

## A place for everything...and everything in it's place!

These are great words of wisdom. It is easier to function in our hectic lives if we have created an organized home where each family member can feel at peace. It doesn't require a lot of money to de-clutter and get organized. It might even save money when you don't need those antacids anymore! Make this a family goal and each team member helps the family reach its goal. A peaceful...Home sweet home!

**What is Clutter?** Four main categories of clutter are:

- Things you do not use or love
- Things that are untidy or disorganized
- Too many things in too small a place
- Anything unfinished

Typical paper clutter can include bills, warranties, letters, memos, cards, sticky notes, mail, advertising flyers, school papers, children's artwork, insurance policies, coupons, etc.

Always follow the 4 D's of effective paper management:

**Do it:** If an action is necessary with the paper you have, do the action right now and when you're done, decide if the paper needs to be filed, or can be recycled.

**Delegate it:** If the paper can be assigned to someone else or belongs to someone else, give or send it to that person immediately.

**Delay it:** If you need to take action on this paper, or if you need to reference it later on, delay it by putting it into an appropriate filing system; a Tickler File System, a Bill Paying System, your filing cabinet, etc.

**Dump it:** Most of the papers we get on a daily basis can be dumped immediately. Open mail over the recycle bin. Go through your In Box every day. Don't delay your decision or paper shuffle. Make it a quick decision.

### ***10 Minute Daily Projects***

You can get organized, and declutter even if you're pressed for time. Multitask by accomplishing it while talking on the phone. Here are some projects you can complete in 10 minutes or less. Choose something from this list daily and watch your home shape up!

1. Clean out 5 file folders. Dedicate 2 minutes per folder and discard any papers you no longer need. Be careful and dispose of any papers with personal information on them properly, to avoid identity theft. Shred/burn these.
2. Have your children/husband/self choose an item a week to donate to the thrift store. My children inherited too many clothes. Although we love hand-me-downs, we were buried. I had them choose their 5 favorite shirts/pants/shorts and put them in the right side of the closet to keep. I repeated this until they had chosen the top 10-20 items. The rest we placed in a donation box. Then a few weeks later I asked if there were any other clothing articles/toys that could be added to the donation box. It took the shock out of taking away too much too fast. And he/she felt in control of the situation and was able to practice a necessary life skill.

3. Go through your linen closet or drawers and eliminate unused items. You only need 1 or 2 sheet sets per bed and 2-5 towels per person, not including beach towels or “rag” towels. Put them in a box or a bag, to be given to your favorite charity. Remember your “pass along” circles. Old towels to you may be a great rag towel to a newly wed or college student that needs these for car washing etc.
4. Toy hunt. Walk around your home for 5 minutes with a laundry basket and put stray toys into it. Then spend 5-minutes putting all the toys back in their proper places. Better yet have your kids do this task daily. Mary Poppins had the right idea. Make it a game! Play music and dance during clean up time.
5. Write out all of your birthday, anniversary and other cards for one month. Address them, stamp them and send them out. Or write the date it is to be mailed in the corner where the stamp will be placed. Put it in the “to be mailed” box in dated order. Check it daily to drop items in the mailbox. Keep stamps nearby for quick access.
6. Pay a bill. Instead of spending hours each time you have to pay your bills, just take 10 minutes each day for this task instead. Keep your bill paying supplies handy, so you can pay as you get them without having to take all of your supplies out each time. It can be a decorative box/basket on a shelf or a clear box/shoe box in a cupboard/drawer. Put the paid bill in the “to be mailed” box for daily postal service.
7. Make an appointment. Whether it’s with a doctor, dentist, window washer, carpet cleaner, a repairman, the veterinary, car maintenance, or a friend.
8. Delete email that’s accumulating. Spend 10 minutes deleting any email you no longer need from your inbox. Don’t get caught up in other “computer tasks”.
9. Clear off a surface every day. The surface might be a table, a dresser, a desk or a kitchen counter. Remove all the clutter so you can actually see the surface again. File any papers needing filing, return any items to their proper place and toss all that junk. Listen to your favorite music while you’re working!
10. Clean out the refrigerator. If in doubt, toss it out! Do we really like this or am I feeling guilty about tossing it out? Toss the guilt and be rid of it. Consider it a lesson learned.
11. Clean out your bathroom cabinet. Toss old makeup you never use, expired prescriptions/medications and anything else you don't need. Save space for the things you actually use. Ask yourself: “If someone were to use this product without checking it first, could they do so safely?”
12. Start a Family Information Binder. Label sections for: each child, vital records, ward lists and meeting schedules, frequently called numbers, emergency numbers and information, school information sheets, sports team schedules, club schedules, music lessons & classes, monthly menus and recipes, emergency preparedness list, utility shut-off instructions, disaster plan with emergency contacts. And include any other items you would use regularly or need quick access to.
13. Write that recipe on a recipe card and file it. Eventually you’ll have no piles of unorganized recipes. You can even start a recipe collection on your computer.

14. Clean out the recipe file. Will you make it? Does your family like it?
15. Clean out the spice cupboard. Toss the unused or old spices. You could even alphabetize them for quick access.
16. Sort through a junk drawer. Set a timer for 10 minutes, set the trash can next to you, open the junk drawer, pick through anything no longer needed and toss it in the garbage. Return items to their proper place.
17. Straighten one shelf on a bookcase. Pass books along you are done with. Or put them in the box that goes to charity. Make sure the donation box gets delivered weekly or twice a month! Don't let that become a problem too.
18. Keep your firewood on the covered patio in a wagon to keep the mess and bugs outside.
19. Sort through the magazine basket. You can recycle or donate these to the hospital or any other waiting room. Drop them off as you're driving by already. They'll love it.
20. When walking through the house, look for items out of place and pick them up as you're walking by. Drop it off in the room or place it where it belongs along the way to your destination. If you're going to the garage and know you will be passing the laundry room, pick up that dirty kitchen towel and washcloth and drop it off along the way. You will save many footsteps and time with this multi-tasking habit.

There are many web sites online that have great ideas. Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and type in "end clutter" or "organization". Also past BYU Women's Conference handouts and Sharing Stations are a great resource worth reviewing.

An excellent lesson is found in *The Latter-day Saint Woman, Part B, Homemaking, 27: Caring for Our Homes, 229*

The Lord gave man instructions in the Garden of Eden "to dress it, and to keep it" ([Moses 3:15](#)). The Lord requires this of us today as He did then. We are expected and required to care for and beautify whatever space we occupy on this earth.

President Kimball often reminded members of the Church of the need to clean, repair, and beautify their homes. "Now we ask you to clean up your homes. ... We urge each of you to dress and keep in a beautiful state the property that is in your hands" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 4-5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 4). "Whatever your circumstance, let your premises reflect orderliness, beauty, and happiness" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 171; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 125).

Doctrine & Covenants 132:8 - Behold, mine house is a house of [order](#), saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.

As you can see, there are many things that can be done randomly to help end clutter and save time. You will have a few of your own items that you can add to this list. It is always best when everything has a proper place and then is kept there. One cupboard, drawer or shelf at a time and you will be humming before you know it. When it comes to clutter, an ounce of prevention really is worth a pound of cure! It's a constant chore, but always easier when you are on the upside of this task instead of on the downside. You need much less than what you think. The important thing is that you keep trying and have confidence in your progress! If we allow it, the world can dull our senses and drown out the peace in our lives. Joy is created, not found.

