



The 3-Step Clean Sweep Program

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Organizing  *Resources*

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Clean Sweep

It is as easy as 1-2-3.

1 - Purge

2 - Simplify

3 - Organize

Getting Started

Springtime is when most folks give their home and office a good cleaning. For everything there is a season, and this is the season to get rid of the winter cobwebs, purging the unloved, broken and unnecessary items, then organizing the treasures. Being organized makes the process of spring-cleaning easier and more efficient.

The hardest part of organizing is deciding where to begin. The second hardest part is getting started. There is always more to do than time allows and thinking about it can be overwhelming. But who says it all has to be done in the springtime? Choose what works best for you. Do one room a month or consider cleaning and organizing all the closets before you tackle drawers and shelves. You can establish a program in whatever way suits you best. The trick to goal achievement is scheduling the time in your calendar. Make an appointment with yourself and **keep** it!

Organizing is about changing behaviors and making wise choices. Before you jump up and dig into those closets, take time to plan your attack. For every hour expended in the planning stage, three to four hours are saved in the execution phase. Spending a little time to save a lot of time is very good advice. So, let's begin to plan.



1. Plan it on paper - Make a list of target areas.
2. Divide and Conquer - Break down large areas into small tasks and determine the steps necessary to complete each portion of the big picture.
3. Supplies - The right tool for the job makes the task easier. Be sure to have ample supplies on hand—garbage bags, storage and recycling boxes, cleaning supplies, rags, step stool and the wastebasket.
4. Schedule - Make daily appointments with yourself to tackle the clean sweep chores and **KEEP** those appointments. Get into the habit of scheduling a 15-minute block of time to accomplish small specific tasks. Scheduled time converts wishful thinking into a real commitment.



Step 1 – Purge

Overabundance is a waste—a waste of time, money, space and energy. With too much stuff, you waste time looking for what you want; you waste money for storage, maintenance and insurance. You waste precious space for items seldom or never used and you waste energy just thinking about getting it all organized.

When you take the time to reduce (purge) the number of things you have, you will automatically increase the available space for the things you truly love and use. Why find room in the closet for ten pairs of sneakers when you only wear two? What is the reason for keeping the extras? Are you making wise choices for what you are keeping?

A positive benefit of the purging process is the release of claustrophobic symptoms. That's right! When useless clutter piles up, you panic and take flight. You cram your schedule with activities outside your home—increased working hours, eating out, movies, visiting, traveling, shopping trips, volunteering... Instead of running, think attack mode. If you have made the commitment to clean out the clutter, then stick to your schedule of completing one small task every day.

Eliminate the things that are broken, worn out, unused or unloved. A warning note: no doubt, you will come across the obvious stuff to toss, but not everything needs to be relegated to the landfill. There are plenty of places to recycle useable items.

Letting go means increased space and less time searching through clutter. You may also find your budget receives a big boost now that you do not have to maintain, insure and store unused items. Selling or donating items will reap the benefit of increased cash or a tax deduction. Purging is profitable—money-wise, space-wise, time-wise, energy-wise!

More than three of anything constitutes a collection and there are always strings attached to collecting—buying, storing, cleaning, repairing, insuring and on and on. You can control clutter and clean easily only when you have less stuff. Vow to save only what you can manage.

Step 2 – Simplify

Life has become incredibly complicated. We have more choices regarding work, family, friends, education, self-development, homes, furniture, clothing, food, places to eat, hobbies, travel and on and on. In today's fast-paced world, there is too much to do, too many demands, an overload of information and way too little time. There are opportunities every day to make more commitments and with each new commitment, we lose some space—environmental, physical, emotional and mental space.

Simplicity does not mean living a stark life. For me, simplifying is a choice and I have chosen to add joy, fulfillment, passion and love to my existence while eliminating those things that drain me of time, money, space and energy. You, too, get to define simple living. You can choose to appreciate the people, places and things in your life, or you can choose to own more and more and enjoy it less and less.

Choosing to simplify requires that you purge the unloved and unwanted items. Get them out of your space. Then take a good look at what is left and decide what is truly important. The process of organizing will be much easier when there is breathing space. You control clutter only when you have less of everything. In other words, less is truly more—less stuff is more time, more energy, more money!

Unfortunately, many people find it easier to be buried in clutter than to try to figure out a way to take care of it. Panic sets in when they look at the accumulation and wonder where to begin to clear it out. Recognizing the fact that you are held in bondage to your possessions may precipitate action to simplify. Let go of the unnecessary. Avoid playing mind games with the belief that it may be useful someday. Be aware of the words like *someday*, *maybe*, *should*, *somewhere*, *somehow*? Such thoughts only add more pressure to keep items that really add no value to life's purpose. Ask yourself some difficult questions and be honest with your answers.

1. When was the last time I used this?
2. Under what circumstances would I need it again?
3. Does it add beauty and joy to my life?
4. Is it a treasure that warms my heart?
5. Does this item support my life's purpose, or is it simply a lifestyle status symbol?

Clean Sweep is all about wise choices, choices for an abundant life.

Now you are ready to organize those special things that you have chosen to be a part of your abundant life. Abundant living is having enough, not too much. Abundant living is having what you need and needing what you have.

Step 3 – Organize

The organizing process is about retrieval, not storage. The ultimate goal is to be able to find what you want when you want it. Purge excess, broken and useless stuff, and then organize those items that are loved and treasured.

Start with your existing storage space—the closets, drawers, and shelves. You will discover more room once you have purged the unwanted and retained the truly useful and treasured items. Refrain from adding new storage areas. New or expanded storage units simply create more places to accumulate more clutter and ultimately result in more disorganization. A well-organized closet (as well as drawers, bookcases, desk, kitchen, office, car, garage...) saves time, money and effort.

Have you heard about the 80/20 Principle – Pareto’s Principle? Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) stated that eighty percent of the work is accomplished by twenty percent of the people. He was a revolutionary thinker.

You can apply the ‘80/20 Principle’ to everything in your home and office. Just look at your clothes in the closets. Simply put, twenty percent of the clothes in your closets are worn the majority of the time, while eighty percent are rarely worn. Scrutinize the eighty percent for usefulness and begin the purging process. When you have narrowed down your possessions to the most important twenty percent, you can start to put things back in a well-organized fashion.

Method 1 - Group like items together and put them back into the closet, such as all blouses in one section, slacks in another area, sweaters folded on the shelf, and shoes in clear boxes. This technique allows you to visualize how many and what colors you have available.

Method 2 - Organize your clothes by frequently worn outfits. Pair together a skirt/slacks, blouse, blazer, belt and scarf all on one hanger. The plastic swivel hangers from department stores make this method easy. Deciding what to wear in the morning is a snap with an orderly closet of those frequently worn outfits.

Some things to think about:

- A double-rod system increases hanging space for short items.
- Special interlocking or stacking hangers may be the answer for hanging blouses or skirts when space is limited.
- Items stored on a shelf or floor should be in clear containers for easy identification.
- When changing seasonal clothes, put the hangers on the rod backwards. As you use that item, turn the hanger around. Now you will have a visual clue as to which outfits are worn and which ones you bypass every day.
- If closet space is limited, think about storing out-of-season clothes in old suitcases or bins that re clearly labeled.

These closet organizing ideas can be used when you inspect your files, kitchen cabinets, garden tools, office supplies and every aspect of your life – twenty percent of your stuff is used frequently, eighty percent rarely or never. Be willing to question the importance of the stuff you have accumulated over the years. Purge the broken, unwanted, unloved and unnecessary. Recognize the important twenty percent, and vow to maintain only those things you love and use.



Finally, start the organizing project by gathering and storing objects in the places they are used. The result is that you can easily find what you want when you want it if you know where to look.

Strive for a one-motion storage technique. When you open a cabinet, closet or drawer, you want to use one hand to reach in and retrieve the item without having to move things around. Avoid piling. A good rule is never stack more than three things.

Henry David Thoreau defined clutter when he said he would rather toss an object that was in his way than move it around just to dust. He knew what he wanted to do with his time—wander the woods, write books and discover life.

What do you want to do with your time?

Help is available

Judith Ann Kirk, owner of ***Organizing Resources***, offers hands-on organizing services as well coaching sessions in simplification and organizational mastery. She uses a holistic approach to teach life management skills and assures an immediate physical, emotional and psychological payoff when chaos and clutter are eliminated.

It has been shown that getting organized renews the spirit and builds confidence. Order is the firm foundation for harmony and joy in your life.

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