



A Room-by-Room Guide to Decluttering Your Home

by Miranda Crace | January 29, 2019 | Homeowners Tips

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New year, new me!

While the new year may not transform us into completely new people, it does create the perfect opportunity to make some changes and adopt new habits – like being more organized.

To help you on your journey to an organized home, we talked to experts from around the country to get their tips and tricks for arranging specific rooms in your house.

The Basics

Each room may have unique needs, but our experts have found some basic rules that can be applied in any situation.

Purge Before You Organize

This one is key. There's no use in organizing things you don't need to keep – or spending money on organizational supplies, for that matter.

Maria Spetalnik from Conquer the Clutter said, "Many people buy the latest and greatest organizing tool and hope it will solve all their problems. What winds up happening is that the tool becomes just another piece of clutter in the pile."

Her alternative? Purge items first. Decide what you actually need and what's just taking up space. Once you've donated, sold or thrown out the stuff you no longer find necessary, then start looking for organization solutions.

This saves you time and money in the long run.

Don't Expect Perfection

We're not going for perfection here; we're going for organized. And organization should make sense for the homeowner. Just because one approach met someone else's needs doesn't mean it's the one for you.

"Sometimes you try the hot new organizing trick and it doesn't work for you or it doesn't work for long. You are not a failure; it's just that that system wasn't created for how your particular brain works. It means you need to figure out WHY that system didn't work for you, so you don't keep doing the same thing over and over and hope for a different result," Spetalink said.

Organization Tips by Room

Once you have a handle on the basics (purge before you organize and don't hold yourself to perfection), you can move on to some room-specific tips.

Kitchen Organization Tips

The team at [Molly Maid](#), the nation's leading residential cleaning franchise, break organizing the kitchen into a few simple steps: pull everything out, create zones and use organizational tools.

Go Through Your Kitchen from Top to Bottom

We touched on this in the basics, but the first step is to purge. The Molly Maid team suggests pulling everything out of the cabinets, drawers and pantry. While everything is sitting out, you can wipe down or vacuum the surfaces.

Now it's time to sort. And how do you know what to keep and what to toss? Cyrus Bedwyr, the kitchen and oven cleaning expert at [Fantastic Services](#), has three easy questions you can answer to put things into perspective:

- **Do I use this?**– If the answer is no, you don't need it. Any item that isn't used should go away, according to Bedwyr.
- **Do I have more of this item?**– Bedwyr points out that people often overstock things they think they need. For example, do you really use all of those spatulas or baking trays? "Don't fill your life and home with multiple items you think you need. Make use of what you already have," Bedwyr said.
- **Would I buy this today?**– Impulse purchases happen, and they may seem like a good idea, but in reality, you usually don't need them. Bedwyr said, "If the item in question can qualify as such a purchase, you don't need it."

Create Zones

After you've sorted and purged your kitchen items, it's time to give them a home that makes sense. The Molly Maid team calls these areas "zones."

"Think about the location of every cabinet, drawer and shelf in the kitchen and pantry, then reorganize so that items get stored near where they get used," Molly Maid said. For example, you can keep your glassware near the sink or your spices near the stove. Keeping items stored where they're used most often can help you stay organized in the future.

Once you know what each zone will be for, you can arrange your items according to their purpose. Molly Maid suggests putting frequently used or heavier items down low so they're easier to reach or lift.

Buy Storage Containers

Now that you have the general organization of the kitchen laid out, you can finally see what kind of storage equipment you need. This prevents you from overbuying storage items that would likely end up back in a closet somewhere.

Molly Maid said, “Clear plastic and wire bins make excellent containers for organizing items by zone and for general tidiness.” They recommend under-shelf baskets or wire shelves to utilize the dead space above glasses or dishes in your cabinets and stackable storage units for potentially wasted floor space.

Bedroom Organization Tips

If you’re anything like me, a disorganized bedroom does not make for a good’s night sleep. From the closet to extra blankets and nightstand trinkets, a little bit of organizational planning can go a long way.

The Closet

Let’s start with the closet.

How should you arrange your clothing? Some people organize by color, others by type of clothing and others by how often they wear particular pieces. This goes back to the idea we talked about earlier: Don’t expect perfection. There is no “right” way to do this, just one that’s right for you. The important thing is that you can find your clothes when you need them.

As seasons change, it can be hard to know what to do with your off-season clothing, especially accessories like gloves, hats, swimsuits or wraps. [Paloma Baillie](#), a Los Angeles-based professional organizer, has a solution for that: “You can use plastic containers with locking lids to store off-season fashion.”

Organizational Furniture

For storing extra bedding, like blankets, sheets and pillows, consider investing in a piece of furniture that can double as storage.

Something like a trunk or a bench with built-in storage can go at the foot of your bed or under a window and look like a piece of furniture while also storing other items.

Clear Off Surface Areas

Your closet is organized, everything is off the floor, your random extra bedding is folded up neatly in another storage area – so why do you still feel disorganized?

Sometimes we spend so much time organizing the things people can’t see, we forget about what’s right in front of us.

Surface areas, like the tops of dressers or nightstands, can be arranged using storage containers or trays. Luckily, they come in plenty of shapes and styles, so they can double as décor! If you’re putting items on a tray, make sure everything has its own area, so they seem curated, not scattered.

Laundry Room Organizational Tips

Last but not least: the laundry room.

You know, the room with “piles of laundry, most of which you aren’t sure if it’s clean or dirty,” said Natalie Wise, a modern lifestyle philosopher and author.

Wise suggests setting yourself up for laundry room success by creating zones. “Have a zone for dirty clothes and a zone for clean clothes, and never the two shall meet,” she said. “Depending on your situation, you may also need zones for baby/kid clothes, dry-clean-only items, delicate dance costumes, stained sports or work clothes, and the like.”

Whatever zones you have, Wise advises keeping necessary items for each one close by. “For instance, keep hangers where the dry-clean-only items are, so you can easily grab them on your way out the door. Or keep hand-wash liquid and soft dust bags for the delicate dance costumes,” Wise added.

If you don’t have much space to work with, Wise says to go vertical! Consider tall, thin racks for each family member’s clean laundry. “I find it easiest to keep each family member’s laundry separate and do separate loads for each family member’s clothing. There’s no sorting, and it goes much more quickly; then each family member can fold and put away their own laundry,” Wise said.

Getting Organized

However you decide to get organized, remember our fundamentals: purge before you begin, and don’t expect a “perfect” solution. Finding what works best for you and your family will help you not only get organized, but *stay* organized in the future.

If you have tips on arranging your home, share them in the comment section so other readers can get inspired.