

# Getting Organized in the New Year

Well, the holidays are over. (Sigh!) I do enjoy every minute of the holidays, but there's the whole feeling of starting anew that comes with the new year and that's not so bad either. It allows me to evaluate and set new goals, not only for life, but for my home, as well.

One of my resolutions--wait, that's a lot of pressure; let's just call it one of my ideas--for the new year is to become really organized. Now, I think the hardest part of getting organized is just getting started, so my first step in my organizational odyssey is to determine which areas of my home need an organizational boost. If I try to organize the entire house at once, I know I will become overwhelmed. Decorate one room at a time for greater success. If I'd just listen to what I'm saying on a daily basis to everyone else, maybe I'd learn something!

So, my plan includes the three areas of my house that seem to become the most cluttered—the family desk, my home office and the dreaded garage. Once the areas are selected, it's time to delve into organizational options for each area. Do you get that Hold Everything catalog? Well, it is full of organization and storage options--and they're pretty, too. I also stop by many of the discount stores to check out what they have to offer in the area of organization. Drawer dividers, baskets, boxes, shelving, plastic containers, you name it, they've got it, but you first need to figure out what you need before you go on that buying spree.

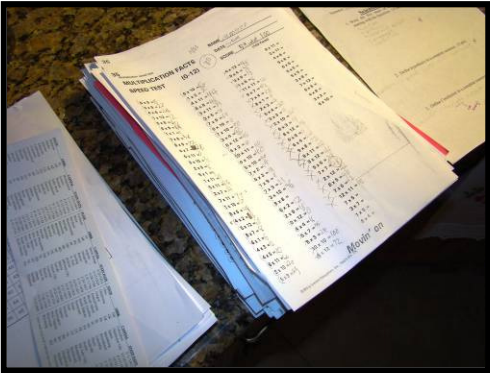


Get back to the plan and start with the messiest area of all. (That way if you only get one finished, it's the one that needed it the most!) My biggest organization nightmare is what I call my "family desk". It isn't really a desk. It's a letter holder and drawer, but they are located in the kitchen right where all the homework is done and all the important papers, coupons and cat medicines go. You know, you have one too, it's basically command

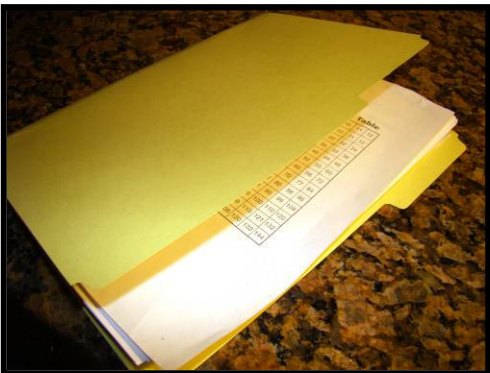
central! Now I go into organization mode which has several steps that I have written down for my son every time I ask him to clean out his desk or a drawer or closet. The steps are as follows; remove, sort, toss, organize, put away.



So, to begin I remove everything from the letter holder and then sort through it. I've taught my kids to make piles of "throw away", "ask Mom" and "keep". I did pretty much the same thing. The "ask Mom" pile was made for those items that I wasn't sure about. Do they belong to someone else? Are they important? What the heck is it? Etc.



Here are my son's school papers in the "keep", "throw away" and "hang on the refrigerator" piles!



The "keep" pile will now be stored in a file folder so it will stand up neater in the letter holder. This is the "organize" stage where you find ways to make the items you are keeping stay where they are supposed to and remain as neat as possible. This one is the toughest for my kids. They are happy to just jam the "keep" pile back into the desk drawer!



Repeat these steps for everything in the particular area you are organizing. Remove, sort, toss, organize and put away!



In the end, I tossed quite a few items that were no longer necessary, I used several file folders to neaten things up, and although perhaps to you it doesn't look that much neater, in person, it looks great in comparison!

The drawer that is a very important part of our homework ritual went from this conglomeration...



...to this! What helped was a letter tray that acted as a divider for the drawer, keeping the paper where it was supposed to go and the crayons and colored pencils in a place where they weren't sliding around all the time.



**H**ow exciting it is for me to see some progress in areas that have been long awaiting some attention! It didn't take but an hour to get these two areas in shape and keep in mind that it can be this easy for you too. Now I'm so inspired, it will be easier to move on to the next organizational projects!

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