



Pro Kinship for Kids

Kinship Link

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Cut the Clutter and Get Organized

American consumers have a fondness for purchasing a great deal of “stuff”, which has led to clutter-filled houses. Families are also having less time to keep everything organized, so we get clutter. This lack of organization causes stress for everyone in the household. Members in the home also feel unsettled by this lack of organization.

Here are some sources of clutter:

- Mail, junk mail, bills, and important unfiled papers
- Books, catalogs, and magazines
- Toys and games
- Hobby materials
- Tools and hardware
- Outerwear: Hats, mittens, boots, shoes, bags, and backpacks
- Laundry and cleaning supplies
- Out-of-date prescriptions and cosmetics

It is time to take control of the clutter at your house. Start with a positive attitude. Cleaning is a chore, but taking a positive approach will encourage family members to become involved. Clutter is up to all. Choose a convenient time for everyone to discuss plans for clutter

control. It is unfair to expect one person to restore order to the entire house. Everyone shares the responsibility for picking up after themselves.

Getting Started

In each room, start at one spot and work clockwise around the room until you return to your starting point. Use the box approach to sort the clutter. Sort items in to boxes labeled *Keep*, *Store*, *Give Away/Sell*, and *Throw Away*. If your clutter is mostly paper, you may want to use a garbage container or bag for recycling. This is the method that professional organizers use to eliminate clutter.

The Keep Box

- ◆ Return items to their proper places
- ◆ Sort like items together
- ◆ Create “centers” for work, such as cleaning, desk/office, cooking, baking, makeup, tools, studying, hobbies and games, etc.

The Storage Box

Store these items for use at another time. Be sure to label all bins and totes with the person’s name that they belong to and if the contents are seasonal (for

example, Sarah’s winter clothes). Consider using storage bags that can be vacuum sealed to reduce bulk and increase storage capacity.

The Give Away/Sell Box

The items you choose to donate to a secondhand store or charity should be in good condition. Some places to consider donating to might include a school, church, library, women’s shelter, or historical society. Call before you drop things off, so you are not leaving your clutter for someone else to deal with. If your items are in good to new condition, consider taking them to a consignment shop to earn some money from your unwanted items. Consider selling your items on local social media sites (for example, Craigslist, ETSY, eBay, Next Door, or a Facebook Marketplace group). Books or textbooks can be sold online by using a book buyback service.

The Throw Away Box

Throw away anything that is broken, ripped, worn, or stained. This box could also be a trash can or trash bag. Depending on how much stuff you must dispose of, a trip to the recycling center or landfill

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may be in order.

Things to Toss Out Now:

- * Anything with a stain, hole, or tear
- * Clothing or accessories you like, but look funny on you
- * Old, worn out purses and shoes
- * Outdated clothing and accessories
- * Ratty weekend clothes
- * Clothing and outerwear that does not fit
- * Anything of a lower quality than your regular wardrobe
- * Lifeless undergarments

Use the One Touch Rule

Try to touch items only one time. For example, when you bring the mail into your house, sort it into bills to pay or items that need attention, item to keep/file, and items to throw away. Try to only touch your mail once instead of allowing it to accumulate. It is difficult to sort when it has piled up and is not organized.

Maintaining a Clutter-Free Home

- ◆ Everyone need to do a little bit every day
- ◆ It is everyone's job to keep items picked up and put away
- ◆ Tasks need to be appropriate for

age and abilities

- ◆ Share your ideas and expectations of what is expected and acceptable. You may need to teach others simple and effective ways to do the tasks.

A word of caution: Some members of your household may object. Stay firm and do not do their share of the work or you will end up getting it back! It will take at least 2 to 4 weeks until the jobs become routine. You will need to be patient. The reward is worth the work.

Closet Organization Tips

How much clothing do you need? People often keep all their clothes packed in a tight space. Compacted clothes and unused clothes you don't wear are clutter. One way to determine if the items hanging in your closet are still being worn are to take all the clothes hangers and turn them around so the hooks face towards you. As you wear the clothing, turn the hangers around to where the hooks face away from you. After several months, you can assess your closet and see which clothes are clutter and which ones you wear. Most clothing needs 2 to 3 inches of space for hanging. This space allows the clothing to "breathe"

and not become funny smelling. It also allows air flow in and around clothing to prevent mold and mildew growth. Tightly packed clothing can be a buffet line to clothes moths and other fiber eating insects. Learn to choose clothes in a unified color theme. Clothing that can be mixed and matched to be worn year-round save you space and money. Choose dark, solid-colored bottoms to maximize your closet. Be a fit fanatic, so that what you wear look good on you! Organize your closet like a rainbow, to make clothes selection and organization more efficient.

Organize with hooks, hangers, shelves, or baskets. Everything should be visible immediately, because you wear or use what you see. Try using shower curtain rings to store scarves and handbags in your closet. Look for additional areas in other parts of your home to store out-of-season clothing - other closets, utility room, under the beds, or other places. Can you add shelves in unused areas that you may not have considered for storage?

Above a garage or closet door may be a creative way to gain more storage space.



Healthy Snacks

Here are a few new healthy snack ideas for you to try at home this month:

- ◆ Cut a whole wheat pita into wedges and serve with 2 tablespoons of hummus or bean dip.
- ◆ Make a veggie pizza by topping a whole wheat English muffin or pita with 2 tablespoons tomato sauce, 1/2 cup diced fresh veggies, and 1 ounce low-fat mozzarella cheese.
- ◆ Create a scrumptious yogurt parfait by layering 6 ounces of fat-free yogurt with 1/2 cup fresh or frozen fruit, then sprinkle 1/4 cup (or less) low-fat granola on top.
- ◆ Prepare instant oatmeal using fat-free milk, 1 tablespoon maple syrup, a sprinkle of cinnamon, and 1/4 cup dried fruit.
- ◆ Whip up a quesadilla in the microwave using a whole wheat tortilla, 1/4 cup black beans, 1-2 tablespoons low-fat cheese, and 1 ounce of salsa.
- ◆ Make your own trail mix by combining whole grain cereals, unsalted nuts or seeds, and dried fruit. (Tip: portion into 1/4 cup servings).

- ◆ Roast chickpeas (or garbanzo beans) and season with spices.
- ◆ Make a dip using low-fat cottage cheese or Greek yogurt for raw vegetables.
- ◆ Mash an avocado with salsa and eat with whole-grain tortilla chips or spread on a whole wheat tortilla, sprinkle with low-fat cheese, then roll it up and enjoy.
- ◆ Mix equal amounts of fat-free plain or flavored yogurt with 100% fruit juice, then pour into paper cups and freeze for a tasty treat.

