

# **Let's Get Organized!**

Easy and Simple Strategies to Getting  
(and Staying) Organized

(This is an 11 page free preview copy -  
FULL ebook is 52 pages.)

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## Introduction

“You can find pictures anywhere. It is simply a matter of noticing things and organizing them. You just have to care about what is around you and have a concern with humanity and the human comedy.”

-Elliott Erwitt

### ***How we spend our time says a lot about who we are***

If you are simply too tired or do not have adequate time to do anything in the evenings, then your daily routine is out of balance and you need to make adjustments.

Your work can be too difficult or unsuitable, or you may not be making full use of your hours during your day or evening. A good balance of your time is needed for work, goals, recreation, and relaxation. Take a close look at your daily routine, examine your findings and come up with a plan. Be prepared to follow your plan and with this, you can become *better organized*.

### ***Why be better organized?***

Being busy will keep your mind off worry because you will not be thinking of two different things at one time. You can make good use of your time away from work to increase your knowledge of things and life, to work at a hobby or project, and then to relax and be content. This is good balance and when you are better balanced you are better organized.

Perhaps you are a single parent and in a bit of a time crunch each day. Make a point to sit and relax each day and plan. If you are careful you should be able to find just a few hours each day to apply yourself to being better organized.

"I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor." - Henry Thoreau (1817-1862)

Most of us use only a small amount of our true capabilities and we can all do so much more. You can learn new things. This will give you new purpose in life and a feeling of achievement. Read nonfiction books to increase your knowledge of everyday things in life and to learn new skills or to improve on existing ones. All of this will help you to be better organized.

The more organized you are the more time you will have for yourself. As you become better organized, take on a new after hours project. Start with something small and work your way up to devoting more

and more time to your project. Perhaps you can take on a new woodworking project, for example. Once you complete it, you will feel good about yourself and how you are spending your new, organized time.

***With a place for everything and everything in its place, you are freed up in body and mind to take on new endeavors.***

If you are under a lot of stress, a more passive and relaxing undertaking might be just what you need, at least to start with. For just one day a week, or a few hours on certain days, set aside time for your own unique enjoyment. When you do this, staying organized will not feel as much of a chore. You will naturally wish to remain organized so that you will have more time for yourself.

Take a walk in the park, listen to lovely music, read an interesting novel, leisurely work in the yard, or watch a bit of TV, these are all of the perks in time from staying organized.

"When I go into my garden with a spade, and dig a bed, I feel such an exhilaration and health that I discover that I have been defrauding myself all this time in letting others do for me what I should have done with my own hands." - Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

## **Remembering to Organize**

Being well organized takes lots of time and effort and there is a lot to remember. Below are good tips to help you to remember it all:

1. Jot it down. With the many details that you have to remember in any given day, why should you try to keep it all in a memory bank? At the very moment that you remember something needs to be done, the very best thing to do is write it down. Then, just as you need to recall it, it will be there for you in an instant.

2. Keep it all in one place. Once you have developed the knack of writing everything down, your next step will be to keep your writing all in one place. You will remember better this way. Otherwise, you are going to spend valuable time searching for your notes.

3. Stay healthy. A keen memory is a well-nourished mind. Eat healthy; get plenty of rest and lots of good exercise. These will all see you through to having a good memory, staying focused and being alert.

4. Record your every thought. You might find yourself driving when a good idea about organizing comes to you or you might recall something that you really need to write down. No need to pull over and start writing, record instead! Pull off to the side of the road and use a small hand held tape recorder.

This is a wonderful tool to carry around with you, to record your thoughts, or your parking space number, or even a memorable telephone number you see on a billboard as you drive by. Use your handy recorder to be your second eyes and ears.

5. Call ahead. When you are at the office and you want to do something when you arrive back home, call ahead to your answering machine and leave yourself a message. As soon as you get home you can listen to your message and remember exactly what you wanted to do.

6. Be confident in yourself. If you keep saying you have a bad memory, you will probably continue to have a bad memory. It is important to have a motivated, I CAN remember attitude.

7. Handy email reminders. There are many good and free e-mail reminder services available. You can type in what you want to remember, such as a welcome party, anniversary or special event, and you will receive an e-mail reminder when the date is approaching. This is a terrific way to jog your memory by Internet.

8. Use sticky notes. Those wonderful, little sticky notes are the next best thing to sliced bread! They are amazing as memory helpers. Want to remember something prior to leaving your home? Just mark it down on a Post-It Note and stick it to the inside of your door. The bright, neon colors will be great to catch your eye as you are leaving. You will not likely miss it! Need to make an urgent call first thing in the morning? Leave a Post-It Note on your telephone.

9. Use timers and alarms. Take advantage of alarm clocks and timers throughout your day. Have to take the clothes out of the dryer by 12 noon? Set your alarm clock to remind you. Want to leave for the ladies luncheon by 7 p.m.? Set your timer to beep a few minutes before it is time to start to get ready.

10. Visual memory joggers. Visual reminders will help you remember and stay focused. Use visual reminders for remembering your goals. If your goal is to take a trip to a Ireland in a few years, keep a magazine photograph of Ireland right on your desk. If your goal is to lose 30 lbs. in six months, find a picture or ornament that will help remind you of this goal each day.

## **Say Good-bye to Clutter**

Now that you have a good system to remember your tasks at hand, the next big step will be to get rid of clutter. Clutter diminishes a smile, dampens the spirit, and so should not be tolerated.

It is very easy to find any given room in a cluttered mess, but it takes some hard work to de-clutter and organize.

Many people say that one of their favorite things to do when stressed out is to clean! Hard to imagine, right? Well, it is true. Cleaning gives order and purpose to your life, even if only in smaller chunks at a time.

We are not just talking about moving around clutter from one shelf to another. We are talking about de-cluttering every room of your home. Say good-bye to the dust, say good-bye to the junk – say hello to room to breathe and move around! Now, doesn't that sound delightful?

Start out by drawing up a list of what you absolutely want done. Think about those leaning tower of Pisa papers in the den, then move slowly into the family room. See any piles of old photos just crying out to be placed in a photo album? Write that one down. How about those piles of clothing sitting in the bottom of your daughters closet just waiting for a mother's touch. Write that one down, too!

By now, if you are clever, you see a list of very workable, one-at-a-time chores that can be assigned throughout a busy day. The idea is to get started and work your way around. By the end of the day, you will have a beautiful, uncluttered home as your reward!

Do not become discouraged if your attempt to enlist your husband and children runs a-muck. Just write them down on your list as those who require an attitude adjustment and then save that chore for next time. One can hope!

If you are altogether frank about it, you really do not want a second pair of meddling hands anyway; some chores are best left to only one pair of hands. That way you can be sure that the chores will be done right the first time.

## **Best Secrets to Getting and Staying Organized**

- Tell yourself (and believe) that some degree of clutter with a child is going to happen no matter what!
- Begin with messes and clutter that you see every day. Work on organizing your kitchen and family room before your hallway closet.
- Assign everything in your house a place. This way when your family searches for something they need, they will know exactly where to find it and where to put it away.
- Use this same principle to organize your silverware, with clearly defined places for every fork and knife, or drawers for ties and socks or, underwear. Think in this same way for every aspect of your home. This will save many hours of searching for things. It will dramatically cut down on the clutter of items left out "for now" or "until I find a place for it." Develop a new mantra: everything has its place and a place for everything!
- Enlist a new rule: throw out one old thing for every new purchase that enters your home.
- When using stairs, never go up or down them empty-handed. Always grab some items that belong to upstairs rooms and quickly put it away while you are there.
- Make a mental note to observe what things pile up in your house and where they cluster, and then come up with a place nearby that becomes the official home where those things will reside. Introduce baskets, shelves, and folders for this purpose. They work well. Set

aside one basket for you and your partner for incoming mail, bills, and receipts and letters.

- Create a number of brightly marked folders for discount coupons, invitations and directions, and other time-sensitive papers that just clutter your counters.
- Keep items that are used frequently in places where you can reach them without stooping or bending, and store them close to the place they will be needed.
- Use drawer dividers for socks, underwear, lingerie, and tiny items, to keep them separated and organized.
- Hang hooks for your keys and purse at the entry to your home, so each time you walk in, you can hang them up.
- Establish one defined place in your house for storing library books, and end a house-wide hunt when it is time to read or return them.
- Get rid of all junk drawers, or allow yourself just one that you clear out once a week or more. When you establish certain items are being used repeatedly, designate a drawer for those.
- Things you don't need any longer:
  - Magazines you meant to read but have never taken the time for
  - Expired medications
  - Clothes you no longer wear
  - Sunscreen that's expired or more than one year old
  - Extra paper or plastic grocery bags
  - Makeup and samples you have never worn
  - Cookbooks you rarely use. Cut out your favorite recipes only
  - Organize your coupons and throw out all that have expired
  - Stuff your crumpled plastic bags from your grocer inside a cardboard roll like a hand towel roll. Keep under your sink.

Getting rid of your clutter and organizing your home top to bottom will free your mind to remember your daily chores. Be vigilant about cleaning about once a month and you will find it much easier to keep up, week-by-week.

## **The Emotional Toll of CLUTTER**

Each area of your home provides you with a unique form of comfort. Comfort and clutter cannot co-exist. Clutter and mess only serves to bring unbalance and will dampen any good spirit. It stands to reason that, give up the clutter and bring in the peace of mind.

### **De-clutter your kitchen**

Your kitchen is regarded as the heart of your home and for a good reason. Here you are nourished and provided for, even if you are dining on a frozen entrée zapped in the microwave rather than a homemade meal lovingly presented by Mom. An untidy and cluttered kitchen makes it hard to nourish yourself and others, on both physical and emotional. How you care for your kitchen is a hot clue to whether you are giving proper attention to your own nourishment and that of others. Cleaning up and de-cluttering your kitchen will open space for you to receive the support and comfort that you need in life.

### **De-clutter your living and dining room**

These are special places where you socialize with family and friends. Here you engage with the world while being at home through watching television, reading the paper or discussing current events with old friends over dinner. Clutter can turn these otherwise special and social spaces into dens of isolation, especially if the mess is so bad that it has been a time since you have invited people over. Look carefully at your living and dining rooms to see what they say about your relationships. Are they important to you? Are you hiding yourself from others, by burying yourself in nasty clutter?

### **De-clutter your hallways**

You need clear hallways to navigate through your home. Your clutter in your hallways prevents important connections between different areas of your home and your life. Look at your hallways and see what it says about the rest of your life. Do they contain good lighting and are they easily navigable, or do they cause confusion and trip you up? If you feel a disconnection between work and family, self and others, what you need to be done and your obligations, it may be time to give your hallways some good organizing.

### **De-clutter your bathrooms**

Each day we use this important space to meet the world. We begin our days from this room. Clutter in the bathroom can mean you don't take pride in how you look and feel. How can you feel clean when using a cluttered, dirty bathroom? A clean, well-decorated bathroom is a tranquil sanctuary for rejuvenation and self-care. Scented soaps, attractive accessories, and fragrant candles all take their place here. This is beauty for the mind and soul. You can beautify your life by organizing and cleaning this important room. Take the time to transform your bathroom into a place of refuge and this will bring a sense of the sacred into your morning and evening personal-care rituals.

### **De-clutter the bedroom**

Your bedroom is for sleeping and intimacy, and it functions as a place of renewal for self and relationships. Clutter in the bedroom is worse than in any room. It is anything but restful and peaceful. If you are feeling "wired and tired," creating order out of chaos in this most personal space will help you relax and to let go of the stresses of the day. Then you will get a good night's sleep or enjoy some special time with your partner. Of all of your rooms, this one is the most critical for being organized and peaceful.

### **De-clutter your closets**

Closets are everything hidden, unknown, or unrecognized. When we fill our closets with clutter, we harness our ability to be intuitive and insightful. Cluttered closets can indicate problems that you may not even be aware of but which block your progress through life, work, and relationships. Keeping the closet door closed is not an obvious solution. Organizing your closets IS!

### **De-clutter your attic and basement**

A cluttered attic causes you to feel under pressure. It is not easy to feel good about the future when there is so much stuff "hanging about and over your head." Organize those boxes of yesteryear and you will feel ten pounds lighter, instantly! The basement and other below-ground storage areas are thought to be holders of the subconscious mind, so take the time and have that clutter cleaned up!

### **De-clutter your garage**

Think of your car as a symbol of your agility, independence, and ability to be self-propelled in life. If there's so much junk piled high in your garage that you can barely lift the garage door, it is time to organize. Do this and be prepared to move forward in your life, as well.

Stop thinking of de-cluttering as a terrific, and start thinking of it as one of the most effective self-improvement exercises available to you. Every magazine and piece of paper you place in the recycle and every book you give back to the library will liberate you. Just as giving those older items to charity, will. Free yourself now of clutter and open the flood gates of joy and energy into your life.

## **Turn Clutter into Harmony**

If a primary goal is to exist in a clutter-free environment, think of devising a system in which to operate freely. With a smart system, you will have valuable free time. Having more time to spend your hours doing what you enjoy most is everyone's goal in life. Using a system, you will have a method of doing something that might otherwise be a strain. You will have a new way of simplifying a task or operation.

Paper clutter is a very good example. We find papers thrown here, there and everywhere. Loose paper can be found in every area of your home. To transform a disorderly area into an orderly one, you will want to first clean up the area of all loose paper and put it away in a designated place or just throw it away. You can use baskets, drawers or shelving space to store away your paper. Once you have a designated place established, it is easier then to remain organized.

Think now about how your paper became so messy in the first place. What did you do with it once it arrived? Did you put the full bundle into a basket, for example? If you glanced at it and then put it down in a haphazard pile at the nearest table or desk near you, chances are that is your problem. Your goal is to designate a said place for every item of value in your entire home. That way you are organized.

### **The organized way to deal with all paper that crosses your hands and/or desk is to:**

1. Have it placed at a designated tray, basket, shelf or drawer.
2. Spend the time you need to look into what the paper commands of you and, when done with it;
3. Place it in either a file, put it in a filing basket to be filed, put it in an out basket, or simply throw it away.

This type of paper flow system will organize you in a heartbeat and will prevent finding assorted pieces of paper everywhere throughout your home. As soon as you receive the paper, you put it in its allotted place. From this, you will create a peaceful work area. You will automatically know where to go to get your paper and where to find paper that you need.

The same system can be applied to reorganizing a disordered environment. You can tackle a room, a closet, or a drawer by first organizing it and then taking a look at how it got that way in the first place. Here is where the new system comes into play. You need to be able to maintain the order you have applied to it for later so that the same mess does not just develop all over again.

## **The more time and effort you put into being organized, the less time you will need to apply to organizing later**

You will need to acquire the necessary "tools" needed to create good order.

Having good order is the building block to being better organized.

Shop the discount and specialty stores for great tools to organize. They are inexpensive and work well. If you find your bedroom is hard to keep organized then look around for something to solve your problem. The moment you find the right tool, you can begin to put things into their proper place.

There is no easy way around trying to get your life in order and be better organized. It takes time and effort on your part. The more tools you can apply to your disorganized messes, the easier it will be to maintain order. Once you find the right approach, it will be easy to keep the same momentum going.

Use a system to organize every area of your life. Go from room to room in your home and apply tools to simplify messy problems. You will be so glad you did!

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