

Week 3: Organizing your Stuff

The Process

Analyze

Identify what is and isn't working, and why you want to get organized.

Strategize

- Define zones & map out your space
 - Group like items
 - Put things where you use them
 - Make it appealing

Attack

1. **Sort:** identify what you have and place it into categories.
2. **Purge:** make a decision about everything you've sorted. Be ruthless.
3. **Assign a home:** decide exactly where to keep everything.
4. **Containerize:** put items in appropriate containers to improve retrieval and return.
5. **Equalize:** make adjustments as needed; keep up routine maintenance.

The Attack Phase

<p>Sort Prep: 4 boxes: garbage, recycling, donations, 'belongs somewhere else'. The "keep" test: pick up each thing and ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I use this? • Do I love this? • Do I need this? • What category does this belong in? <p>Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying what's important to you • Grouping similar items 	<p>Purge Hesitant? Two options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize what you've got & pare down later. • 'Maybe' pile. <p>Sentimental Clutter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a picture. • Save the best – toss the rest. • Give things a loving new home. • Bring what's left into your day-to-day life: use it or display it.
<p>Assign a home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember the Kindergarten model: group like items together right where you use them. • Make sure it will be <i>intuitive</i> for you to both find things and put them away. • Choose one rule for consistency. <p>Keep in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate sizing. • Don't mix categories within a storage unit. • Follow your own associations. • Accessibility and safety. • Premium, secondary, semi-storage, and hard-core storage spaces. 	<p>Containerize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves retrieval and return of items. • Helps limit accumulation. • Can be the most fun & creative part • Select for: aesthetics, sturdiness, manageability, accessibility, and size. <p>Equalize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make regular maintenance routine. • Evaluate regularly until you're satisfied. • Adjust when needs, possessions, or priorities change. • "One in, one (or two!) out" rule. • Keep track of what you have.

Paper Management

<p>Filing Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types - distinguished by location and/or colour. • Broad categories – one or more hanging folders. • Specific categories – individual files. • Categorize/title files based on <i>retrieval</i> – where will you <i>look</i> for it? 	<p>Inbox</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose a reasonably sized box, folder, or basket. Put everything in the basket as it comes in. 2. Keep a recycling bin nearby – don't put junk in your inbox. 3. Keep everything you need for processing nearby: cheque book, stamps, envelopes, etc. 4. Sort regularly (weekly recommended).
<p>Bills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep in one place. Sort to facilitate payments. • Move to archive files immediately after processing. <p>Receipts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get receipts for all purchases to verify later. • Sort receipts and record expenses. Discard 'non-returns'. • File 'returns' in an active file. Sort monthly. • Archive receipts for large purchases, with warranty information. Sort yearly. 	<p>Active Files</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep current files accessible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make it as easy to file as to pile. ○ Open file box for a one-step process. ○ Portable so you can work where you want. • Categorize based on use • Always keep a 'current taxes' file. • <i>Try this:</i> hang to-do items with binder clips.
<p>Archives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only keep documents as long as you need to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use expiration dates to easily identify when to discard. • If you can reprint a valid statement, no need for a paper copy. • Financial records: keep until reconciled with annual statements, then keep those for 7 years. 	<p>Digital Archives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan anything you want to keep for info but don't need original copy. • Scan original copies before sending them anywhere. <p>Important Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep most important in a single accordion file or box that you can grab in an emergency. • May bridge active/archive categories.

Next Sessions:

Week 4 – Bring your computer if you can.

Week 5 – Start tracking your spending now!

Resources

www.RealSimple.com | www.OnlineOrganizing.com | www.unclutterer.com

www.operationorganization.com | www.apartmenttherapy.com

Simplicity Series at: world.edu/author/rebecca-sargent/

<http://www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/organizing/tips-techniques/storage-ideas-small-spaces-00100000067344/index.html>

Solutions to common stumbling blocks: <http://www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/organizing/declutter-your-home-00100000068526/index.html>

<http://www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/organizing/streamline-your-supplies-00000000052054/>

More online at kwfreeskool.wordpress.com