

# Declutter

## Your Life

Bring that fresh, spring-clean feel to body, mind and soul with our top 30 tips to reorganize and prioritize your everyday—leaving more time for you!

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CONSULTING EXPERTS MARGARET MOORE, CO-AUTHOR OF *ORGANIZE YOUR MIND, ORGANIZE YOUR LIFE*, AND SUSAN BORAX AND HEATHER KNITTEL, CREATORS OF GOOD RIDDANCE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZING SOLUTIONS

### Get down

#### YOUR THRIVE LIST

To maintain mental wellness, Margaret Moore, co-author of *Organize Your Mind, Organize Your Life*, keeps a special to-do list of 10 things that make her thrive. Her faves: collaborate with her husband, hang out with friends, cook and eat great food, dance to music, travel to new places and look stylish—even when jogging. Your turn!



#### UPLOAD YOUR LIBRARY

Instead of stockpiling books, try a tablet reader to free up shelf space for some calming candles or air-purifying plants.

#### DISCRIMINATE TO ELIMINATE

*Be ruthless when it comes to what you keep or bring into your home in the first place. Try adopting the mantra "Keep only what you love and use."*

### Set a Timer AND WORK OFF-LINE

"It's important to step away from the computer to give your mind space to wander," says Moore. She suggests working off-line for at least an hour a day and using the time for personal development.

### BUY A BRIGHTLY COLOURED WALLET

TREAT YOURSELF TO A LITTLE SOMETHING IN A VIBRANT JEWEL TONE—IT'S WAY EASIER TO SPOT IN A CLUTTERED BAG! AND TUCK IN A BABY PHOTO. BRITISH RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT 88 PERCENT OF LOST WALLETS WITH BABY PIX GET RETURNED, COMPARED WITH 50 PERCENT OF THOSE WITHOUT.



#### WITH CITRUS SCENTS

A clean-smelling home is a happier home, say University of Toronto and Northwestern researchers. They linked citrus-scented cleaning agents with kinder and more generous behaviour. Spritzing lemony household products could even spur you to volunteer or donate to charity. Talk about cleaning up your act!

#### DO THE WORST THING FIRST (AND NEVER PROCRASTINATE AGAIN!)

Isolate the thing on your to-do list you dread most, then do it. It's called "eating your frog," and it's what workplace efficiency experts do when they want to get ahead. The idea comes courtesy of Mark Twain, who said: "Eat a live frog first thing in the morning, and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day." Just getting it over with gives you more time for the things you enjoy.



SAVE VALUABLE TIME WITH

*Launch Pads*

Designate a highly visible and easily accessible 'launch and landing pad' for your keys, purse and phone near an entrance-way. It can be a cupboard, bowl or drawer – whatever it takes to get you out the door faster in the morning rush.



Carry a pen and notepad in your purse to write down ideas when inspiration strikes.



*cover secret!*

SAVE AN  
EXTRA  
**\$1,378**  
THIS YEAR

Here's an easy way to bank extra bucks: Add \$1 to your savings account. Next week, add \$2, and continue to increase the amount by a dollar over the next 52 weeks. The most you'll ever put in is \$52, but you'll gain more than \$1,300 doing it!



### Perform

#### A CLUTTER-SCENE INVESTIGATION

Assess your mess first and set a goal, say Susan Borax and Heather Knittel, creators of Good Riddance Professional Organizing Solutions in Vancouver. They identify clients' goals and pinpoint their greatest hurdles. Hint: Trouble often lurks in storage areas, where lesser-used items tend to hide.



### File!

#### DON'T PILE

Designate folders for reference, active and ongoing projects, outstanding bills, personal info and future to-dos. Label each one and stick them in a filing cabinet drawer. Recycle often; drawers should be three-quarters full at most.

## 7 *space-saving* SOLUTIONS

TURN EVERYDAY ITEMS INTO CLEVER STORAGE OPTIONS

- STORE BOBBY PINS IN AN EMPTY TIC TAC CONTAINER.
- STACK CUPCAKE LINERS IN MASON JARS.
- KEEP HAIR TIES ON THE HANDLE OF YOUR BRUSH.
- USE EMPTY TOILET ROLLS TO TAME WRAPPING PAPER.
- USE A SPARE BUTTON TO KEEP A SET OF EARRINGS TOGETHER.
- MOUNT A SPICE RACK IN THE BATHROOM FOR CREAMS AND LOTIONS.
- DIVIDE NAILS AND SCREWS INTO A MUFFIN TIN OR EGG CARTON.



### SIP DANDELION TEA

Think of it as nature's housekeeper. Steep a cup in the morning to help flush away toxins and battle bloating.

### COLLECT MEMORIES, NOT THINGS

Think twice before buying tchotchkes. Focus on creating incredible memories instead!



### USE APPS TO GET *Organized*

HERE ARE OUR NEW FAVE WAYS TO SAVE TIME (AND SANITY!) IN THE DIGITAL AGE



#### SYNC EVERYTHING

This storage app makes everything from spreadsheets and travel documents to music and photos searchable, sync-able and accessible through an easy tagging and filing system. [evernote.com](http://evernote.com)



#### SLAM SPAM

Log in and, for \$3 a month, this virtual postman will automatically filter out spam and unimportant messages from your inbox. [sanebox.com](http://sanebox.com)



#### JOG YOUR MEMORY

Tell this reminder app what you need to get done and it will analyze and rank tasks for you. Got a lunch date near your dry cleaner? ReCall will prompt you to drop it off on your way. [reqall.com](http://reqall.com)



Look polished (without trying!). Use [stylitics.com](http://stylitics.com) to plan your outfits.

**BONUS TIPS**  
from our friends (and experts) at  
*Today's Parent*

### ✓ DITCH THE *Junk* DRAWER

Staying organized starts with finding permanent homes for everything, say Borax and Knittel. And watch out for black holes, "the spaces into which objects disappear and aren't seen again." Think pockets, purses and backs of cupboards.

### ✓ TUNE IN TO DIY SHOWS & *Design Blogs*

Staying up to date on clutter-busting skills helps make them second nature for you, says a new study from Canadian and U.S. researchers. They call it "participating in a taste regime," and they say it's a great way to refresh your routine.



# SCHEDULE YEARLY APPOINTMENTS NOW!

Regardless of whether you use a fridge calendar or your phone, arm yourself with a pen, a phone book and a bit of patience and set up all of your appointments for the entire year. Use our checklist as a guide (and remember to add your own if we missed something).

#### MEDICAL

**Dentist:** Every six months.  
**Family Doctor:** Once a year if you're healthy.  
**Gynecologist:** Once a year for females over the age of 15, or if they are sexually active.  
**Optometrist:** Every one to two years for everyone over the age of three.

#### AUTOMOTIVE

**Maintenance Check:** Have your car inspected, tires rotated and oil changed every 5,000 km.  
**Driver's Licence:** Every five years in most provinces.  
**Licence Plate:** Every one to two years in most provinces.

#### FINANCIAL

**Tax Consultation:** Once a year before April 30 to help with your income tax filing.  
**Financial Advisor:** Once a year to discuss your investment plans.  
**Insurance Agent:** Once a year to review your policies.

#### OTHER

**Passport Renewal:** Every five years (and 10 years starting in July).  
**Pet Checkup:** Annually once they turn a year old.  
**Date Nights:** Make time for special events like birthdays, Mother's Day, anniversaries or girls' nights out.

## .com

50 more ways to declutter your life  
[chatelaine.com/declutterlife](http://chatelaine.com/declutterlife)

### STRIVE FOR FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

If it doesn't make your life easier, don't do it, say Borax and Knittel. There's no right or wrong way to stay clutter-free – there's only the way that works best for you!

## BREAK BAD HABITS WITH NEW TRICKS

Instead of focusing on breaking a bad habit, try teaching yourself a better one. Identify a behaviour you want to change, write out the pros and cons, and choose a healthier habit to replace it with. Consciously doing things that make you feel better can fix unhealthy patterns. Win-win!



For more great tips from "31 Ways to Be a More Organized Mom," check out the March issue of *Today's Parent* magazine. On newsstands February 25.

