

"Let All These Things Be Done In Order"
Tips for Getting and Staying Organized
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D&C 88:119 "Organize yourselves, prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God."

Tip #1—Remember there is no one right way to organize your space. Each family and situation are different. Think about what is and isn't working for you and your family. Then, make a list of the things you would like to change.

*Are you always looking for your car keys?

*Does thinking about what you are making for dinner drive you crazy?

*Do you need to find a place for your children's backpack after school?

*Is the mountain of paper coming into your home making you feel swamped?

Write down anything you would like to fix and then choose the one thing from the list that bothers you the most. (Save this list, after you have mastered the first one, you can find a solution for the next thing on your list.) Now concentrate on finding a solution for the thing that is making you feel most frustrated.

*If you are always looking for your car keys designate a space, or drawer, cupboard, or hook that they always go in or on the minute you walk through your door.

*What's for dinner making you crazy—have your family help you make a list of their favorite meals. Then take your family's favorites and plug them into a calendar so you can figure out at "10" (10 o'clock the night before or 10 o'clock that morning) what you are having for dinner.

You get the idea. Just focus on the one thing that would help you feel more order in your day and think of all the ways you could solve the problem, pick one and try it out. If it doesn't work, try something else, until you have a solution that works for you and your family.

Tip #2—Make the wastebasket your best friend. So many things come into our lives that we don't have the time or energy to deal with. Throw those things away. You only need so many pans, bowls, hot pads, papers, etc. Go through and get the extra stuff you are storing and not using out of your life. Same goes for all the mail and school work you get every day. If you

don't need it, throw it away. You will feel better when you get rid of the stuff you don't need.

Tip #3—Get a calendar that will work for you and make it work for you. It can be a wall calendar, one that sits on your desk, a phone or hand held electronic device, whatever suits your style get one and get all the appointments, birthdays, school project deadlines, work deadlines and anything else out of your mind. Make the calendar accessible so you and your family can get to it and use it frequently. Go over the calendar at Family Home Evening and look at it first thing every day to help you stay on top of your game.

Tip #4—Start small, but START. Conduct a junk raid. Choose just one cupboard, drawer, or closet to start with. Take everything out and clean it out. Put all the items you have taken out into 3 containers; 1 for the garbage, 1 for giving away, 1 for items you are going to keep. Then when everything has gone into one of these containers, RUN with the garbage container to the garbage outside and don't look back. (And don't let anyone else look in!!!) Take the items in the give away container out to your car, or nearby so they are out of your house and can be quickly taken to a charity or given to someone who could use them. Now look at the remaining items and make sure they belong in the space. Do you use it in this room? Do you use it everyday? Do you have more than 1? Does it fit in the space you are assigning it. Remember everything that stays must have a function in the room it is in and a place to call home (contain it.) Don't try to do too much at once or you will get frustrated. Start small, but START.

Tip #5—Make everyone a part of the team. Unless you are the only person living in a space, everyone who lives there should be helping to keep the space organized. Train your children to help. Show them how and what to do. It will pay off in the long run. They will become orderly the more they practice.

Tip #6—Establish routines and habits to help you get yourself and your home in order. For example, teach your children to rinse out the sink after they have brushed their teeth. It only takes a few seconds, but it saves the person cleaning later lots of time.

Tip #7—Set up a system for the paper that comes into your home. There are lots of ways to do this, and I have tried several that have worked, and some that haven't. Paper will keep coming, and can easily overtake you and your orderly home. Once you get a handle on paper coming in, your home will immediately look more orderly.

Tip #8—Store things where they are used. Store extra toilet paper in the bathroom. Store scissors in the office where you use them. If you find you are always looking for an item when you are in a different room than the one it is stored in, move the item to that room, or buy another one so you are not wasting your valuable time running around looking for items in other rooms.

Tip #9—Dejunk regularly. Things get moved and not returned to their proper spot. Sports schedules get old. Birthday parties come and go so you don't need to hold on to that invitation. Clothes get too small, or out of season. Shoes get worn through. Life just keeps going on, so take a drawer, or closet or cupboard as often as possible and quickly see what needs to be thrown away, given away or kept and get it back in order.

Tip #10—Try to have everyone help clean up the clutter from the kitchen, family room, bedroom, etc. each night before going to bed. You aren't trying to organize everything here, you are just trying to straighten up before bed so when you wake up in the morning you have a fresh start. No one wants to wake up to dirty dishes from the night before, or a pile of clothes in the middle of the room. Your day will start off so much better if you aren't facing a mess from the night before.

Tip #11—Believe in yourself. You can do this. Little by little you can put your home and things in your life in order. You are a child of God and He is a God of Order. Order is a divine characteristic and you can order your life. Believe in yourself, and believe in your family. Once you see the benefits of living a more organized life you won't want to go back. You will give yourself and your family valuable time to do the things you want to do, the things that are fun, and meaningful, and the things that help you draw closer to our Savior. Order will help make your home a place where you and your family can feel the spirit. So don't put it off, take one small drawer and start today, and soon your home will be a little bit of heaven here on earth. Good Luck!!!!