

Transform Your Kitchen



The **kitchen is the heart of our home** - a place where we connect with family and friends, and are nourished in many ways. Getting your kitchen in order allows you to prepare meals, clean up, and entertain more easily. It saves you money, cuts down on stress, and puts the fun back into being together with your family and having people over.

Here are some tips regarding setting up an organized kitchen:

- **Store like with like** - use bins/boxes/baskets to store categories of items. For best results, label whenever possible.
- **Store things near where you use them.** If it makes sense to you, **create zones** for certain categories of items, e.g. food preparation, baking, making kids' lunches, table setting and serving, cleaning, waste disposal, and recycling. Similarly, **store items by ease of use** - the things you use most often should be the most accessible.
- **Utilize any of these organizing devices that create space and order:** lazy-susans/turntables, roll-out storage, lid-organizers, junk-drawer dividers, pot racks, hooks, see-through storage containers, under-shelf baskets, and graduated spice racks. A rolling cart is often helpful for adding counter and storage space.
- **Have a plan for kitchen related papers.** If papers need to be in the kitchen, set aside an area for them to live. Sort these papers and use organizing devices to keep track of them: e.g. baskets with folders in them, 3-ring binders with pocket pages, desk-top file boxes, or labeled bins. Make sure to include places for recipes, coupons, take-out menus, recycling information, and perhaps a bin/basket for each family member.
- **Beautify your space.** Add art work that inspires you and perhaps a few cherished knick-knacks, buy fresh flowers, and don't underestimate the value of empty cleared counters.

Once you've set up an orderly, appealing kitchen, **here are a few ideas to help you maintain this organized space:**

- **Periodically, rid your kitchen of clutter in a general way.** Banish all non-kitchen related items,

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and let go of anything that's not useful or that you don't love.

- **Then, take everything out of one area at a time, and sort and reduce these items.** Check expiration dates, toss, donate and store whatever you can elsewhere in your home. Clean cabinets and drawers before putting items back.
- **Weed those cookbooks** - how many do you really use? If you can't let go of the ones you never use, try putting them elsewhere in the house. In a year from now, see if you've missed them.
- **Organize your recipes.** Perhaps weed and sort them in front of a good TV show - and file the best ones in a recipe file box, a 3-ring binder with tabs and page protectors, an accordion-style divider, or the like. Or eliminate paper altogether, consider an online recipe organizing website or cookbook software for your computer.
- **Beware of buying in bulk** unless you are sure that you have the space.
- For best results, **be ruthless and weed continually.**

Good luck with this project. You will reap rewards from just a few small changes, so don't worry if you're unable to tackle everything at once. And **have fun with it!** Organize to a favorite TV/radio program, or to invigorating music. Try making it a family event followed by a special meal; or have a friend over to help and then return the favor.