

# Monica's Organization Tips



©, 2006, Monica Resinger of Homemaker's Journal; <http://homemakersjournal.com>

*Be sure and click 'Bookmarks' to the left for clickable contents*

*To print a page, click 'print' under the 'file' menu then enter the page number you'd like to print.*

---

## The Organization Process

It helps to be inspired before beginning an organizing job, so here's a little inspiration for you. First off, get a mental picture of the place you wish to be organized -- a cupboard, a shelf, a desk or any place that really bothers you. Now, imagine how nice it would be when you go to retrieve an item from this area if it were organized. Only things you like and use would be in this area, these items would all have a home and you would know exactly where these homes are. It would be neat and clean. The item you are retrieving would be right where you went to look for it. Wouldn't this be a nice way to have our whole house?

Many of us, including myself, are far from the dream above, but I know we can get there. We can achieve anything we want as long as we want it bad enough. We just need perseverance and patience. I know this because I am currently in this organizing process and I am experiencing success!

I believe baby steps are the way to achieve large overwhelming jobs. If you wish to organize your five-drawer dresser, but it

seems overwhelming, do one drawer a day and in five days you will have the job completed. It will almost seem effortless because each of those drawers will probably only take you five or ten minutes to sort through. You can apply baby steps to any overwhelming job, just break the large job down into small, manageable tasks.

Another way to break a job down and feel less overwhelmed is to use a timer. Just set your timer for a manageable time and work until the timer goes off. Often times, you will find that you don't want to stop when the timer goes off and you get more finished than expected.

How to organize and sort:

Choose the area you'd like to organize. If it's a large job, break it down into manageable tasks as mentioned above, or get the timer out.

Have three containers such as empty boxes or garbage bags handy. If you wish, set your timer for a manageable time (5-15 minutes is sufficient) and begin sorting through the items.

When you find something that you don't use anymore, put it into one of the containers. This container will be the donation container. Later on you when your are finished organizing you will take this container to your favorite charity and donate it. You may have more than one charity box by the time you are finished. Don't rationalize keeping an item that you don't use by saying you might use it later or you're going to keep it for someone. Get rid of it now, it's these items that are causing you a headache and a big mess. Remember your visualization of that nicely organized space!

When you find something that is broken, put it into another container. This will be the trash container. Don't rationalize that you will fix it later; if it's not fixed yet, it's not going to get fixed. Remember your visualization.

When you find something that is useful that you want to keep, put it into the third container. Be sure this item fits into your visualization of that nicely organized space! Later on when the drawer, shelf or cabinet that you are organizing is emptied and cleaned off you can put these items away on or in it. As you are sorting, keep your clutter free and clean image of the area in your mind, this will help you to keep going. Visualizing the rewards of the job is very motivating.

If the timer goes off before you're finished and you'd like to stop at this point, go ahead and stop. Put your containers off to the side somewhere they won't be disturbed. Later in the day or the next day at the most, set your timer and begin the process all over again. Don't let the job go longer than a day if possible. The longer it sits, the harder it is to begin the job again. Remember to visualize the outcome.

If you'd like to keep working even though the timer went off, by all means do so! Keep going until you're feeling that you don't want to do it anymore.

When you are finished sorting, take the charity container to your favorite charity. It's important to do this as soon as possible. If it remains sitting in your house, the items will slowly make their way back into your living space.

Empty the garbage container into the garbage. Do this as soon as possible also.

Vacuum and wipe the shelf or drawer. You will now have enough clean space to store the items you want to keep.

## Organizing Magazine Information

I've always enjoyed home and garden magazines. So much so that they quickly began to pile up. Soon I realized I couldn't keep each and every magazine because my house just doesn't have that kind of space. Keeping every magazine wasn't doing me any good anyway; I couldn't find specific information when I wanted it.

So what I decided to do was to keep only the articles, pictures, recipes or other information that I was interested in. Each time I read through a magazine, I'd clip anything that I thought I might like to look at later.

Information I kept was pictures of decorated rooms, craft instructions, garden designs, information about specific plants and more. Sometimes I would make a note right on the clipping what I liked about the information so later when I looked at it I would know why I clipped it. For example, on a picture of a decorated room, I'd make a note that it was the color combination I liked about it. If it was an article, I'd highlight the information that interested me and so on.

So what do I do with my clippings? First of all, I set them in a wicker sewing basket until I get time to work on them later. Then when I am in the mood, I get the sewing basket, scotch tape, scissors, pen, highlighter and my cheap notebooks (the spiral bound 70 page notebooks that you can find on sale from .19 cents to .99 cents depending on how good the sale is). I started out with about 10 of them. Once I have all my items together on a nice big work surface like the kitchen table, I begin. First thing I do is sort the clipped information into related piles. All the bedroom decorating information in one pile, the craft patterns in another and so on. You can sort yours any way you like. You may want to break down a category such as crafts if you have a lot of clippings.

After sorting, you can see what categories you'll need. At this point, you can label each one of your notebooks with one of the categories.

Next comes the fun part -- putting your scrapbooks together. Trim any rough edges and tape the clipping to one of the pages in your notebook. Simple as that, and fun to see the items grouping together knowing you'll have the information at your fingertips. Now I'm sure you could use different materials for this such as scrapbooking materials, but this is a cheap and easy way. My mom makes her own binded construction paper books and her categories are different than mine. She loves pictures of horses and angels so has books for those. The possibilities for this are endless and only limited to your imagination.

It is so handy to have these books when it comes time to start a project. If you've been collecting information for quite a while then start a project on that category, that information becomes very valuable. They are also fun to take a look at every now and then.

---

## Create your Own Computer Cookbook

I've always loved saving and trying new recipes from magazines and books. When we got Internet services, a whole new recipe world opened up! I found e-mail lists where people share recipes, ezines that have recipes published and I do searches on the Internet for specific recipes when I need them. Obviously, I needed a way to save these recipes.

I found a quick, organized and easy solution, and you don't need a recipe program to do it. I have found it time consuming to save recipes from the Internet into recipe programs because they require you to type in each separate ingredient into the program's recipe format. This is too time-consuming especially when you're scanning lots of recipes.

What you need to save recipes my way is a word processing program such as 'Wordpad', 'Notepad' or 'Microsoft Works'. Most new computers come with a word processing program already installed on it, so if you have a fairly new computer, you probably have a word processing program too. I'm using Windows operating system. Here's a step-by-step process of making your own computer cookbook.

1. The first thing you will want to do is make a new folder somewhere in your computer such as in 'My Documents' called 'Recipes', or whatever you want to name your cookbook. You can create a new folder by selecting 'New' under 'File', then select 'Folder'. A new folder will show up and the computer will prompt you to name it.
2. Open a new document in the word processing program.
3. Highlight the recipe you want to save by left clicking your mouse, holding it down and dragging the cursor over the entire recipe you want to save. This should show black highlight over white text when you're finished.
4. Right click any part of the text you highlighted. An options box should pop up and you need to select 'copy' from it. Now you have copied the text onto the clipboard of your computer.
5. Go back to the blank word processing document and right click your mouse in it. From the options box, select 'paste'. This will paste your recipe into the document.
5. Save your recipe by clicking 'save' in the word processing document. Double click the 'Recipe' folder you created in step 1 to go into this folder. Now you will want to make a new folder for this type of recipe. Click the 'New Folder' icon at the top of the 'save' box. The new folder will pop up in the save box where you can give it a name. If your recipe is a spaghetti recipe for example, you can make the new folder a 'ground beef', 'Italian' or 'main dish' folder. After you have named the new folder, double click it so you will be saving the new recipe inside of it. Now name the recipe accordingly and click 'save'.

Follow this simple procedure for all your Internet recipes and soon you will have your very own organized computer cookbook. You can take this a step further and type in your recipes to try or favorite recipes from cookbooks or magazines; this will save space and money by eliminating the need for cookbooks or recipe storage systems.

I find it very handy and I can find recipes easily. When I want to try one, I print it out. Since it is in a word processing program, you can change the font or the colors to jazz it up.

If you'd rather save time and not fuss with making your own computer cookbook, why not try our recipe e-books? Click here for more information: <http://homemakersjournal.com/allebooks.htm>

---

## An Organized Shopping List Makes All the Difference

Making and using a grocery list will help you buy only necessities and/or sale items so will help you save money. It will also get

you out of the store quicker as long as the list is organized.

An unorganized grocery list can actually keep you in the store longer; here's an example: I used to make my grocery list by writing the first item at the top of the list and working my way down in no particular order. At the store, I'd be in a particular area, read my list over in a hurry and miss one or two items in that section. I would then have to run back to that section later when I noticed I missed items. Every time I went shopping I'd spend a good part of the time running back to a particular section to pick up something I missed. I decided there had to be a better way.

What I came up with is a pre-printed sectioned list made on my computer. The list has headings for each section of the grocery store such as 'produce', 'meats', 'breakfast foods', etc., just like you'd see in a coupon organizer. Now, as I'm making my list, I just go to the section on the pre-printed list and write in the item. Then, when I'm grocery shopping and in a certain area, I can see at a glance ALL the items needed in that section. Another benefit is that it's very easy to search for coupons since the list headings match the coupon headings.

I made this list by opening up a new document in my Wordpad program; any word processing program will work. Then all I did was type in the following headings three across in a row, then four or five returns down to make the next row of three across. The returns provide space for to write in items later. These are the headings I used:

PRODUCE  
BREAD/BAKERY  
CONDIMENTS  
BAKING SUPPLIES  
PACKAGED MEALS/SOUPS  
SNACKS/POP  
FROZEN VEG./JUICE  
FROZEN MEALS  
FROZEN TREATS  
MEAT  
BREAKFAST ITEMS  
CLEANERS  
PROCESSED MEAT  
PET FOOD  
TOILET PAPER/TOILETRIES  
MILK/DAIRY

After the list was finished, I printed out a few to keep with my grocery ads in a binder. When I need more, I'll print more.

I took my list shopping and found out, an organized shopping list does make all the difference.

---

Organize Your Leftover Containers in Four Easy Steps!

It was time to organize my leftover containers that are kept in a kitchen cupboard on a slide out shelf. I didn't realize how long

it had been since the last time I did this until I got to the bottom of the shelf and found things I'm ashamed to tell. I will tell you that there were containers I had forgotten I had because they were buried so deep.

How could this be useful?! Really, the only use it had was to barely store my leftover containers; 'barely' meaning each time I'd open the door, something would fall out. I had to ask myself 'why would I need 250 containers?!' Just joking, it wasn't that much, but it was too much. Here's how I got this cupboard in shape in four easy steps:

1. I took everything out of the cupboard. This is a cupboard close to the floor so I sat on the floor and took them out and set them around me on the (clean) floor. When the shelf was cleared out, I vacuumed it and wiped it off.
2. From the lids and containers on the floor, anything I didn't use or want anymore either went into the trash or into a bag to be donated to the Goodwill depending on if it was still useful or not.
3. With what was left, I matched containers with lids. Each container I found that still had a lid (don't ask me where the others went!), I'd set back into the cupboard and each lid went into a square plastic organizer to hold them; this way the lids would still be in with the containers, but not all scattered around. I stacked the containers according to their size and shape.
4. I threw away the remaining disposable lids and containers (yogurt, sour cream, margarine, etc.) that didn't have a match and donated any good, no match lids or containers to the Goodwill; I'm sure they'll find a match for them.

Complete in four easy steps! Now when I open that cupboard, the containers don't come falling out and I can easily find the container I need. It is a great feeling to have them organized (for a change).

If you are interested in more kitchen organization tips, check out the 'Kitchen Organization Tips' E-book; click here: <http://homemakersjournal.com/kitchenorganization.htm>

---

## A Place for Everything

So, you've made the decision to get organized, you've sorted through your belongings and you now have only items that you love and are usable. This may be for one small area of your home, a few areas, a drawer or two, or the whole house. However much you have done, it is an accomplishment no matter how big or small, so congratulations!

A very important aspect of being and staying organized is to have a place for everything. If you don't have a place for everything, then it all starts piling up again and pretty soon you're keeping everything because it's hard to tell what's what and what's where. Here's the scenario: You don't have a home for anything and whenever the mail comes in or you go shopping, you just put the items wherever you find room. Pretty soon, you have a mess! Believe me, I know; I've been through it.

I urge you to put some thought into making a home for every single type of item that you keep; this is so important! If you bring something new and different home and you don't have a place for it, make a place for it immediately or as soon as possible. If you don't have room, you'd better get sorting again. Here are a few suggestions on how and where to store some common items found around the house.

In the office:

**Paperwork:** A filing cabinet is a huge lifesaver when it comes to organizing your paperwork. I made files for every type of paper I had lying around, from movie reviews to our house papers and this has made my life a lot easier. I put these files in alphabetical order in my filing cabinet and now everything is put away, but even more thrilling is the fact that I can actually find a piece of paper in about five seconds! This is a huge improvement for me when before, I wouldn't even know where to begin searching for a piece of paper let alone have success in finding it.

**Magazines:** Cereal boxes are very handy for keeping magazines neat. To make a magazine holder out of a cereal box, cut off the top inch or so of the box, then, starting at one side of the top and cutting at a downwards angle, cut down half to one third the height of the box. Do this on the other side also and you will then have a magazine holder. At this point, you can decorate the holder by pasting pretty magazine pictures on it or painting it, then adding lace or ribbon. You can also put magazines in big wide wicker baskets.

**Coupons:** I have found envelopes very handy for storing coupons. Just label them the way you'd like them labeled (alphabetically or by type of food) and put your clipped coupons in them. The envelopes can be stored in a recipe or card file box of appropriate size.

In the closet:

**Blankets:** Laundry baskets make excellent holders for blankets that sometimes fit awkwardly on shelves.

**Shoes:** An over-the-door shoe hanger is a great way to get shoes off the floor.

**Travel bags, purses and totes:** Plastic storage bins are very handy for storing these.

In the craft room:

**Crafting items:** See-through plastic storage bins are a very good container for this because you can see where your items are and thus find things quickly.

In the living room:

**Remote controls:** A great way to store these is in small wicker or wire baskets.

**Odds and ends:** We use a wooden chest as a coffee table and it's handy because it doubles as storage. We keep some of our collectibles in there along with craft pattern books and other odds and ends. Another idea for this is to put a wooden or glass circle on top of a new garbage can. You would then drape a decorative tablecloth over the top of the circle. The garbage container can then be used to store your odds and ends and you would also have a decorative table for fresh flower arrangements or knick-knacks.

In the bathroom:

**Miscellaneous items:** Wicker baskets are great for storing a lot of items in the bathroom. You can put all your hair styling aids in a large one, washrags in another and cosmetics in another.

**Medicines:** For the medicine cabinet, I bought short, plastic drawer organizers that fit the shelves just right. I have one for headache medicines, one for cold medicines, one for owies (band-aids, ointment, etc.), one for stomach medicines, etc. This not only makes it easier to find items, but it also makes it easier to wipe the shelves when they become dirty.

**Toilet Paper:** I crocheted a toilet paper holder to hang right above the toilet, so when someone runs out of toilet paper, there should be a roll in the holder for easy retrieval. You may be able to find one of these at a craft bazaar.

**In the Bedrooms:**

**Miscellaneous items:** Under the bed storage organizers are great for storing seasonal clothes, Christmas wrapping supplies, gifts to give, books, and other items.

**Kids Toys:** The see-through plastic bins are great for toys because the kids can see what goes where. You can also mark the bin with a picture or word.

**Crayons:** Save baby wipe containers or coffee cans to store crayons in. If using a coffee can be sure there are no sharp edges to cut the children.

I hope this gives you enough ideas to get you started in finding a place for everything. If you'd like more ideas, check out the e-book \*Storage Solutions\*: <http://homemakersjournal.com/storagesolutions.htm>

Once you have accomplished making a place for everything, you only need to train yourself and family members to put things away in the appropriate places.

---

## An Organized Pantry

By Monica Resinger

One night I was making burritos for dinner. I went to grab refried beans out of the pantry and couldn't find any. Later, while cleaning out the pantry, I found some. If the pantry had been organized to begin with, I would have been able to find the refried beans and save my husband a trip to the neighborhood store, saved money as refried beans at the neighborhood store are not cheap and lots of frustration. Another problem with a cluttered, unorganized pantry is waste. I found spilled flour, noodles, Jello and cornmeal packages. So, in an effort to improve myself and knowing what I had done in the past wasn't working, I put some thought into how I could create a better system. Here's what I came up with:

### Assign a Home for Each Item

Assign a home to each different type of item. For example, have one shelf for cereals, another for canned foods, another for spices and another for prepared boxed meals such as macaroni and cheese. If you have to, you can split up a shelf for two different foods. Be sure to keep multiples of foods together so you can see at a glance how much of something you have.

### Get Rid of Dead Space

Make sure your shelves don't have too much 'dead space'. Dead space is unused space which is usually found above what you are storing. For example, when I was putting my canned food away on the canned food shelf, I noticed I couldn't stack two regular sized (about 15 oz.) cans one on top of another, but there was a lot of empty space above the cans (dead space). So I adjusted the shelf up a couple of inches so now I have room to stack two regular size cans and there is less dead space. This made a tremendous difference--I could now get all canned foods onto this shelf rather than have them scattered



throughout the pantry.

## Creative Containers

Find canisters or other holders for noodles, flour, sugar, rice, popcorn or other food that comes in plastic or paper bags. I used to store the opened bag of rice (or other plastic or paper bagged food) right in the opened bag (closed with a twist-tie) which always lead to spills. Now I use canisters, empty coffee cans, glass jars, and other containers to hold these items for no mess. If you use pretty glass jars (which you can find at thrift stores), you can store noodles, rice, split peas or other attractive food in them and display on your counter to save pantry space. Finally, put taller items in the back. This makes finding things easier.

The effort you put into organizing your pantry can be very rewarding. It will save you time, frustration and money. It is so nice to be able to open the door and see everything organized (or just being able to see everything without a can falling on your head or toes).

For more kitchen organization tips, check out The Kitchen Organization Tips E-book; it's packed with tons of tips that will help you get your kitchen organized and keep it that way including the refrigerator, freezer, drawers, spices and more! Click here for more information: <http://homemakersjournal.com/kitchenorganization.htm>

---

## Get your Family Racing to Complete Chores!

by Monica Resinger

My family went on a mini vacation a few years back which included a stay at a very nice hotel. During our stay, I admired how clean the room was and wished my home could be that clean. We had a long drive home and I thought about how I could start keeping my home that clean or close to it. The reason my house wasn't as clean as I liked was because I didn't do everything that needed to be done when it needed to be done—in other words, I didn't have a system.

What I came up with was a chore schedule list. I started out by writing down every chore that needs to be done for each room in the house, then I labeled them with either a D (for daily), a W (for weekly), an M (for monthly) or 1-3 x a year. Then I went to the computer and opened up 4 new documents and saved them as Daily, Weekly, Monthly and 1-3 x a year. On each of these documents I listed each chore that needs to be completed in that time frame and left an area for checking off each chore on each day, week or month when completed.

It has been a while since I created these chore schedules and since then, I've come up with an excellent way to get my family to help. Here's what I did: I made the chores schedules into tables with spaces to write in whoever's initials completes the chore. At the end of the week, we tally up initials and we come up with 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place winners (4 people in my family). First place is the one who has the most initials and so on. We give \$10 to 1st place, \$7.00 to 2nd, \$5.00 to 3rd and a giant candy bar to 4th. To even be considered for a prize, a family member must have at least 7 chores completed.

This method has members of my family racing to get as many chores done as possible within a week trying to win 1st place! The house has been much cleaner and my kids are learning housecleaning skills while having fun trying to win. Of course it has been much less work for me so it is well worth the money paid for prizes. If you don't agree with paying money for chores,

then you could give other types of prizes such as time spent with mom or a day at the park, etc.

If you'd like to cut the work of creating your chore schedules, I have them available here:

<http://homemakersjournal.com/choreschedules.htm>

---

## Get your Recipes Together!

Here a few methods I have found to organize recipes:

### PHOTO ALBUMS

You can place clipped recipes and recipe cards in any type of photo album (hint: go to the thrift stores and pick up inexpensive albums) although the type of albums that you can add pages to would be best because this will help you organize the album better. You can place tabs on pages to divide the album into categories then simply place your clipped recipes into the appropriate category. This method is a great way to keep all loose recipes together. The plastic protection will help keep your recipes clean.

### A RECIPE FILE

Get an accordion-type file to organize clipped recipes and recipe cards. Label each section with a different recipe category then simply file your recipes. This method will at least keep them all together and is quick, but you will have to sort through all the recipes in a certain category when trying to find a particular recipe.

### A RECIPE BOX

With a recipe box, you can put different categories onto tabbed dividers and you can buy more dividers if necessary. You can file clipped recipes but it is neater if you write them onto recipe cards which is time consuming. As with the accordion file, you'll have to sort through recipes in a category to find one.

### A COMPUTER RECIPE PROGRAM

If you have a little spare time this is a great way to compile all of your favorite recipes--including ones in your recipe books. These programs are pre-formatted so you just fill in the blanks. It can get time consuming entering in all your recipes, but if you stick to entering in 1 or 2 recipes a day, you'll make some progress.

There's a number of benefits using this method, one being that you can easily find recipes and print them out. You can print out recipes and make homemade cookbooks to give to your friends and relatives. The program will figure the nutrition information for your recipes. Some programs offer a menu maker and a shopping list. It's also easy to locate certain recipes with certain ingredients. For example, if I have ground beef on hand, I can do a search for 'ground beef' and the program will bring up all recipes with ground beef in it. Also, these programs come with recipes--so if you don't want to enter your own, you'll still have a great cookbook to use all these features on.

### A THREE-RING BINDER

I use the three-ring binder in conjunction with my recipe programs. I have put tabbed page dividers into it and labeled each divider with its own recipe category. Whenever I print out a recipe to use from my recipe programs, I punch holes in it and place it into the appropriate category in the three-ring binder. This eliminates the need for me to re-print the recipe later.

I hope this article gives you some ideas for organizing your recipes. Recipe collecting can be a fun hobby especially if it is organized!

---

## Household Behavior Modification

Ever hear of behavior modification? Usually it's associated with weight loss meaning you make changes to your eating behavior to produce weight loss. If applied, it usually produces pleasing results with just a little effort. I'd like to introduce another behavior modification idea and that is household behavior modification.

With this idea, you make changes in certain behaviors that you do at home to make improvements in areas that are bothering you. The question is, where do you start?

To figure out where to start, you need to notice what's really bothering you about your home. It could be your cluttered desk, too much clutter everywhere, not being able to see clearly through the windows, or embarrassment when people come to visit among many other things. When you notice that you are irritated about something in your home, write it down in a notebook so you can look back at it later and come up with 'household behavior modifications' to help solve the problem.

Once you are in the mood for coming up with some solutions to your household problems, bring out your notebook and a pen. For each household problem that you listed, come up with a few solutions and write them down on a new page. This can include behavior modifications and other notes such as purchasing items that will help solve the problem. It's best to focus on one problem at a time.

I have done this many times in my own home and I'll give you some examples of what I did to solve the problems. I'm in no way finished, but at least things are always getting better.

Here are some of my examples:

~ Note in notebook: Irritated by all the paper everywhere (junk mail, newspaper, etc.). Behavior modifications: Sort through mail right after it is retrieved, throwing away what needs to be thrown away, putting bills in bill box and coupons in coupon binder. Put daily newspaper in recycling bin to be picked up weekly by garbage service. Reminder: Make call to get recycling service for the newspaper.

~ Note in notebook: Embarrassed when visitors come over and the house is a mess. Behavior modifications: Since the living room is the first room visitors see, I'll be sure to tidy it first when cleaning house. Enforce the rule that everyone picks up after themselves. Get in the habit to check the living room constantly to see if it needs tidying and if it does, tidy it.

~ Note in notebook: The front porch is ugly. Behavior modifications: Straighten, organize and sweep front porch on a weekly basis. Note: Find some cute decorations for it at a thrift store or yard sale. Cover the ugly plywood floor with outdoor rug.

To come up with solutions, you have to get to the root of the problem. Ask yourself where is the problem coming from? My ugly front porch problem was coming from too much clutter, no decorations and lack of organization. My paper everywhere problem was coming from saying 'I'll get to it later' and not having a place for what I did keep. Once you get to the root of the problem, it will be easier to see what needs to be changed.

Writing these down has the benefits of being able to look back later and see if your behavior modifications have worked. If they haven't, then you can think up new behavior modifications or reinforce the old ones, whatever needs to be done.

I suggest that you add your modifications to your chore schedule. This will help ensure that you stick to it. If you don't have a chore schedule, check out the one here:

<http://homemakersjournal.com/choreschedules.htm>

Remember, small changes add up to be big improvements!

---

## Homemaking School for Children by Monica Resinger

With it being summer vacation for the kids, a lot of us may be experiencing a messier house than usual. A solution to this would be to give the kids daily chores or, what I like to call it, homemaking school. Homemaking school will not only help the house stay tidier, but will also give your kids valuable lessons in housecleaning and responsibility that they need now and later in life.

As I was growing up, I didn't have many chores. All that was expected of me was to do the dishes after dinner and keep my room clean (which I barely did). Later when I got my own place, I discovered a few problems as a result of not learning how to do certain household tasks.

One of these problems was lack of organization. In my parent's home as I was growing up, most everything was kept for later use or for sentimental value. Since I grew up this way, this is how I ran my household; I didn't know any other way. I found out after a period of time that this was not going to work for me. My tiny apartment wasn't as big as mom and dad's house and it wasn't long until my place was bulging with too much stuff. It has taken me years to train myself to be more organized and the job is even more challenging with children and husband. I'm still 'in training' and still not that organized, but there has been a lot of improvement. The point is that if we can begin training our children early, they can have an easier time when they get out on their own.

Organizing was only part of my housekeeping problems. There were many other things I didn't know how to do correctly that I had to teach myself. Home magazines were my partner through this and they helped me tremendously.

I don't blame my mom and dad because they were doing their best at that time, and besides, I've learned a valuable lesson from it and that is to be sure to teach my kids how to do this stuff.

The most effective way for me to get my chores completed is to schedule or list them. This is probably the best way for the kids to get their chores done also. There are a couple of ways you can do this, but the first step is to figure out what you want each child to do.

To do this, think of age-appropriate jobs. You don't want to give a job that's too difficult to your child because this will end up in disagreements and won't be worth it in the long run. You may even feel your child is too young for chores yet and that's

perfectly fine, it's up to you when they start. If you feel they are ready, start thinking of what type of jobs around the house they could manage. The way I do this is to look at my own chore schedule and try to imagine my kids doing each chore. If I can't imagine it, they probably aren't ready for it yet.

Younger children are perfect candidates for dusting and wiping. They can wipe lower kitchen cabinets or dust low bookshelves. They can pick up stray items from rooms if shown where to put the items away; after a while, they will learn where everything goes. If they don't do it perfectly at first, let it go, they will get better as time goes on. The important thing is that they are learning to keep house and help mom keep it clean.

Older children can do dishes after dinner and pick up the dinner mess. They can dust the higher stuff. Mopping floors, disinfecting the toilet, sweeping porches, vacuuming, cooking they can do most everything you can if shown how.

Once you have decided what you want your children to do as chores, you can make up a chore schedule or list either by hand or on the computer. You can make it as a table with days of the week going across the top and the chores listed down the page. It could be just a simple list hanging on your refrigerator by a magnet. Or, you could make a fancy, colorful list from a computer program that can be hung in a frame. The list can be laminated so it can be used over and over. One final idea is to get a dry erase board or chalkboard and write chores on these. The important thing is to get it written down. This will serve as a reminder to you and the kids.

Once you have established which chores each child will be doing, it's important to show them the correct way to do each task. It may take a few times of showing them, but they will get it right eventually, so don't give up.

If you'd like you can pay them. Some people feel children shouldn't be paid for chores because children should learn they are part of the household and it's their responsibility to help out. Some people feel it's fine to pay children for the work they do. One important note here is if you decide to pay them, be sure they know they won't get paid for EVERYTHING you ask them to do. They do need to know that they are part of the household and they need to do their part. Paying children for chores is up to the family and based on their particular values, don't let someone else decide this for you. How much you pay them is also up to you.

Remember, chores are really life lessons for our children. Think of it as homemaking school.

Check out Monica's Chore Schedules that have the following 4 printable schedules made up in a table format (like a calendar) so once a chore is completed, it can be checked off for that time: Daily, Weekly, Monthly and 1, 2 or 3 times a year. Includes a way to have a fun family chore race so your family will have fun quality time together and get the house cleaned at the same time and more! Click here for details: <http://homemakersjournal.com/choreschedules.htm>

---

Messy Car? Here's How to Get it Under Control.  
By Monica Resinger

Speaking from experience, I understand how easy it is for your vehicle to become an out-of-control mess. You use it to go shopping, traveling, visiting friends and family, pick the kids up from school, get to work and back and more. All this results in empty soda cans, shoes and socks, French fries, hamburger wrappers, chip bags, receipts, loose change and who knows what

else rolling around in your vehicle.

This is not only embarrassing (if someone is allowed to see it) but it can slow things down when you can't find what you're looking for and can make you unappreciative or resentful of your vehicle. Wouldn't you rather have a nice clean car with everything in its place?

It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking it's too hard to keep your vehicle clean and organized but really, it isn't difficult if you apply a few 'rules of the road'. To get on the 'road' to recovery, begin applying these rules:

~ When you get home or to your destination, be sure everything that doesn't belong in the vehicle comes out of the vehicle. I know, you're tired and don't feel like doing it right when you get home, but you're most likely not going to feel like it tomorrow either so get it over with now. Tell everyone that what they bring into the car they bring out of the car the same trip and be sure everyone follows this. If your kids want to take items with them, have them put the items into a backpack or tote bag. This will make it easier for them to bring in the house when you get home. It will take a little effort to begin with but after a while, it becomes a habit for everyone.

~ If you stop for fast food and eat in the car, be sure to throw the garbage away in the restaurant's garbage can before leaving the parking lot. This not only saves your garbage space but also leaves you one less thing to do when you get home.

~ Always have a garbage bag in the car. You might even want to include one in front and one in back. Tell everyone the only place garbage is allowed is in the bags and they are not to set it anywhere else even if it is only temporary. Good triggers to empty your bag are when you are getting gas, going shopping or stopped at a rest area or fast-food place. All of these places provide garbage cans and it's a great reminder to get rid of it.

~ It's helpful to carry a whiskbroom and pan to clean as you go. Also, keep some rags and a spray bottle of all-purpose cleaner to wipe things up as they happen. Replace the rags as needed.

~ On road trips, make it a habit at every rest stop to do a quick clean up of the vehicle. Dump the garbage in the cans provided, wipe spills or dust, put things in their places and sweep it out.

Now, get your car organized.

The best way to organize your car is to be sure that everything in it is needed in the car. So the first step would be to go through what you have in the vehicle and decide if each item is necessary. It helps to have 3 containers, boxes or bags to sort the items into. One container for garbage, one for items you don't want and can give to charity and one for items that belong in the house. Anything you want to keep in the car set to the side for the time being.

Once you have sorted through everything, take the garbage container to the garbage, take the charity bag to the charity and put your household items in the house.

Now organize what's left - hopefully it isn't too much because cars don't have much storage space. If you find the glove box or other containing places in the car aren't roomy enough for what you have left, then you might want to double check your items and be sure you really need and want them in the car. If so, you could go to the store and look in the automotive section for car organizers. There are a lot of different vehicle organizers on the market. I noticed they are now carrying an over-the-seat organizer for children's and other items. The important thing to remember is that whatever you decide to keep

in the car, be sure it has a home.

What should be in the car? First I'll tell you the must-haves. In the glove box, you should have current insurance card (if you don't keep it in your billfold), vehicle registration and vehicle maintenance book. In the trunk you should have a spare tire, jack, lug wrench, and battery jumper cables.

There are many other helpful things you could store in your car such as a first aid kit, flashlight, screwdriver, etc. It's up to you what you decide is helpful when you're using your vehicle. If you keep a lot of tapes or CD's in the vehicle, consider keeping 4 or 5 at a time in the car then rotating them from the house.

To summarize, it doesn't take that much effort to keep your vehicle neat and clean. Establish 'rules of the road', what you want in the car and places for these items and you've got it made!

---

**Brought to you by:**

**Homemaker's Journal E-Publications**

**When you purchased this e-book, you received free resell and distribution rights in its' currently compiled format. The contents of this e-book may not be changed in any way. You may resell this e-book and keep 100% of the profits.**