

# METRO • WASHINGTON homeimprovement

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Kitchen appliances  
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Tips on storing, stacking,  
stashing and trashing your stuff

## WET'n' WILD

DIVE INTO YOUR POOL OR SPA PURCHASE WITH EASE



# Home is Where the

Find a place for everything and put everything in its place

# Stuff is



Photos courtesy of The Container Store

by Stephanie Lauritzen

**T**ake you and all the people in your home and think about all the things each of you have. Chances are it's a lot of stuff—stuff that often ends up hanging out in a place where it doesn't belong, in turn becoming clutter. All the stuff needs a place of its own: The clothes in your closet, the recipes in your kitchen, the toys and clothes in your kids' bedrooms and even items in your garage. Homeless items do nothing more than create chaos and sap sanity. They get lost and lead to hours wasted hunting for them. Stop putting off organizing your home. It's time to escape the cluttered chaos with help from the pros.





Photos courtesy of The Container Store



Look for wasted space. Prime examples include over doors and underneath beds. These spots are valuable real estate in your home and are often overlooked.

### Find Freedom

Your home's functionality directly affects everyone that lives there. Having clear expectations, a schedule, a calendar clearly accessible to everyone and the ability to find everything you need when you need it is FREEDOM!

- Sandra Forbes, organizing coach, owner, Forbes Organizing, Northern Virginia

### One step at a time

The first key to successful organization is realizing that there is no such thing as an instant fix. "The clutter didn't accumulate in a day, so chances are it is not going to disappear overnight," says Lori Welch, certified professional organizer (CPO) and owner of JCL Services in Alexandria, Va. "It is best to create a plan with smaller steps to reach your ultimate goal."

"Don't let organizing overwhelm you," says Mona Williams, vice president of buying for The Container Store. She recommends the following 12 tips for general organization:

1. If you have multiple areas that need to be organized, **pick one to start** with and stick with it. When you complete one area, celebrate and move on to the next.

2. **Allow plenty of time.** Depending on the area, schedule a couple of hours each day to work on organizing the area. "Set aside time, mark it on your calendar and honor the time commitment like you would any other scheduled event," notes Standolyn Robertson, president of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO).

3. Once you have selected an area, go **through the contents.** Donate or hold a garage sale for anything you haven't worn or used in about 2 years. These items take up space and probably won't be missed.

4. After you have removed irrelevant items, **take inventory of what remains.** Determine whether or not that item is in the right place or if there is another area where it should be living. This will help you to create storage plans for each area of your home.

5. **Look for wasted space.** Prime examples include over doors and underneath beds. These spots are valuable real estate in your home and are often overlooked.





## What's your O.Q.?

## Quiz

This quiz will determine your O.Q. (organizing quotient) to see how badly your home craves organization. Simply add up the points as you go.

### 1. How long does it take you to find your keys?

- ☐ I know right where they are—they go in the same place every day. **6pts**
- ☐ I throw them down as I come in the door—they get lost easily. **3pts**
- ☐ One day I spent an hour looking for my keys and was late to work. **0pts**

### 2. How do you feel when you have visitors?

- ☐ Pretty good. I'm happy to have guests in any part of my home. **6pts**
- ☐ I have one or two rooms that I just don't let visitors go into. **3pts**
- ☐ I visit other people at their homes rather than let them see my mess. **0pts**

### 3. How do you handle paying bills?

- ☐ I have a set spot for bills and I pay them twice a month. **6pts**
- ☐ It depends on how much money I have in my checking account. **3pts**
- ☐ I usually pay them when the power or cable gets turned off. **0pts**

### 4. What does your hall closet look like?

- ☐ The usual—coats, vacuum cleaner, winter gloves on the top shelf. **6pts**
- ☐ I can't fit my coats in there because of all the other junk. **3pts**
- ☐ I don't open that closet. I might be buried in an avalanche! **0pts**

### 5. How much in your closet is worn regularly?

- ☐ If I haven't worn it in a year, I get rid of it. **6pts**
- ☐ I have a lot of clothes that don't fit, need repair or are out of style. **3pts**
- ☐ I never use the closet—my clothes are in piles around the bedroom. **0pts**

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

#### Controlled by clutter (0-12 Points)

You're lucky if you can go through the week's mail, let alone sort the pile of papers stacked up on the kitchen counter. Read through this article for tips, tools and techniques to cut the clutter. If you're overwhelmed, consider a professional organizer.

#### Messy moments (15-21 Points)

You usually manage to keep things under control. However, when life gets busy you scramble to keep things straight. You're hanging in there, but you need to read this article for more ways to manage organization without sacrificing time.

#### Nutty for neatness (24-30 Points)

You are about as organized as they come. Your home is a clutter-free zone and your friends know they can always count on you. If you have tips and info to share with fellow readers, send them to [editormwhi@nci.com](mailto:editormwhi@nci.com).



**Editorial Resources begin on page 44**

Source: Quiz provided by [OnlineOrganizing.com](http://OnlineOrganizing.com).

## Home Organization Resources

#### Closets by Design

6962 Wellington Road  
Manassas, VA 20109  
(703) 330-8382  
[www.closetsbydesign.com](http://www.closetsbydesign.com)  
See our ad on page 2

#### Closets Your Way

(703) 407-4875  
See our ad on page 26

#### GarageTek

The world's cleanest garage  
(240) 268-1150 (MD & DC)  
(703) 425-0900 (VA)  
[www.garagetek.com](http://www.garagetek.com)  
See our ad on page 30

#### Premier Garage

45945 Trefoil Lane, Suite 148  
Sterling, VA 20166  
(703) 481-2246  
[www.premiergarage.com](http://www.premiergarage.com)  
See our ad on page 26

## Basics

for the Busy Household Checklist

- ✓ Display a visible schedule
- ✓ Start a collection basket for miscellaneous items that need to be returned to their homes
- ✓ Use stacking letter trays, organized by family member, to collect mail, notes and reminders
- ✓ Develop a central place for keys in a high-traffic area
- ✓ Plan lunch menus in advance and pack lunchboxes the night before school
- ✓ Create a filing system that holds important documents for each family member
- ✓ Keep a list of all family errands you'll be more apt to accomplish everything in one trip

Source: *The Container Store*,  
[www.containerstore.com](http://www.containerstore.com)