

DIY Declutter Checklist

A room by room, easy to follow Checklist using basic steps to organize and declutter your home.

The thought of decluttering may seem overwhelming but let me assure you that anyone can get more organized! By following these basic principles in each room of your home, you will get out from under the clutter. Let's get started!

1. Arm yourself with 2 sets/colors of garbage bags (one for trash, the other for donations), a box/container for recycling, and a few bins to sort into.
2. Start in one corner and work yourself around the room.
3. Sort all items into categories of Donate–Trash–Recycle–Keep (with like items together to avoid an additional sort).
4. Dispose of donations, recycling, and trash.
5. Decide where items should live. You should store things where they are being used most often and create appropriate storage systems for your space.
6. Containerize items in bins, baskets or use file folders for papers.
7. Label, label, label! This makes it easier to find and return items to their intended home.
8. Maintenance–don't wait until things get too far out of control. Routine maintenance is an important component of staying organized–hopefully for life!

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The Basement

The basement is a great space for storage, yet often becomes a dumping ground. Items such as old furniture, home decor, clothing, trinkets or old toys end up in the “black hole”.

Organize your basement into zones; such as holiday storage, tools, outdoor equipment, kitchen storage, overflow of pantry items, etc. I recommend removing all cardboard boxes and storing items in plastic bins since moisture can lead to mildew issues over time. Therefore, avoid storing delicate items like photographs and textiles in this space. Shelving will help keep things off the ground and dry should you ever have water issues due to floods or broken water heaters.

Try to adopt a new approach before deciding to store anything in the basement “for now”. What is your intention for the item? Would you ever (realistically) use it again? Think about it... why hold on to something that no longer fits your needs, style, or space?

The Bathroom

Bathrooms rarely require much time to purge and organize. You can find an array of storage solutions that work well for drawers and under the sink. Use what works best for your space and the items to be stored. * Once organized avoid the build-up of cosmetics and old towels by scheduling quarterly or twice-yearly clean-outs. This may sound silly but mark it in your calendar.

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The Bedroom

A bedroom should be a tranquil place to end your day, so think of clean lines and clear counters. Tackle each dresser, one at a time, using the same basic steps listed above. Consider drawer organizers to separate smaller items (like underwear and socks) and don't forget your nightstand. Use the space under the bed for seasonal clothing, bedding, or even table leaves, which should lay flat.

The Closet

An organized closet will save you both time and money. No more searching for items or purchasing duplicates because you didn't know what you already own. Evaluate your closet design and determine if additional hanging space (double rods) or shelving would be helpful. Sort all clothing into categories (like pants, shirts, blouses, long sleeve, etc.) Then, color-coordinate each section from light to dark. Store smaller items in baskets or bins for a more streamlined look.

Consider adding extra shelving to your children's closets since they generally require less hanging space. Use the additional shelving for bedding, stuffed animals, and toys to keep the bedroom free of clutter. Add a hamper for each family member.

The Family Room

This room usually requires only a few edits. Purge cupboards, cabinets, and drawers and once again sort items by categories. Games, DVDs, remotes, etc. should all have their own space in bins and baskets stored on shelves. Adding furniture with hidden storage (an ottoman i.e.) is a great way to keep the room looking picked up.

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The Garage

Just like the basement the garage is a space that attracts a lot of clutter. Therefore, seasonal clean-outs are a **MUST!** Create zones for each category of items and use wall space to get garden tools, bikes, and sporting equipment off the floor. Wall hooks and wall cabinets are great organizing options. Remember to browse the internet for inspiration as there are many ways to organize this space to its fullest potential.

The Home Office

Organized files are a wonderful thing, but overstuffed file cabinets are hard to navigate and make it difficult to find what you need. Keep only what is necessary and try to go paperless whenever you can. Neaten desk drawers and cabinets quickly by sorting your office supplies into bins and drawer organizers. Got a mess of cables behind your desk? Use cable ties or one of many other gadgets designed to tame the wire mess. *

The Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of the home. So, organize it to best suit your family's needs. How often do you entertain? Do you have school-age children who need their lunches packed? Are you an avid cook or baker? Set up stations that make the kitchen more efficient for you to function in. Your pantry and fridge should also get organized into zones. And don't forget to regularly purge and check for expired food.

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The Laundry Room

Do you dream of having an organized laundry room? There are many creative ways to make it more efficient. Do you have enough wall storage for laundry supplies? Could you benefit from adding a drying rack or a folding station? Use the wall space behind the door to hang your ironing board, brooms, and mops.

The Mudroom

The mudroom is your family's launching pad, it's one of the home's most important places to organize. Each person should have a cubby or bin to store their hats, gloves, and scarves, etc. Install hooks or shelves to hold keys, backpacks, and coats and get creative with shoe storage. *

The Playroom

Children's playrooms are often a challenge to organize. I advise against using toy boxes as they become a jumble of clutter. Instead, try using small to medium-sized bins/baskets to store like items. As tempting as lids are to hide the toy clutter, they are not practical in this space. Make it easy for your kids to return items by labeling each bin (using pictures for toddlers) and teaching them from a young age to clean up each evening. These are skills they will carry into adulthood.

For additional tips and inspiration please follow me on social media and reach out to Yve@organizingbyYve.com with questions or comments.

Happy Organizing!

*Storage solutions and inspiration can be found online such as on Pinterest or Google Images.