

DENVER LIFE

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DENVER'S LEADING LADIES **5** WOMEN *Share* THEIR SECRETS *to* SUCCESS

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Declutter Your Life

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Spring *Cleaning*

'Tis the season to organize. Simplify your life with tips from local home organization experts.

BY AMY SPAGNOLA

Mountains of mail, piles of papers and stacks of dirty dishes are signs of clutter and chaos! If your life is consumed by old electronics, toys and unfinished projects, a sense of well-being and harmony is nearly impossible. Recent studies even suggest that clutter leads to poor eating habits, reduced exercise and increased tension.

The demands of everyday life cause many people to give up on maintaining an organized and neat home, but with a little effort, a messy lifestyle can become a thing of the past. Organization and discipline will spill over into other areas, such as finance, relationships, eating and work performance. The key is to clear clutter before it becomes a mainstay in your life and home.

Photo of White & Platinum elfa Office Shelving & Desk courtesy of The Container Store



DONATION DRIVEN

Make your purge pay it forward with these local nonprofits that will accept your clothing and furniture.

CLOTHING, HOUSEHOLD AND MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS:

Denver Rescue Mission 303.297.1815 | denverrescuemission.org
Clothes to Kids of Denver 720.379.4630 | clothestokidssdenver.org
Samaritan House 303.742.0828 | ccdenvr.org
Dress for Success 303.832.1889 | dressforsuccess.org
Soles 4 Souls 615.391.5723 | soles4souls.org

WINTER COAT DONATIONS:

Coats for Colorado

At any Dependable Cleaners locations in the Denver metro or Boulder area between October 1 and November 31. dcleaners.com

Coats of Joy

During the annual holiday season (November-December), visit the website for drop-off locations. milenaconsulting.com



Photo of Timeless Modern Collection walk-in closet courtesy of Closet Factory

LEAVE IT TO THE PROFESSIONALS

Julie Ratinoff, deemed “The Organized Goddess,” is a professional organizer, healer and educator. Having lived in Colorado for more than a decade, Julie assists everyone from empty nesters to stressed-out parents. Here’s her advice for clearing clutter and improving the energy of your home:

Be Organizationally Aware

The most disorderly areas of a home are often the most used places, including counters, entryways or out-of-sight areas, such as closets and basements. In Feng Shui terms, clutter carries the feeling of stagnant energy. Even if you can’t see an unorganized closet or basement on a day-to-day basis, you may feel weighed down by the mess.

Be Discerning

There are many different organizational tools, so it’s important to know what will work best for you and your family. Make sure to purge before buying any containers or solutions. That way you know exactly what you have and what products to buy. Finding something that is functional and also works with your design preferences is key.

Throw a Purge Party

People often hang on to items that serve no purpose, so you must decide if something is a tool, toy, treasure or trash. If you’re not sure if you will need it or aren’t quite ready to let it go, put it in a box and mark your calendar for six months from now. If you haven’t thought about those items during that time period, chances are you don’t need them.

Feng Shui Yourself Free

Make your space feel more light and airy with candles, fresh air and mood music. Entryways and greeting spaces should be free of grime and disorder, because they set the tone for your feelings and energy. A messy bedroom can leave you restless. Make an extra effort to clear clutter out of this space.

The Organized Goddess’s Pointers for a Put-Together Home:

- Gradually tackle one room at a time. Don’t rush to clean and re-organize the entire house in a day.
- Every item needs a go-to spot. If an item doesn’t have a home, it needs to be donated, tossed or trashed.

- Minimize your kitchen tools and clear the fridge of anything expired. Often the heart of the home, a kitchen can easily become unorganized.

- Avoid impulse buying. Go to the store with a list and stick to those items.

- Keep everything within reach. If it's stuck in some cabinet abyss, odds are you won't use it.

FROM ORDERLESS TO EFFORTLESS

With organizing classes and ample professional experience under her belt, Wendy Himes, owner of Piece of Cake Organizing, knows how to combat clutter.

DLM: Why is it so hard to stay organized?

Himes: Staying organized is just like staying on a fitness regime. Daily and weekly routines keep us in shape. Once the right organizing system is in place, a daily five-minute pick up and weekly 10-minute cleaning prevents clutter from accumulating.

DLM: What are the benefits of hiring a professional organizer?

Himes: A professional organizer has a fresh, knowledgeable perspective. He or she knows the tricks of organizing and de-cluttering and how to prioritize the problem areas if you have a time or money crunch.

DLM: What are your favorite organizing tips?

Himes: I love to help my clients place similar items together. When a client realizes that she has four garlic presses or nine black sweaters, she is more inclined to get rid of the least favorite ones. I also love utilizing the vertical space in a home. I use hooks and shelves in rooms and closets; it's amazing to see how much clutter goes away when an extra shelf is installed.

CLUTTER CONTAINMENT

These local stores have everything you need to begin your journey to junk-free living.

Bed, Bath and Beyond 2500 E. 1st Ave., Denver
303.321.0742 | bedbathandbeyond.com

Closets By Design 901 Jason St., Denver
303.683.5181 | closetsbydesign.com

Closet Factory 8480 Upland Dr., Centennial
303.690.6901 | closetfactory.com

Clutter Trucker
720.982.7856 | cluttertrucker.com

The Container Store 2500 E. 1st Ave., Denver
303.336.0909 | containerstore.com

IKEA 9800 E. Ikea Way, Centennial
888.888.4532 | ikea.com/us






Photo of the EXPEDIT shelving unit courtesy of IKEA

DLM: How can people decide what to keep?

Himes: I teach my clients ways to keep their belongings in perspective. If you were moving next week, would these things be worth hauling to the new home? If the new home was smaller, what would you get rid of? Imagine that your house is a model home. Remove some knick-knacks and see if you can live without them.

CONCIERGE COMFORT

Allison Farrar is the founder of As You Wish, an upscale concierge service and personal assistant firm. She handles everything from moving management and calendar coordination to personal events and property management. One area she helps clients manage is the home office. Here are her tips for organizing your work area:

- Food, children's toys, golf balls...I've seen it all. Be cognizant that this is your work space and nothing else belongs.
- Make a filing system; keep books in a certain area and current projects and supplies together.
- Have areas that are labeled: follow-up/to-do, file, etc. When you have some downtime, tackle these bins and put everything in the appropriate places.
- Keep a division between an at-home work space and family life. You can separate your office from living areas by setting up decorative drapery, large plants or a separated partition. 

ASSISTANCE NEEDED

Local personal organizers and concierge services will check every item off your to-do list.

As You Wish 303.517.7315 | asyouwishcolorado.com

Eco Errand Girls 720.308.8107 | ecoerrandgirls.com

Garage Guru 720.425.4187 | garageguru.co

The Go To Gals 303.570.7774 | thegotogals.com

HandyGirl Concierge 303.931.9612
handygirldenver.com

The Organized Goddess 303.929.9655
theorganizedgoddess.com

Piece of Cake Organizing 303.805.9815
pieceofcakeorganizing.net

Professional Concierge Associates 303.459.2226
pca4you.com

Tasks By Tiffany 303.947.5857 | justerrands.com