



1 Keep a portable file tote for catalogs, thank-you notes, shopping lists and a menu planner. Take it with you for when you're waiting in the school carpool lane and check things off your to-do list. » *Stephanie Vozza, founder of [theorganizedparent.com](http://theorganizedparent.com)*



# 55



## WAYS TO CLEAR THE CLUTTER

Our team of organizing experts offer their top tidying tips, tools and affordable finds guaranteed to help you bring order to your home once and for all.

by Laura Serino



Get inspired by the latest and greatest in storage essentials that are pretty, practical and handpicked by us.



55  
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CLUTTER



**2** Slip your movie collection into DVD albums, organized by genre—comedies, dramas and cartoons—so it's a cinch to flip through. Recycle the empty cases through [freecycle.org](http://freecycle.org). » *Regina Leeds, author of One Year to an Organized Work Life (Da Capo)*

**3** Keep shelves tidy by rolling kids' T-shirts, sweaters and sweatshirts instead of folding. » *Stephanie Voza*

**4** Rather than splurge on a pricey charging station for phones and iPods, make one out of a console or table by drilling small holes for the cords in the back of a top drawer. » *Lori Marrero, creator of The Clutter Diet*

**5** Avoid "my house is a mess" panic when unexpected guests drop in. Leave an empty storage ottoman or basket out for quick cleanups—make sure it's big enough to stash toys, magazines and throws. » *Alicia Rockmore, founder of Buttoned Up, Inc.*

**6** Multitask while watching your favorite TV show by sorting and organizing a messy drawer. » *Donna Smallin, author of A to Z Storage Solutions (Storey)*

**7** A handsome vintage cabinet or sleek modern console can cleverly hide everything from books and games to a flat-screen TV. » *Kim Myles, host of Myles of Style*

**8** Keep ladles, tongs and spatulas in place by attaching adhesive Velcro strips to both the handles and the bottom of the utensil drawer. » *Julie Edelman, author of The Ultimate Accidental Housewife (Hyperion)*

9 Repurpose a plastic or wooden wine rack as off-the-floor shoe storage for the hall closet. » *Ellen Phillips, author of Kick the Clutter (Rodale)*

10 Don't hide a beautiful bowl in the china cabinet. Instead, show it off on top of the dresser and use it to hold everyday necessities like your watch, wallet and rings. » *Meryl Starr, author of The Home Organizing Workbook (Chronicle)*

11 Hang over-the-door towel bars or hooks on a kitchen cabinet or drawer for holding oven mitts and tea towels. » *Deborah Shearer, for organize.com*



Lindsey St. Clair  
Editorial Assistant

13 If you don't have sufficient closet space, try a pretty chest in the entryway as a catchall for items like hats, gloves and wrapping paper. » *Mary Ostyn, author of A Sane Woman's Guide to Raising a Large Family (Gibbs Smith)*

14 Put a small recycling bin next to the family desk and discard junk mail as soon as it arrives. » *Mary Carlomagno, author of Secrets of Simplicity (Chronicle)*

15 If you lack shelf space in the bathroom, give each family member a portable plastic tote that they can keep in the bedroom for stashing their nonessentials. » *Donna Smallin*

16 To save repeated trips up and down the stairs, keep a basket on the bottom step to stockpile items like slippers or video games. Carry them up all at once at the end of the day. » *Romaine Lowery, author*

of The Clutter Clinic (Sterling)

17 Run out of desktop space? Take a cue from the doctor's office and mount a plastic over-the-door file organizer to post memos, school notices and outgoing mail. » *Ellen Phillips*

18 Place a plastic sock drawer organizer in the fridge to keep small snacks like yogurt and cheese sticks organized and easily accessible to kids. » *Amy Keroes, founder of Mommy Track'd*

19 Stick a small office file cabinet into an empty corner of the kitchen and corral everything from coupons to recipes. » *Kelly Osborne, for seejanetwork.com*

20 Drill holes in the lids of glass jars and screw into the bottom of a shelf above your desk. Use for paperclips, thumbtacks and rubber bands. » *Sue Whitney, co-author of Junk Beautiful (Taunton)*

21 Make use of empty space in a bottom cabinet with a slide-out drawer for



Laura Serino  
Associate Home Editor

22



editor's  
must-haves

I'm never without office essentials thanks to this three-tiered tray. Pivini mini organizer, Umbra, \$16, umbra.com.

skillets and pots. Chrome rollout drawer, from \$45, containerstore.com.

» *Lori Marrero*

23 Designate a laundry room bin for clothes that no longer fit. Once it's full, donate the castoffs to charity. » *Jill Shank, cofounder of Mostly Organized Moms, Inc.*

24 For each new clothing item, pair of shoes

12



editor's  
must-haves

Bright silicone hooks keep my fave fleece from being tossed to the floor. Gum hook, +d, \$15, japanesemoderndesign.com.

tools our  
experts  
can't live  
without...

25 MailMate paper shredder, \$90, staples.com. » *Mary Carlomagno, author of Secrets of Simplicity*



26 On-the-wall family calendar, Whoml, \$14, whoMI.com. » *Holly Bohm, for seejanetwork.com*



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or accessory that you buy, donate or get rid of two in its place to maintain closet space. » **Audrey Thomas**, professional organizer for *Smead*

**27** Use leftover twist ties to tame that tangle of television, computer and cell-phone wires. » **Meryl Starr**

**29** Give a summer tote a year-round purpose. Place it on a closet shelf for storing scarves and belts. » **Stephanie Vozza**

**30** Don't waste time returning everyday clothing, like a pair of jeans or a robe, to its designated spot. Try hanging a few hooks in

your bedroom closet to keep favorites off the floor but accessible. » **Donna Smalin**

**31** Avoid closet chaos by choosing one type of hanger for each closet and assigning every family member their own signature color. » **Jennifer Humes**, founder of *clutterqueen.com*

**28** Instead of tossing that never-used wok or salad bowl, leave it out on the counter to stash dishtowels or potholders. » **Julie Edelman**, author of *The Ultimate Accidental Housewife* (Hyperion)



**Judy Prouty**  
Home Style Director



**32**



editor's  
must-haves

What a bright idea—no more misplaced keys. Door organizer, Kikkerland, \$8, [kikkerlandshop.com](http://kikkerlandshop.com).

**33** Put a little putty on the bottom of plastic drawer dividers to keep them in place. Museum putty, \$6, [containerstore.com](http://containerstore.com). » **Lori Marrero**

**34** Store important personal documents—like birth certificates, tax returns and Social Security cards—in a mini safe rather than a filing system in your desk where anyone can access them. » **Mary Carlomagno**

**35**  
Dymo personal labelmaker, \$28, [dymo.com](http://dymo.com). **Jennifer Humes**, [theclutterqueen.com](http://theclutterqueen.com)





## 55 WAYS TO CLEAR THE CLUTTER

**36** A magnetic knife strip in the garage works for holding needed tools like screwdrivers, scissors and pliers. » *Ellen Phillips*

**37** Color-code your storage bins—blue labels for the linen closet, red for the family room—so they're always returned to their proper place. » *Meryl Starr*

**38** Get started on the pileup of family photos by placing current pictures in albums first. When you finally have extra time, sort through and add the rest. » *Donna Smallin*

**39** Create a closet in a small nook by installing a shower tension rod and hanging a curtain. Place a chest of drawers behind it for storage. » *Lauri Ward, author of Downsizing Your Home with Style (Collins Living)*

**40** Tackle a spring and fall cleanup each year—no excuses. » *Dan Ho, Host of The Dan Ho Show*

**45** momAgenda daily planner, from \$42, momagenda.com. » *Nina Restieri, president of momAgenda, LLC*



**46** Lil' dresser drawer labels, \$13, mostlyorganizedmoms.com. » *Jill Shank, cofounder of Mostly Organized Moms, Inc.*



**47** Removable adhesive hooks, 3M, from \$7, commandadhesive.com. » *Donna Smallin, author of A to Z Storage Solutions*

# 41

Turn clean cardboard egg cartons into drawer organizers for jewelry and other small things that tend to get misplaced.

» *Alicia Rockmore, founder of Buttoned Up, Inc.*

**42** Dress up your desktop by putting pens and pencils in a small vase or arranging essentials like a stapler, scissors and mail on

a colorful melamine tray. » *Kim Myles*

**43** A compact dish-drying rack on a shelf

offers easy access to cutting boards and trays. » *Julie Edelman*

**44** A DIY organizing kit that includes garbage bags, markers and labels can make tackling a cluttered pantry or closet less of a hassle. » *Lori Marrero*





55  
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**file fact**  
The top sellers at  
organize.com are  
clear plastic shoe  
boxes and hanging  
jewelry storage.

# the right stuff

Our stylish solutions for every room in the house



48



49



50

51



52



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**48** A desktop filing system controls the pileup of mail. *Mail sorter*, *ButtonedUp*, \$16, [seejanework.com](http://seejanework.com) **49** Toss cans and bottles in a single unit under the sink—or stack a few on the back porch. *Front load recyclers*, *Simple Human*, \$40, [simplehuman.com](http://simplehuman.com) **50** Make the most of under-the-bed storage with a sleek organizer on wheels. *Rolling underbed organizer*, *Neu Home*, \$28, [kmart.com](http://kmart.com) **51** Rattan baskets that slide in and out of a wood console make it an ideal solution for hallway clutter. *Jolie six-drawer unit*, *Pier 1*, \$200, [pier1.com](http://pier1.com) for stores **52** Free up counter space with a wall-mounted rack for paprika, pepper and more. *Spice rack with jars*, *Ikea*, \$13, [ikea.com](http://ikea.com) **53** Sturdy, modern and graphic cardboard files house everything from subscriptions to menus. *Magazine box*, *SemiKolon*, \$18, [seejanework.com](http://seejanework.com) **54** Makeup, toiletries and jewelry fit in a retro floral travel case to hang on the bathroom door. *Tri-fold case*, *Room It Up*, \$18, [roomitup.com](http://roomitup.com) **55** Tame any drawer with movable dividers. *Hold anything drawer organizer*, *Oxo*, \$22, [oxo.com](http://oxo.com)