

# Good Home Organizing

## Module 1, Lesson 3

### Organizing: General Principles



Moreen Torpy  
De-Clutter Coach

Copyright © 2013 by Moreen Torpy, <http://decluttercoach.ca>  
All Rights Reserved.

*This course is presented by Moreen Torpy and no part of it may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means without the express written permission of the author.*

*The contents are based on the author's personal experience and research. Your results may vary, and will be based on your individual situation and motivation. There are no guarantees concerning the level of success you may experience. Each individual's success depends on his or her background, dedication, desire and motivation.*

*NOTE: Some of the recommendations in this report might contain affiliate links. If you click on the link(s) and purchase a product based on our suggestion, we will receive a referral commission. This does not affect the purchase price of such products. We only affiliate with companies whose products we believe in.*

*Some links may change or not work for many reasons beyond the control of the author and distributors. They cannot guarantee or otherwise be responsible for what you might find when you click through to sites not under the control of the publisher of this course.*

## Organizing: General Principles

The best way to deal with clutter is to avoid it! This might seem like a dream, however it is possible. While some people are born organized, everyone can learn that skill by reading and researching how others do it.

By recognizing that clutter and disorganization sap your energy, and that it's an eyesore to others, may be motivation enough to kick-start you on the journey.

It's important to be gentle with yourself along this journey. No beating yourself up if things go awry, just begin again. Remember the word "journey"—getting organized is not a one-time fix for a lifetime. Organizing involves an attitude adjustment and devotion to the cause to be successful.

By devoting some time to this project daily, you'll feel much better about yourself and able to find what you need when you need it.

Every room and person in your home has individual organizing needs however, some general rules apply to all of them.

1. **A place for everything and everything in its place.** By designating a home for everything you have and always returning items to those homes when you've finished using them will automatically contribute to an organized home.
2. **Go vertical.** Wall space is often an overlooked place for storage. Book cases and shelving can work wonders as storage for a variety of articles such as books, pantry items, garden supplies, holiday decorations, sporting goods, memorabilia, tools, laundry supplies, and more.
3. **Use clear containers.** It's helpful to be able to see through your containers so you can quickly find what you're looking for. Labeling them will also speed up finding what you need.
4. **Use color-coded containers:** There are times when opaque colored containers will be a better choice than clear ones. Holiday ornaments, items that are light-sensitive, gifts purchased ahead are some of these times. Label them as well so you can easily access what you need. (In the case of gift storage, if you have children, use code to label that container.)

5. **Place small baskets or boxes** in dresser drawers to hold small objects. Rectangular boxes work for socks, underwear, candles, napkin rings, etc. Square ones, ice cube trays and empty egg cartons for jewelry and other small items.
6. **Supplies of (just about) any kind:** Keep only one replacement for supplies you use regularly such as pantry and paper items. This will ensure you have one when you need it, but will prevent extra space being used that might be needed for other supplies. When you open the replacement, replenish it so you always have one ahead. Keeping a large supply of anything (food and cosmetics) risks it losing its quality and potentially becoming toxic.
7. **Eliminate excess:** Pass on anything you're not using regularly. If you need it again, borrow it. Then if you realize you will be using it often, purchase a new one. This way that appliance or tool will be of the most recent design and safety.
8. **Check expiry dates:** Always know the shelf life of food and personal toiletries. These vary quite a lot and while sometimes it doesn't matter, other times those dates are important to maintain your health. This applies to anything you put into or on your body. I'm not saying to toss every scrap of food immediately when the best before date arrives, just be aware that you need to use it soon unless it clearly exhibits signs of being unhealthy to use.
9. **Eliminate one item of equal size** when you bring something new into your home. Remember space is finite and cannot be stretched to hold more without it becoming clutter. If you have major organizing ahead, eliminate more than one item when a new one comes in. This will help reduce the quantity to be eliminated during a major de-cluttering.
10. **Spend a few minutes daily to maintain your organized space.** By allowing too much time between tweaking sessions, you will invite the space to become disorganized and cluttered again. Just spending a few minutes at this regularly can make a huge difference long-term.
11. **To-do list.** It helps to have a list of tasks that need doing as long as it doesn't become impossible. Have two lists—one for what needs to be done someday, while the other is your daily action plan. In fact, by writing these in your daily planner, you'll have them handy to deal with during the day as time permits.

Anything of higher priority can be flagged so it's done first, then the others in order of importance.

12. **Use your voice mail, email or text message** to remind yourself of something important that must not be forgotten. This is especially useful if you don't have your day planner with you.
13. **Schedule major cleaning** so many years don't pass between sessions. While we don't need to do deep cleaning twice a year as our ancestors did, we do still need to stay on top of it for health reasons. If you have pets or little children who like to touch the windows when looking out, these will need more frequent cleaning. Dust always accumulates regardless of how clean the rest of your home is.
14. **Get plenty of sleep.** Lack of sleep can cause all manner of problems from forgetfulness to erratic driving potentially leading to an accident. If you need a short nap during the day to keep going, allow yourself to do this. A power nap can be immensely refreshing.
15. **Reduce commitments.** By saying "no" to invitations that don't fit with your priorities allows you to say "yes" to activities that mean more to you. Evaluate what these are so your response is automatic. Rehearse responses such as "I'm sorry I can't help this time, maybe next time" or "I need time to think about this before making a commitment."
16. **Know that space is finite.** You cannot put more into it than it can hold. It's not elastic, stretching to accommodate more and more without letting some of its contents go. For example, if your closet holds only 25 hangers, it will hold only 25 items on those hangers. Adding hangers to hold more clothes won't make the closet any larger.
17. **Keep like items together.** This applies to everything from salad dressing to cosmetics. When like items are grouped, it's much easier to find the one you need without searching forever until it's found.
18. **Keep items near where you use them.** Coffee mugs, coffee pot, coffee and sugar together. You might also add tea, hot chocolate and other hot drink

mixes to the same place. Save time and steps when brewing your morning drink.

**19. Reduce safety hazards** by removing clutter that could cause tripping or prevent easy exit from your home in an emergency. And take any hazardous waste to the depot as soon as you're finished using the product so it doesn't emit toxic fumes or risk a spill in your home.

**20. Reward yourself for a job well done.** This doesn't mean to buy something! Think about treating yourself in another way, with something disposable such as tickets to a play or sporting event, a movie, lunch with a friend and so on.

### **Action:**

Follow these guidelines so you and your home will always be organized.

### **Resources:**

The websites listed below were active at the time of this writing.

How long food keeps in a refrigerator:

[http://www.ehow.com/info\\_7748285\\_long-food-keep-refrigerator-power.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_7748285_long-food-keep-refrigerator-power.html)

Keeping food frozen:

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_4601494\\_keep-food-frozen-during-camping.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4601494_keep-food-frozen-during-camping.html)

Shelf-life for cosmetics:

<http://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/CosmeticsQA/ucm167568.htm>

<http://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/CosmeticLabelingLabelClaims/LabelClaimsandExpirationDating/ucm2005204.htm>

<http://www.natural-living-for-women.com/shelf-life.html>

<http://www.thirdage.com/beauty/the-shelf-life-of-makeup>

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Stay tuned for Module 2: Private Spaces—Bedroom, Closets, Bathroom

<http://decluttercoach.ca>  
<http://facebook.com/decluttercoach>  
<http://twitter.com/decluttercoach>

Moreen Torpy



Moreen Torpy is the De-Clutter Coach, a Professional Organizer who has been helping her clients enjoy a better quality of life since 2004.

She has authored three books: [Going Forward: Downsizing, Moving and Settling In](#), [Let's Get Organized: 172 triplets to simplify life](#) and [Christmas Workbook: how to plan and create a more meaningful Christmas](#).

Learn more about what Moreen offers at:

<http://decluttercoach.ca>

<http://GoForwardDownsize.com>

<http://OrganizeForEmergencies.com>

<http://EasyOfficeOrganizing.com>

<http://GoodHomeOrganizing.com>