



O Home Organization

It's a new year! Time for new goals and a fresh start. In D&C 132:8, the Lord says, "Behold mine house is a house of order," which is a lofty goal to emulate. Organization is a big task and can be daunting. However, an organized schedule and home can lead to great peace and happiness. Being more organized can even improve your health by reducing stress and anxiety. It requires preparation to be organized. This month we have included various suggestions, tips, and resources to help you prepare yourself for an organized 2009.

Home Organization:

Beyond Boxes and Bins

by Hannah Hamill, Women's Services and Resources

"Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful."

— William Morris

A wanderer on a lonely road came upon a torrential stream that had washed out the bridge. He couldn't swim and was afraid to wade across, so he had to spend several days cutting down trees and vines with his small knife to build a raft. The raft he built was solid, and the heavy raft carried him safely across the flood. On the other side of the bank he thought, "This is a good raft—if there's another stream ahead, I can use it." And so, he carried the raft for the rest of his life.

I believe that this Zen parable reflects the attitudes of many people who are struggling with a messy house. In the aftermath of the holiday season, we are especially prone to hang onto things that were given to us as gifts. (Are you really going to use that handy digital coin sorter?) Or, even worse, we tend to keep old, worn out things that we've already replaced. For example, I just barely threw away my worn out running shoes. My husband had to convince me that I would never use them again, even though I hadn't really looked at them in three years, and I had recently purchased a new pair of running shoes. My response? "But I just MIGHT

need them someday!"

A brand new year is upon us, and we're all suffering from the effects of a major economic downturn. Your first reaction to the recession might be to cling onto your clutter for dear life—there's no way you can get rid of anything that has potential utility, right? On the contrary, now is the perfect time to change our messy habits, purge the junk, and organize our homes! While a quick trip to IKEA or Bed Bath & Beyond might provide some temporary relief from clutter, I hope to make some suggestions that will be more long-lasting than a shiny new Rubbermaid container.

What is "clutter"?

Understanding what "clutter" is can help you in your quest for organization. According to Merriam-Webster, "to clutter" means "to fill or cover with scattered or disordered things that impede movement or reduce effectiveness." Generally speaking, "clutter" can also mean anything that holds you back from achieving your goals, like holding onto emotional baggage, taking on other people's responsibilities, or putting off major changes that you've been intending to make for a long time. This "emotional clutter" often manifests itself in the form of junk because we are too distracted to attend to housework,

3 ways to break down elephant s i z e d g o a l s

1. Break the big down into the small with a written plan
2. Assign specific projects to convenient times in your daily schedule and note goals on your calendar
3. Know that as you “eat” at these larger goals, you will be better off and happier.

From Marie Ricks,
www.houseoforder.com

or to throw away the accumulating trash.

Why de-clutter?

The Lord has told us to be organized! In Doctrine and Covenants 109:8, we are told to “organize [ourselves]” and to “prepare every needful thing.”

I mentioned earlier that a recession plays a major role in hoarding tendencies, when in reality we should be avoiding hoarding at all costs. We have been taught in the scriptures that material possessions are fleeting, especially in times

of financial distress. Samuel the Lamanite taught in Helaman 13:31 that “the time cometh that [the Lord] curseth your riches, that they become slippery, that ye cannot hold them; and in the days of your poverty ye cannot retain them.” Instead of focusing on saving potential “junk” items, focus on saving money and practicing wise spending habits.

What is holding me back?

I’ve provided plenty of good reasons to have a



Ask yourself “Will I be seriously inconvenienced if I throw this away?”

clutter-free home. So why do most of us still struggle with clutter? Have you recently experienced a major life change, such as the birth of a child, a marriage, or a divorce? Are you too busy at work or in school? Do you have kids at home that create a messy environment? These are all legitimate reasons for having some disorder at home, which in some cases just takes a trip to DI and a vacuum to fix. But if you find yourself unable to function because of the mess in your home, you might want to consider seeing a specialist who can help you overcome some of these problems.

Where do I start?

Asking yourself these four general questions can help you find a good starting place to get rid of clutter:

1. Am I going to use this item? Start with this simple question and then narrow down your answers.
2. What is this item for? Is it a seasonal item? An item that you use daily? Does it need to be readily accessible, or can you put it away in storage?
3. Is this item a “want” or a “need”? You might need a set or two of pajamas to sleep in, but you don’t “need” 15 sets. The same goes for holiday socks, old food containers that have been recycled to be Tupperware, etc.
4. Will I be seriously inconvenienced if I throw this item away? Try not to think too hard about this question, because a simple “yes” or “no” will make your de-cluttering venture much easier.

The bottom line:

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ taught, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21). By focusing on “treasures in heaven” rather than our temporary earthly belongings, we can become more in tune with ourselves, strengthen relationships with others, and draw closer to God.

See also: L. Tom Perry “Let Him Do It With Simplicity” November 2008 *Ensign*

For a Better New Year,

Set Up a Family Calendar Now!

by Marie C. Ricks, Author & Education Week Presenter

Do you want things to be more organized, less rushed, and with fewer glitches this next year? Whether there are just two of you, or you are working with a family of a larger size, prepare and use a family calendar to have better days all during this new year.

A well-used wall calendar is an organized family's best friend. It is a tool which must be prepared diligently at the first of the year, updated each month, reviewed each week, then looked at each and every day to do its best job. Twelve-month wall calendars are usually available at office supplies stores for a modest price.

Label the calendar right away with the known events for the next year. This might include business trips, birthdays, holidays, children's school schedules, family reunions, and potential family vacation dates. Colorful marking pens can be used to emphasize important dates. Draw red hearts on Valentine's Day, balloons on birthdays, and stars on national holidays.

Any time you receive an invitation to an event (such as a wedding, shower, or birthday party), note the date, time, and details on the calendar. When the children's soccer schedule is brought home, take a minute and note times and dates as well. One family found that using stickers for regular, repetitive events was helpful in reminding them of their commitments. Blue stickers were put on Tuesdays for piano lessons, green stickers were used on Wednesday for football practice, and pink stickers were for Friday's dance lessons. Even the youngest members of the family easily learned to associate the colored stickers with certain reoccurring activities.

At the beginning of each month, review the calendar and add additional notes to help your days go better. If Kevin's birthday is on the 15th, when will you take him birthday shopping? Note that date on the calendar. If you have a traditional family party on the 25th, when will you go to the specialty grocery store and purchase the supplies for that special dessert you always bring? Also note this date on the calendar.

At the beginning of each week, hold a family council with everyone in your family at which time you review the events for the upcoming week, learn about school assignments, projects, and tests (such as the term spelling test on Friday), coordinate rides to and from the varied activities, plan the preparation for festivities (such as cookies for the back-to-school night), and get babysitting commitments from your teenagers (so you and your spouse can have a date night out).

This wall calendar is for your whole family's use and should be kept near the kitchen table. At the beginning of the evening meal, quickly review what tomorrow will bring and remind family members of their commitments and responsibilities. For instance, "George, tomorrow I will be picking you up right after school to take you to piano lessons."

"Mary, brownies need to be baked for that party tomorrow. I can help you get them ready after dinner." "Frank, when shall we fill up with gas for the weekend drive to the wedding up north?"

Over and over again, the family wall calendar can act as a prompter to help activities run smoothly and lessen the stress which often accompanies a busy family's life. Purchase and fix it up at the beginning of the year, review and make detailed plans at the beginning of the month, have a family council and coordinate activities at the beginning of the week, and go over the calendar at dinner time. You will notice an immediate and lasting improvement in your family's lifestyle!

Tips for your **TACKLING** organizational goals

1. Set aside 15 minutes each day to work on small things. Set a timer. You'll be amazed what you can get done.
2. Add fun things to your to-do list. Life doesn't have to all be work.
3. Make sure you get rid of excess clutter right away. Don't postpone donating it or throwing it away.

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www.lifeorganizers.com

Launching & Landing

by Marie C. Ricks, Author & Education Week Presenter

I would like to share some organizational ideas about launching and landing. This is an important concept, both with regards to the places where we will launch and land, the methods by which we will launch and land, and the timing we plan for our launching and landing.

Designate L & L Pads

As I work with women, one of the things that keeps them from the capacity to be more organized is that they simply do not have designated places in their home for launching and landing. Yes, they have a kitchen counter where they do put things if the counter isn't already "busy", but they don't regularly plan to keep a place free for launching and landing.

So, if you have a kitchen counter upon which you regularly put the groceries when you come home from errands, this counter should be relatively clean and clear (at all possible times) so when you come in the door with grocery sacks in your arms there is a safe place to put the groceries. This is called a landing pad. Your landing pad might be near your back door, it might even be in your garage, or maybe it is near the front door, but again, it is a flat surface that is left empty except for anticipated items that are being landed. Since we land something and often many things each and every time we return home, this will be a well-used counter.

In the same way, there needs to be a place for launching. This is where you will put items you are going to take when you run errands, when you go a meeting, or when you have another obligation. Because of the mistakes I have made in my own life, I have chosen NOT to use my desk (near the back door) to be my launch pad because I walk right past my desk and all its neatly stacked items and go off on my errands or to my meeting with everything still sitting at home. And so for me there's only been one good launch pad, and that is the back of my vehicle.

Landing Methods

Second, we must think about the methods we use for putting things away and for gathering things up. For instance, when you bring groceries home do you not

only put the groceries away but also take the time to put those bags or sacks completely away in their designated home? And do your receipts find their way to your special "receipt" receptacle? In other words, when you land, do you finish?

Launching Methods

In the same way do you have a method for gathering up, for preparing to launch? For most people, it is very important to have a sturdy, oversized bag or other container for each regularly repeated activity or project. For instance, there might be Church teaching bag (with manual, visual aids, crayons and extra paper) or a bag for going to the dentist (with toys and books to read children) or even another bag for yourself when you get your hair done (with a book or crocheting/knitting) to occupy you while you wait.

Timing

Finally, we will want to think about launching and landing timing. Successful home managers plan for and allow time for launching and landing. Launching is the hardest because we are usually so stressed, in a hurry, and ready to go, we don't really have the time to think well or thoroughly. That means launching is best done quite early: tonight for a tomorrow morning's needs, in the morning for an afternoon appointment, today for tonight's needs.

At the same time, if you can in your life, please try to allow a few minutes to wind up before leaving as you will usually think of some last minute "to do's." And then allow time to come down or "land" after you arrive home from anywhere. In other words take time to land after you have come home from an activity, a project, or another emotionally draining situation.

It is taking these little bits of "time" spaces for launching and landing, in using methods that functional well for us to launch and land, and it is the specific places that we designate for our launching and landing pads that will make "L&L" a more successful process in our strivings for a more orderly life!