

*Golden Tips*  
*for*  
*Getting*  
*Organized*



from the  
*Golden Circle Members*  
of the  
*National Association*  
*of Professional Organizers*



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## Introduction

Welcome! You are about to encounter a remarkable potpourri of organizing tips, developed and contributed by the nation's top veteran organizing professionals. This power-packed booklet will delight you with its easy-to-read and easy-to-apply information.

Sponsored by the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO), "*Golden Tips for Getting Organized*" is an educational, consortium effort of the Golden Circle members of NAPO, whose purpose is to recognize and acknowledge veteran organizers for their professionalism and expertise.

We are proud to share our wealth of inspirations with you, and hope you will perpetuate this effort by continued learning, and sharing the nuggets of gold contained in the following pages. May all your organizing dreams come true!

### Special Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the Golden Circle members whose gracious contributions are the foundation of this booklet. Also, to the Golden Circle Booklet Committee responsible for the overall production of this publication (listed alphabetically): Sheila Delson, Doreen Doyle, Paulette Ensign, Donna Goldberg, Donna D. McMillan, and Terry Prince.

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— *Tips Booklet Committee, 2001*

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## Books

**1** Group your books into three basic classifications: non-fiction, fiction, and reference. Consider storing the categories in different rooms or bookcases to make the distinction apparent. Recycle your books by

- taking them to a used bookstore for cash or trade.
- bringing them to associations that hold annual book sales and need donations.
- starting a book swap with friends that share your taste in books.
- using the library for acquiring books. Let it take care of purchasing and storing them for you.

*Terry Prince*

*Terry Prince, Consultant*

*Elk Grove, CA*

## Car

**2** Use a decorative sticky notepad for quick notes or reminders while in your car. Remove the backing and stick it onto your console or dashboard where it will be in plain sight.

*Karen Linn Solomon*

*PC Tech Associates*

*Los Angeles, CA*

**3** Take time to organize your car properly if it is your "second office." Determine what equipment and file storage you need so you can operate effectively from your car.

*Lee R. Donald*

*Organizing Associates, Inc.*

*Mobile, AL*

## Children

**4** Use the model of a classroom when organizing a child's room. Create "stations" to accommodate the different activities—puzzles in one area, crafts in another, and dress-ups

in yet another. Use compartmentalized storage units that are marketed to schools. They are equally effective in homes.

*Ellen Langan  
Langan + Associates  
Seattle, WA*

**5** Create a traveling office for children. Students in younger grades like to do homework near an adult, usually on the kitchen table. Stock an art box or tackle box with school supplies, ruler, glue, markers, hole punch, whiteout pens, and pencils. When they need a supply, they won't need to run back and forth to their desks.

*Donna S. Goldberg  
The Organized Student  
New York, NY*

**6** Mount "wall file pockets" to the wall or the side of a cabinet with nails or Velcro for children's school papers. Label the pockets "homework," "for parents' signature," and any other meaningful labels. This keeps the papers in good order and off the kitchen table.

*Stella Macey  
S.O.S. Stella's Organizing Service  
Santa Clarita, CA*

**7** Be realistic when creating a child's room. Include basic needs like good light, a comfortable reading spot, and a work table. Hang things on the walls. Develop effective storage spaces. Honor the child's privacy. Remember that it is *their* room. Let them enjoy living in it.

*Hanley B. Cox  
Fiddlesticks, Inc.  
Tulsa, OK*

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## ∞ Closet ∞

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**8** Install a small rod in your closet just for the storage of empty hangers. You'll never go looking again. Go to your local display company after the closet is installed and buy clear plastic hangers with swivel heads.

*Sandee Fablen M.M.  
PrioritiesFirst  
Kirkland, WA*

**9** Use the "hanger trick" when weeding out clothes in your closet. At the start of each season, when switching your clothes for the change in weather, hang all your clothes with the hanger head pointing out into the room instead of toward the wall. As you wear, launder, and return your clothes to the closet, put them back as you normally would, with hanger pointing to the back closet wall. At the end of the season see how many clothes still have their hanger heads facing out into the room. These are the clothes to consider discarding.

*Kim Cosentino  
The De-Clutter Box, Inc.  
Westmont, IL*

**10** Group clothing by length in your closet to gain more usable floor space. You can also separate clothes by type, such as casual, dress, his, hers, or in and out of season. While grouping, eliminate items that you rarely or never wear because they don't fit, aren't comfortable, or are out of style.

*Susi Peterson  
Specialized Organization Services  
Isanti, MN*

**11** Work in one area at a time. Choose only one area to review instead of taking everything out of a closet at once. Start at the beginning of the hanging clothes rack. Make categories for each kind of clothing: blouses, suits, pants, skirts, outfits, empty hangers. Consider color-coordinating each area.

*Stephanie Schur  
Space Organizers  
White Plains, NY*

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## ∞ Clutter Control ∞

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**12** Create more counter space by hiding your kitchen phone station instead of cluttering up your counter with an overstuffed pencil cup and loose papers. Hang your calendar inside the wall cabinet door nearest the phone. Clear enough shelf space to hold a pencil cup or attach a pen on a cord to the cabinet door. Stash the phone book, a few office

supplies, and a phone log in the nearest drawer. Train your family to use the log instead of writing messages on loose pieces of paper.

*Kit Davey  
A Fresh Look  
Redwood City, CA*

**13** Weed out a bookcase, closet, or some other cluttered place in your life by gathering together only those items that excite you, inspire you, or make your heart sing. Let the rest go. Use this approach for considering what to keep rather than for trying to decide which things you can get rid of.

*Anacaria Myrrha  
Simple Systems  
San Rafael, CA*

**14** Keep up with the clutter and leave the deep cleaning until later. This is especially effective during busy times of the year, such as around the holidays. When those holiday guests stop by unexpectedly, they'll notice clutter much faster than the dust on top of the refrigerator.

*Judy Warmington  
Woman Time Management  
Hudsonville, MI*

**15** Do a big "quick sort" through any pile of possessions. Use 8½" x 11" scrap paper and a marking pen to identify stacks for further sorting. Make labeled stacks with titles like, "To the Bathroom," "To the Garage," "To the Family Room," or "For Gift Shelf." Set a grocery bag or shoebox on top of each paper that identifies a stack (keep each paper's title showing). Begin collecting, leaving the labeled paper in place for further sorting when transporting items.

If items in appropriate rooms need further sorting, repeat the sorting process with more labeled stacks or containers with specific titles such as "Batteries," "Electrical," "Electronics," "Light Bulbs," "Glues & Tubes," "Vases," etc.

*Mary Anne Lessley  
Creative Organizing  
Boulder, CO*

**16** Organize one thing at a time. Start with one desk drawer or one file cabinet, one kitchen drawer or one closet.

*Katherine D. Anderson  
Anderson Organizing Systems  
Albuquerque, NM*

**17** Add wall lights rather than table lamps. This un-clutters a room instantly. Before adding lighting, replace paper shades with fabric, nylon, cotton, or silk lampshades, which are translucent and do not block light.

*Barbara Landsman  
Unclutter Your Life  
New York, NY*

**18** Use the "in and out" inventory rule: "Something new comes in; something old goes out." This maintains your system once you weed things out and get organized. Do this and your things will never back up on you again.

*Stephanie Culp  
The ORGANIZATION®  
Temecula, CA*

**19** Ask yourself, "Does this need me?" as a way to sort through accumulation. Get a big empty box. Take a book, item of clothing, or any other personal item you have a high need for, and ask yourself, "Does this need me?" Remember, the question is not "Do I need this?" but "Does this need me?" Let your heart respond with a simple yes or no. If it does not need you, drop it into the box. Give the box away.

*Judith Kolberg  
FileHeads Professional Organizers  
Avondale Estates, GA*

**20** Select a starting place for any project the same way you read a book. Work from front to back, top to bottom, left to right.

*Barbara Brooks  
Be Better Organized  
Thousand Oaks, CA*

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## Computer

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**21** Keep a file called “Internet” in your most accessible desk file drawer. Store a list of each of the Web sites where you have registered as well as the corresponding user name and password you have used to register at each site.

*Wendy B. Samuel  
Clutter Therapy®  
New York, NY*

**22** Align your computer files with your paper files to create standardization and simplified retrieval. If you want a certain folder or file to appear at the top of the alphabetized list in your computer, simply begin the name with an underscore (\_). This achieves the same thing as the old way of adding an ‘A’ before the word, and is less confusing. Example: \_MyPlan.

*Jamie D. Sebens  
Working Order  
Cincinnati, OH*

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## Decision Making

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**23** Frame any challenge at hand in the form of a question before writing it down as a statement. For example, “What are the three most important things I need to take action on?” Once that is clear, capture the action items on an action list and then schedule them.

*Ingrid Kutsch  
Insight to Action®  
Lincoln, NE*

**24** Make decisions about paper as it crosses your desk. Clutter is nothing more than the physical manifestation of indecision.

*Holly Uverity  
Office Organizers  
Houston, TX*

**25** Make a “Not To Do” list. Deciding what not to do is just as important as deciding what to do. Make a note

each time you catch yourself accepting tasks that are beyond your capabilities or doing nonproductive busywork during a time when you feel you could be accomplishing important work. Keep this list semi-permanently until you have firmly established in your mind what represents the busywork that is sabotaging your productive work.

*Dorothy J. Lehmkuhl  
Organizing Techniques  
Estes Park, CO*

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## E-mail

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**26** Organize your e-mail. Create special folders for storing saved e-mail messages. Electronically file the messages in these folders, by subject, for quick retrieval. This keeps your e-mail in-box clear for incoming messages.

*Karen Simon  
PC Tech Associates  
Santa Monica, CA*

**27** Place your contact information in all your e-mail replies. Include phone number and/or extension. Make it easy for people to communicate with you.

*DJ Watson  
sorganized Professional Business Operations  
Pensacola, FL*

**28** Handle your e-mail as you would handle your actual paper mail. Skim your in-box for junk mail. You do not have to read it. Delete what is not needed. Read and decide on the appropriate action, such as:

- a. respond to originator.
- b. forward.
- c. cut and paste any pertinent information or reminders to your PIM (Personal Information Manager) and delete the e-mail.
- d. print to a paper file or store in the computer. Avoid a redundant filing system.

*Do'reen A. Hein  
Artistic Designs  
New York, NY*

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## ☯ Feng Shui ☯

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**29** Increase prosperity and bring in more opportunities by using feng shui concepts. Place a water fountain (with a good flow) in your office or by the front door. Direct the water flow towards you or to the inside of the home or office. This increases the flow of abundance into your life.

*Terumi Leinow  
Terumi & Associates  
Woodacre, CA*

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## ☯ Filing ☯

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**30** Use the crease lines at the bottom of file folders for supporting the papers being filed. Using this “box” also lets you see the file folder label easier, and cues you when the file is getting too full. It is time to begin another file or clean out the one being used when papers in a single file folder exceed the 1½” allotment.

*Judy Fitzpatrick  
Clutter Consultant  
Atlanta, GA*

**31** File instruction manuals for everything you own into a single file. Staple each receipt to the first sheet of the corresponding instruction booklet. This saves time hunting for either the receipt or manual when you need them later.

*Lorraine Litvin  
Let's Get Organized  
Pompton Lakes, NJ*

**32** Set up a hanging file titled “Taxes.” Put folders for tax forms, year-end statements, deductions, and any other tax documents inside. You will already have a place to file these documents as they arrive so they can be found quickly when needed.

*Joan Kisver  
WorkSmart  
North Miami Beach, FL*

**33** Save yourself the trouble of purging your financial records every year by investing in a new A–Z indexed expanding file each year. Label the file with the year. As you pay bills and collect receipts, pay stubs, deposit tickets, and any other tax-sensitive documents, file them in the expanding file. For less than \$15, the filing system you use to store your financial records for the current year becomes the archive to be kept as a permanent record in the attic.

*Jackie Tiani  
Organizing Systems, Inc.  
Glendale Heights, IL*

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## ☯ Financial Record Keeping ☯

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**34** Request a change in your credit card billing date if the date comes at an awkward time of the month for you. The banks are usually willing to accommodate you.

*Lynne Crew  
Affairs In Order™  
Sarasota, FL*

**35** Consider banking on-line and using money management software programs. This eliminates the need to enter bank transactions into a paper register and the need for hand-balancing your checkbook. Combined with on-line (or telephone) bill paying, this greatly simplifies and minimizes the time needed to manage your money.

*Cynthia Ballinger  
Simplified Living  
Folsom, CA*

**36** Keep an up-to-date list of all of your assets and liabilities, including whether assets are held jointly or singly, and where the appropriate documents can be found. Keep one copy and give another to someone your trust! Include:

- Bank accounts, property title deeds, insurance policies, investments, stock certificates, brokerage accounts, valuables, chattels (furniture, cars, boats, etc.), cemetery plots, and so on.

- Mortgages or leases, bills, credit card accounts, etc.

*Claudette Päage  
Päage et Cie Personal and  
Business Management Services  
Scarsdale, NY*

## 🌿 Grocery Shopping 🌿

**37** Make a grocery shopping list. Organize the items based on how you travel around the store. List only items you normally purchase. Leave a space to write in anything extra or for family members who don't want to take the time to locate the item they want purchased. Make several photocopies of the list and hang it inside the kitchen cabinet door with a pencil hanging nearby on a string. Circle the items as needed. When it is shopping time, fold the list in half (vertically), slide your coupons inside, and staple or tape it closed to take to the market.

*Ann Gambrell  
Creative Time-Plus  
Torrance, CA*

**38** Dig out a month's worth of your family's favorite recipes. Print them onto index cards with all the necessary ingredients. Include children's favorite recipes and teach them (if they're capable) how to make the dish. Take a week's worth of recipes with you if you shop for a week so you won't forget the required ingredients. Place the recipe in the back of the stack after you make the dish, leaving tomorrow's menu in front.

You'll never have to think about what to make for dinner or hear, "Gee, it's Tuesday so it must be pot roast night!" when you add side dishes to the card that go with the recipe. When your child's favorite recipe comes up, take the night off and let your child do the cooking!

*Sheila G. McCurdy  
CLUTTER STOP®  
Upland, CA*

## 🌿 Holiday Shopping 🌿

**39** Create a "Shopping Central." Get a large envelope and write "Shopping Central" on it in bold print. Use it for your shopping lists, gift ideas, receipts, and credit card slips. Keep it with you. Write the name of the gift's recipient on the back of the receipt. Refer to the envelope to remind you what you bought for whom, to help you realize if you're missing a gift, and for reference for next year's holiday shopping.

*Helen Volk  
Beyond Clutter®  
Albany, NY*

**40** Buy all greeting cards near the end of the month to be sent during the next month. Address them and write the date to be mailed in the stamp position.

*Barbara G. Glass  
THE CLUTTERBUSTER  
Los Angeles, CA*

**41** Buy greeting cards at random when you see ones you like. Store them in a file caddy or other sturdy container that will accommodate several 9"x12" manila envelopes upended on their sides. Using envelopes instead of file folders keeps the greeting cards completely protected.

Label the envelopes:

- Birthday
- Happy Anniversary / Friendship / Thank You
- Get Well / Feel Better / Sympathy
- Congratulations / Baby / Wedding / New Home
- Special Occasion / Holiday
- Blank

*Bette Martin  
Necessary Indulgence Professional Organizing  
Studio City, CA*

**42** Purchase clear storage boxes. Label them "Infant/toddler Gifts," "Girls Gifts," "Boys Gifts," "Halloween," "Birthdays," and leave one blank for gifts purchased for the

family. Stock the bins with treasures bought throughout the year, usually on sale. This eliminates having to run out and buy a gift for a birthday party or holiday at the last minute.

*Kate Rboad  
Kate Rboad - Consultants  
The Woodland, TX*

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## ∞ Home ∞

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**43** Make a map for your fuse box. Place labels identifying which room each switch belongs to, so that when a fuse blows, you won't have to figure out which one needs replacing. There is never a good time for the fuse to go out.

*Carolyn Strauss  
Five by Five Organizing  
Culver City, CA*

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## ∞ Jewelry ∞

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**44** Store thin chain necklaces in fat drinking straws. Thread one chain through one straw. When you lay them in your jewelry box, they will not get tangled.

*Janice Kemmer  
American Business Organizers  
Chino, CA*

**45** Use ice cube trays to store earrings. Place each pair in a "cube." The trays stack easily, provide an inexpensive way to store earrings, and allow everything to be visible. Consider getting ice cube trays in different colors to easily identify contents if you have a variety of earrings such as gold, silver, and costume.

*Deborah Gussoff  
In Order, Inc.  
Montclair, NJ*

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## ∞ Kitchen ∞

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**46** Use baskets for snacks for young children. Position the baskets on lower kitchen shelves so the children can reach them without knocking things off the shelf.

*Bootsie Johnson  
In Place Unpacking & Organizing  
Smyrna, GA*

**47** Use other-than-round plastic containers for storage and freezing leftovers. Square ones take up less space.

*Bonnie Wilder  
Organize to Order, Inc  
McLean, VA*

**48** Use drawer dividers and trays to organize kitchen "junk drawers." These trays are designed to keep things in place and segregated within any drawer. They can be purchased in varying sizes to suit individual needs.

*Julie Signore  
1, 2, 3, SORT IT  
Kula, Maui, HI*

**49** Line the inside backs of your kitchen upper cabinet doors with cork tiles. Use as a bulletin board and/or to keep often-used recipes over your mixing center. Just open the door and mix, without splattering your recipe.

*Pat Moore  
Pat Moore, the Queen of Clutter  
McKenney, VA*

**50** Look at the contents of each cabinet, one section at a time, noting how many items require special storage. Count and measure each item by category. In a kitchen this means stacked dishes, pots, pans, lids, and trays. Identify and retrieve lost storage space. Measure sizes of all kitchen equipment and heights between shelves. Now you can rearrange cabinets, either by yourself if they're adjustable, or with a carpenter's help.

*Maxine Ordesky  
Organized Designs  
Beverly Hills, CA*

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## ☞ Moving ☞

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**51** Get rid of as much as possible before moving. Hold a yard or garage sale, and donate items you are not using. Or, take a deep breath, think about the cost of moving, and fill up your trash cans with things that are just bogging you down.

*Monica Friel  
CHAOS TO ORDER  
Park Ridge, IL*

**52** Identify what is used daily by older people when helping them move to a new home. Most times they don't know or care what is in the attic or basement. They care where, when, and how they are moving and what will fit in their new place. Store excess items at children's homes or in a storage unit until the older people are settled in their new place and can make clear decisions about what to keep and what to discard.

*Anne-Lies Van Overbeek  
The Get Organized Company  
Houten, Holland, Europe*

**53** Pack an overnight bag before you move. Include items you will need for the next few days such as clothing, medications, and toiletries. Have an "Open First" box that is clearly marked. Pack sheets, towels, pillows, and your coffee pot (with all the accessories) in that box. You may want that coffee to get you going the next day.

*Linda Rothschild  
Cross It Off Your List®  
New York, NY*

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## ☞ Office ☞

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**54** Organize paper-type office supplies by hanging them in file folders, labeling and alphabetizing the folders as you normally would for typical reference files. This is great for lined paper, scratch paper, blank paper, graph paper, notepads, stationery, mail-outs, small envelopes, large envelopes, day planner pages, sheet protectors, blank forms,

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and cardboard (for mailing). Include a section for greeting and occasion cards in a labeled, alphabetical manner.

*Jane Reifer  
Clutter Control Organizing Services  
Fullerton, CA*

**55** Arrange your office using daily/weekly/monthly criteria. Store supplies used daily within arm's reach when you're seated at your desk. Inventory that you access weekly can be filed on the other side of the office, and monthly materials can be stored somewhere else entirely.

*Stephanie Denton  
Denton & Company  
Cincinnati, OH*

**56** Keep your desk items on the preferred side. Whichever hand you use most often is your preferred side. A right-hander's preferred side is their right side. The exception is to keep the telephone on the opposite of the preferred side so you can use your preferred hand to take notes.

*Eileen Roth  
Everything in Its Place  
Mesa, AZ*

**57** Arrange office furniture and equipment so that each is efficient and serviceable with the other. A practical desk and a side table or credenza need enough drawers and shelves to store frequently used office supplies and should contain one or two large drawers for hanging files. Feng shui experts suggest positioning the desk facing the main door (the power position) for maximum concentration, control and authority.

*Donna D. McMillan  
McMillan & Company Professional Organizing  
West Los Angeles, CA*

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## ☞ Paper Management ☞

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**58** Practice The Art Of Wastebasketry® Determine whether to keep a piece of paper by asking, "What's the worst possible thing that could happen if I didn't have this?"

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If you can live with your answer, toss or recycle it and live happily ever after!

*Barbara Hemphill  
Hemphill Productivity Institute  
Raleigh, NC*

**59** Approach paper organization by gathering the paperwork from every surface in the office and stacking it in one large pile. Address each piece of paper one at a time, considering where it should go or if it is necessary to keep it at all. This creates some clear space, reduces visual chaos, and allows more effective work to be done.

*Gail Pine  
Left Brain Solutions  
Santa Barbara, CA*

**60** Merge, purge, and organize. "Merge" means putting like items together. Put all paper together and group all other possessions together. "Purge" refers to getting rid of all papers and possessions that no longer serve your highest purpose.

*Martella Keniry  
SOS Organizing Services  
San Pedro, CA*

**61** Sort mail daily. Trash the junk mail immediately. Highlight due date on bills. Sort mail into action file folders. File items for future reference, by category, in a file cabinet.

*Nancy Black  
Organization Plus  
Beverly, MA*

**62** Use a paper shredder as a way of controlling accumulation of magazines, newspapers, and "old" confidential paper. Shredding these things minimizes clutter.

*Jan Limpach  
Organizing Plus  
Omaha, NE*

**63** Create a tickler file for managing all paper that requires action. Use either an expandable, accordion-style tickler file product, or hanging folders including tabs for January – December and 1–31 (days of current month). De-

velop a combination that works best for you. You may use the accordion system along with some hanging files labeled for specific actions like "Call," "Calls Expected," "Read," "Write," "Discuss," or "Pay."

*Kathy Paauw  
Paauwerfully Organized  
Redmond, WA*

**64** Simplify paperwork by sorting according to the action needed. Use three categories: "Call," "Write," and "Go." "Call" is self-explanatory. "Write" is everything to be done with pen or computer, from paying bills to writing a thank-you note to addressing an envelope so something can be mailed. Any Call or Write task with no corresponding document is represented with a piece of scrap paper placed in its own pile.

*Monica Silver  
Monica Silver Professional Organizer  
Tucson, AZ*

**65** Create a mini-file system by using 3"x5" cards with tabs for such information as recommendations for good books, restaurants, movies, doctors, and other resources. Write the information on 3"x3" sticky notes to carry with you. Put the sticky note onto a card and file it in the right category when you get home.

*Bonnie Foz  
IN ORDER  
Newton, MA*

**66** Sort a stack of paper long overdue to be sorted by turning it upside down. Starting from the bottom with what is usually the older things makes it easier to toss, handle, pass along, or file. Reward yourself when you are done with that stack!

*Ellen P. Mathis  
Organizing Services  
Long Beach, CA*

**67** Identify an original document so it won't get mistakenly used. Put it in a clear three-ring plastic sheet protector or report cover. Make a note in pencil on the back top-right corner identifying it as "original." This two-step

precaution will alert you immediately. You can also photocopy through the plastic.

*Sally A., Hulem  
In-House Organization  
Downey, CA*

**68** Program your bank account number into a memory phone to make telebanking a breeze. You will still be protected, since only you know the personal identification number (PIN).

*Doreen Doyle  
Doreen Doyle Company  
Boston, MA*

**69** Use a spiral notebook to capture random ideas, to-do lists, and notes of phone conversations. The notebook creates reliability and consistency for storing information and is far superior to the back of an envelope.

*Paulette Ensign  
Tips Products International  
San Diego, CA*

that accommodate dividers or index cards to record pertinent information and simplify the retrieval process. Store photos carefully, away from extreme temperatures and humidity. Select a few treasured shots to share with family and friends.

*Judith A. Kirk  
Organizing Resources  
Plainville, CT*

**72** Keep pictures in order when taking them in for developing by putting used film back into its canister after removing it from your camera. Then place a removable label or piece of masking tape on the canister's top. Write #1 on the label. Continue numbering each roll of film sequentially. Place the labels from the canisters onto the film processing envelopes and put corresponding film inside the envelopes. When you get your photos back, you will immediately know if any rolls are missing. It is easy to go through your pictures in the order you took them when you put the envelopes in sequential order.

*Jean Furuya  
The Office Jeanie  
Torrance, CA*

**73** Turn duplicate and so-so photos into postcards and take them on a trip with you to mail off to family and friends. Order duplicate photos only when you know you are sending a set to someone in particular.

*Peggy Timm  
Organizing Options  
Mercer Island, WA*

**70** Gather all photos from where they have been hiding and assess how many decades' worth there are. Sort them by decade and store them in 10"x13" envelopes in a secure box until you can get to them. Then get out the ones from the current year. Begin making scrapbook albums.

*Juli Shulem  
JS Designs Unlimited  
Santa Barbara, CA*

**71** Organize your photos by using three easy steps.

- 1) Toss: Not all pictures are keepers because of quality or duplication.
- 2) Sort and Edit: Use an acid-free pen to record names, date, and event on the back. Sort by event, chronology, geography, or individual person.
- 3) Storage and Share: Use photo cartons or albums

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## Project Management

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**74** Visualize the end result before starting an organizing project. Cut out a picture from a magazine that exemplifies your vision. This will help you to focus on what you want to achieve.

*Sandra M. Einstein  
e=mc2 organizing & coaching consultants, inc.  
Gates Mills, OH*

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## ♻️ Recycle ♻️

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**75** Place an empty copy paper box under your desk. This provides a large, out-of-sight receptacle for immediate paper disposal.

*Frank Murphy  
Inventory Management Services Inc.  
Greenville, SC*

**76** Recycle old toothbrushes. There are places that grind up returned brushes and turn them into plastic lumber for park benches and porch decks. Some will send you a free toothbrush every three months.

*Karen Fulks  
ORGANIZERS EXTRAORDINAIRE  
Venice, CA*

**77** Recycle the things you love and can't part with by making them into something else. Cut out the fronts of your tee-shirt collection and have them stitched into a quilt top. Combine the fragment of your grandfather's watch chain with the favorite earring that has lost its mate (and all those other bits and pieces in the bottom of your jewelry box) onto a chain for a memory-laden charm bracelet. Make a glass-topped collage of favorite photos to cover an end table or storage chest.

*Audrey Lavine  
Life Support Systems  
New York, NY*

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## ♻️ Storage ♻️

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**78** Invest in a "sample case" if you travel to clients with your laptop and printer, assorted cables, and a full supply of your regular "briefcase" supplies. It will hold all of your paraphernalia. It has wheels and a strap for pulling it. A sample case can be purchased for under \$50 from numerous suppliers.

*Glorya Belgrade Schklair  
The Practical Organizer, Inc.  
Moorpark, CA*

**79** Keep things near where they will be used. Keep what is used in the office in the office and things used for sewing with the arts and crafts supplies. Storing things by usage can help minimize clutter.

*Marsba Sims  
Sort-It-Out, Inc.  
North Miami Beach, FL*

**80** Use self-sticking plastic business card holders to install changeable labels for boxes or clear plastic bins. Use a bold marking pen and the backs of any old business cards to make readable, easy-to-change labels.

*Maureen 'Mo' Osborn  
Simplify Your Life, Inc.®  
Falls Church, VA*

**81** Use two-gallon Ziploc bags for everything from crafts to paperwork. These bags are often the final storage or separating device. Leave everything divided and conquered where it cannot reshuffle itself while waiting to be relocated into another container if the bags are not the final destination.

*Mary Pankiewicz  
Clutter-free & Organized  
Whitesburg, TN*

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## ♻️ Telephone ♻️

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**82** Leave an effective voice mail. Slowly state your name, company, and telephone number at the very beginning of your message and repeat it at the end. This gives two chances to write and double-check your phone number.

*Jeanne K. Smith  
Exit, Stage Right®  
Palo Alto, CA*

**83** Keep a carbonless phone message pad by the phone. Record messages and conversations on it. You can tear off the note and feel comfortable that there is still a record somewhere. These are also a necessity by the home phone. Teach your children to take full messages.

*Debbie Gilster  
Organize & Computerize  
Laguna Niguel, CA*

**84** Make a mini-agenda for your phone calls. The average phone call lasts 12 minutes. Using an agenda for that same conversation can shave five minutes off of that call. Think of how many calls you make each day and multiply by five minutes each. How much time did you just find?

*Betsy Wilkowsky  
The Organized Executive, Inc.  
Marietta, GA*

**88** Incorporate effective time management by remembering the acronym CCN. This stands for categorizing, containerizing, and naming and is a way to streamline your approach to a series of related tasks.

*Cynthia Kyriazis  
Organize It  
Ambler, PA*

**89** Use 3"x5" sticky notes to jot down the reminders or errands that you want to get to "sometime in the next few days." Each day move the sticky note forward until the opportune moment arrives to act on it.

*Beverly Clower  
Office Overhaul  
Santa Monica, CA*

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## Time Management

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**85** Allow 50% more time for activities/projects than you originally planned as a way to accommodate unexpected delays. Things usually take longer. Consider it a bonus when you have time left over!

*Patricia Braun  
Braun Strategic Resources, Inc.  
Chicago, IL*

**90** Create master lists/checklists for recurring needs. Some examples are air mileage numbers, books to buy, things loaned to others, or things you have borrowed.

*Christine R. Palen  
Palen-Siu Enterprises  
Marina del Rey, CA*

**86** Find a reliable system for recording actions to be done. This can be a planner book, a to-do list on paper, an electronic planner, or computer software. Diligent use of the system serves as the prompt and ensures that actions get taken care of.

*Mikki Lesowitz Soliday  
Divine Order  
West Hollywood, CA*

**91** Plan 60% of your time. Allow 40% to handle the unplanned. Plan 15 minutes each morning and afternoon to review your priorities.

*Amy M. Siu  
Palen-Sui Enterprises  
Marina del Rey, CA*

**87** Save time by anticipating ongoing tasks. Find a time every day to open and sort your mail. Reconcile your bank statements each month. Use one calendar and one task lists. Return phone calls as soon as possible. Organize your wardrobe for quick and easy dressing.

*Karen Moore  
KLS Organizing Services & Products  
Goshen, KY*

**92** Save valuable time by placing a container in a designated place near your way out the door. Put things needing repair, returning, or cleaning or things needing to go to school or work into the container. This system helps get things done in a timely way, without having to hunt for the items in question.

*Sally Seidl  
Organized Unlimited  
Irvine, CA*

**93** Use a ticking kitchen timer to get things done. Set the ticking timer when you feel overwhelmed looking at a pile of papers or a stack of boxes to be emptied. The ticking timer keeps you going at a quick pace and helps you stay focused. Stop working on the project when the timer goes off. Decide if you want to finish the project immediately, or at another time, and reset the time accordingly.

*Lynn Hall  
Clutter No More, Inc.  
San Diego, CA*

**94** Place a basket at the bottom and top of your stairs. Use it as an in/out box. Drop items into the basket rather than walking all the way upstairs to put something away. On your next trip upstairs, grab the basket or contents of the basket and carry them with you. Sometimes you will have one item and sometimes many to carry.

*Greg Vetter  
Vetter Productivity Inc.  
Atlanta, GA*

**95** Make a static action list come alive as an effective tool by adding two key factors. Consider two things about each item on your list:

- 1) The due date. Adjust this as needed. The entry could stay on the list forever without a due date.
- 2) Estimate how long it will take. This will give you a realistic approach to getting it done by the deadline. Review and revise your list regularly to harness your action list as a success tool.

*Ethel Cook  
Corporate Improvement Group  
Bedford, MA*

**96** Keep in mind the type of energy you'll need for the work you'll be doing when allocating time for organizing. Just because you're free on Thursday night doesn't mean that's the best time to deal with papers that have been piling up for months. Chances are you'll find the work more manageable in the morning, when you're fresh and alert.

*Judy Stern  
Organize NOW  
Great Neck, NY*

**97** Plan at least one day during the school week with no scheduled activities. Set a limit to the number of outside activities for each family member. Schedule weekly family meetings to review the coming week's events and commitments.

*Mitzi Weinman  
TimeFinder®  
Newton, MA*

**98** Take regular mini-retreats at least three or four times a year. Schedule 2–4 hours away from the distractions at home or work to rest, think, plan, read, regroup, and make decisions. Take an entire week instead of a few hours if you can manage it.

*Sue Swanson  
Sue Swanson Organizing Specialist  
Pullman, WA*

**99** Learn to estimate how long a task will take. Double (or even triple) your "guesstimates" at first. You'll become more accurate with practice.

*Tommie M. Bryan  
The Organized Way  
Somerset, NJ*

**100** Master the minutes. Utilize small blocks of time rather than waiting for large amounts of uninterrupted time to take care of things. Consider what can be accomplished in ten minutes. You can organize a drawer, clean out your wallet, write a note, or read a story to your child. In five minutes you can make a few phone calls, sort your mail, empty the dishwasher. In one minute you can review your to-do list, make your bed, or stop and smell the roses.

*Linda Samuels  
Oh, So Organized!  
Croton on Hudson, NY*

**101** Copy your keys. Keep duplicates of the house or car keys in a hidden place or with trusted people. You'll have an easier time if you get locked out of your car, house, or office.

*Jay Davidson  
Palo Alto, CA*

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## Travel

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**102** Devise a series of master lists to cover any type of packing and pre-trip preparation needs. Make copies before each trip and then either cross off what you will not need or check off the items as you retrieve them for packing. Brainstorm as many items as possible and update or correct your lists periodically.

*Eleanor Siegal  
The Source  
San Antonio, TX*

**103** Designate a drawer in your home for items used when traveling so you don't have to think about gathering them each time. Store a travel umbrella, cosmetic kit stocked with your favorite items, a fold-up tote bag, a dirty clothes bag, a steamer, a travel blow-dryer, a fold-up jewelry case, and travel electric curlers. Personalize the drawer according to your needs. Keep a supply of plastic dry cleaners bags to pack clothes without making wrinkles.

*Marilyn M. Long  
Advanced Records Services  
Marietta, GA*

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## Video Storage

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**104** Store VHS videotapes in 11"x8"x4½" photo boxes that hold up to 10 videos per box. Assign each box a number and make a title index list of the contents. This will make access easier and save time and frustration when looking for that one special title.

*Sheila Delson  
FREEDomain Concepts  
Poughkeepsie, NY*