

Order in the House!

Easy ways to win the war on clutter.



Clutter is the enemy of every small space.

Professional organizer Lorie Marrero

has developed a brand new program to answer the queries she receives most commonly from homeowners

across America: The Clutter Diet, an all-in-one online resource, inspiration and support center designed to help you conquer your clutter crisis once and for all. For petite places, Marrero notes that the diet mentality is right on the money. "Smaller spaces mean that you have to be more careful with what you buy and own." Here, she shares her best organizing DOs and DON'Ts. For help to solve your own clutter conundrums, visit theclutterdiet.com.



PHOTO: ERIC ROTH

DO USE SPACES IN WAYS THAT THEY MAY NOT HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO BE USED.

We worked with a woman in a small apartment who never cooks, so she has a few take-out menus and plates, and then the rest of the kitchen is filled with sweaters and shoes—why not use the space? Be flexible and remember: Don't limit yourself.

If your closet is cramped and the kitchen is bare, use the extra room to handle the overflow.

DON'T BUY IN BULK WHEN YOU DON'T NEED TO.

Some people, like empty-nesters, often have a habit of still buying a flat of canned goods, even for two. Old habits may die hard, but stick to this rule of thumb: If you don't have the storage space for it, don't buy it.

DO MEASURE BEFORE YOU BUY SOMETHING.

Particularly if you recently moved to a small space, you may not be used to the fact that furnishings should be smaller in scale. To look their best, pieces need to be multi-functional, and not big or bulky.



JCPenney's Kiki Storage Bench offers seating, and both open and hidden storage in one slim profile. jcp.com

DON'T BUY THINGS BECAUSE THEY'RE ON SALE.

Just because an item is on sale, that doesn't mean it's the right thing to buy right now. Here are five important questions to ask yourself before you make a purchase:

- Who can I borrow this from or share this with?
- What do I already have that is like this item?
- Where will I store this item? That's a big deal for small spaces.
- When will I have time to use it and maintain it?
- Why do I need this item?



Rubbermaid's Under Shelf Basket slides easily onto most standard shelves, where it acts as a space-maximizing drawer.

DO USE VERTICAL SPACE.

For example, if you open up a cabinet and you have a stack of plates, there's a lot of space until the shelf above, so you can either adjust the shelf, or get an insert and squeeze in more storage. In the closet, builders only install one rod and one shelf, and it's done at an eye-level height. You can usually fit two or three extra shelves above that.

DON'T GET A STORAGE UNIT.

It can be a trap for people. They have all these things, and when they find they are moving from a larger space to a smaller space, they panic. They don't want to get rid of anything, so they get a storage unit instead. Typically, people never get around to sorting out what's in there, and at some point the rental cost on the storage unit exceeds the replacement value of the items inside.

DO BUY MULTI-FUNCTIONAL FURNITURE.

You can put a home office inside a coffee table. Murphy beds are also fantastic for flexibility. Look for things like clothing-drying racks that telescope out, stackable washer-dryers and other compact machines that do more than one thing.



A high table with side storage can be a bar, dining table, desk or console.

MESSBUSTERS

Getting organized is a task that most of us intend but dread doing. It seems getting started is the first and most difficult hurdle, especially if you've let things slide. But take heart: After you pare down your rooms, you can set up some simple systems using stuff you probably already have around the house.

—Stefanie Fraser



CORRAL IN CROCKS

Old, pretty jam or marmalade jars make sturdy vessels for holding bathroom necessities. Clean them out and line them up on a shelf for impact. Their oh-so-organized looks will encourage you to keep the system neat.

HOOK IT UP

Look around your home for smart spots to hang a hook or two—it's a great way to keep keys, coffee cups, brooms and other common items off



of floors and countertops, or simply to make sure your coat doesn't hit the back of a chair or couch when you come home. If you have kids, be sure to hang some at their height to encourage them to be tidy, too. Lightweight catchall baskets are also a good idea for little ones' little odds and ends.



THINK INSIDE THE BOX

Grab those shoe and other gift boxes that are collecting dust, recover them in a wrapping paper of your choice, and then label each to easily identify its

contents. HINT: For an official-looking finish, pick up some stick-on scrapbooking materials that mimic the look of metal label holders. Stack the boxes on shelves to use as handy containers.

For more fun reuse ideas, check out Stefanie's blog: recycle-eh.com/myblog.htm

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