of them do you actually use every day? When it's time to clean your bathroom sink, how long does it take you to clear off the counter?

What about your bathtub and shower? How many toiletries are in there, and how many do you use every day? If you're feeling brave, take a peek in all of the drawers and cabinets.

Do you even know what's in there? Can you quickly find what you need? Now try the medicine cabinet. Are there medicines that are expired or that you can't even identify?

If you're still reading, I assume you now see a need to get your bathroom organized. You're in luck! This article will give you a step-by-step guide to finally get this room in order. So grab some trash bags and cleaning supplies, and get ready to get organized!

Start with the sink. Identify a large flat surface(s) for sorting. The counter spaces in the bathroom alone probably won't be enough space. If you decide to use your bed, you might want to put a sheet over it to protect the bedspread from any toiletries or makeup that might spill. You could use a small portable table in addition to the counters.

Pull everything off the counter, out of the drawers, and out of the cabinets and start sorting into categories. Some categories would include soap, lotion, makeup, hair care, nail care, shaving, dental care, etc.

Pick a category, and look at every item. Yes, there will probably be a lot of items.



METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

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No, there really is no shortcut. Yes, you have to look at each item individually. Ok, now proceed.

Be realistic. Do you really use this item? Don't ask yourself whether you should use it or whether you might use it. If you don't use it, it's clutter, and it needs to be removed. If it's empty or near empty, throw it away and recycle the container if possible. If there is still product remaining, donate it.

Go through this same process with each category, looking through each item and removing anything you aren't using.

There are a few items that you will want to keep on the counter. Most likely, you will want to keep hand soap right beside the sink. You'll probably want to keep your toothbrush, toothpaste, and a cup on the counter. If possible, the rest of the counter should be kept mostly clear.

Before you start replacing the rest of the items, think through each step of your morning routine. Pull out the items that you use every single morning. Put these items either into one container or into one drawer. I always prefer clear labeled con-

tainers, but you can use anything that holds all of the items and fits in the space. Ideally, this container could be stored in an easily accessed drawer or cabinet, and not on the counter. If it must be kept on the counter, at least it can be moved quickly for cleaning.

Think through your evening routine and repeat the last step with those items you use every evening.

Clean every counter, drawer and cabinet really well. Chances are it hasn't been done in awhile.

As you begin to replace the rest, keep in mind that items used more frequently need to be easier to access. Try to utilize all available space. Most bathroom cabinets are tall, and if we store items directly on the bottom of the cabinet, we are often left with empty space above them. To solve this problem, you can use either a shelf riser (a U-shaped device that extends above the objects and turns one shelf into two), a storage unit with drawers, or stacked bins.

Replace all items into drawers and cabinets, preferably in clear labeled bins.

Hopefully you will quickly see the value of your newly organized space. As you use it, you might need to make slight adjustments until it is most efficient and pleasing to the eye.

Use these same steps for other areas of your bathroom: medicine cabinet, tub/shower and linen cabinet or closet. Be realistic about what you really use, keep only a reasonable number of items (no one needs 47 shades of lipstick or 23 towels), and be ruthless.

\*Special instructions for medications: Medication needs to be disposed of as quickly and safely as possible to prevent misuse and to reduce the amount of drugs entering the environment. The best option for safe medication disposal is to use a medicine take-back option. There is a drug drop box at the Justice Center at 200 Shelby St. in Kingsport, and at West Towne Pharmacy, 1619 W. Market St. in Johnson City.

Only if this option does not exist in your area should you consider throwing the medication into the trash can or flushing it down the toilet, and even then, there are specific instructions. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration website is a helpful resource.

Now that your bathroom is organized, you have a new and even bigger challenge. How will you keep it that way? Maintaining order is just as important (or maybe more) as organizing it in the first place.

Be extremely choosy about bringing in anything new. Remember how many unused toiletries you got rid of? Keep that in mind as you're shopping, and don't buy it unless you are sure you will use it.

As soon as you identify something else you're not using, get rid of it. It may have survived the first purging session, but now that you've seen the benefits of an organized space, be even more ruthless.

Be determined to return items to their home as soon as you use them. Yes, there will be days when you're in too much of a hurry. But don't wait too long to restore the order.

I hope you have found this article helpful. I'd love to hear your questions or suggestions for future articles.

Happy organizing!

*Angie Hyche is a professional organizer and owner of Shipshape Solutions in Kingsport. Email her at beshipshape@gmail.com.*

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