



Q We have a lot of organizing work to do in our home, and I don't know where to start. The garage, bedroom and kitchen all need to be tackled. Is it better to start with the garage, which is the worst problem, or the bedroom or kitchen, which are areas of the house we need to spend lots of time in?

A Start in the easiest area so you can begin to flex your organizing muscles. Then when you get to the harder stuff, you will be in the swing of it and will be able to tackle it more easily. Definitely make the garage the last space to organize. As you go through your home organizing, inevitably you will purge items. Things that you don't throw away will be put aside to donate or give away. Where to keep them to get them? Yeah, you guessed it. The garage!

Start in your bedroom. By getting your bedroom under control, you will create a sanctuary. Go through your closets and purge clothes you no longer wear. Only keep bedroom-related items in this room – no office supplies or kids' toys. Once the bedroom is done, you can practice keeping it organized and use it as a "vision area" to help you keep your eye on the prize when you get to the harder areas.

The kitchen is a little tougher and needs to be broken down into manageable amounts. Tackle the pantry first,

then drawers and then cabinets. Try to streamline and really ask yourself if you use all the appliances and other items you are holding on to. I mean, how many plastic containers and lids do you really need? Think about the flow of your kitchen and keep things together close to where you will use them. For example, keep coffee mugs near the coffee pot, coffee and water supply.

And now for the garage! This, of course, has actually gotten worse since you began, because now all the stuff you've purged from the bedroom and kitchen are dumped in there. Call and set up an appointment with a pick-up donation service such as the Salvation Army. Remove everything that you are donating and set aside, ready to be taken away. That's half the battle over with. When organizing the rest of your garage, think of zones. I like to create "his," "hers" and "kids" areas when organizing a garage to make it super simple for everyone to find what they are looking for.



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Q How do I keep my home office from becoming a pile of junk, toys and papers? The desk just seems to become a repository of things I need to deal with and remember for school, work, home finances. I have a filing system, but what about those important papers that are only important for a week? Or my daughter's class roster? Or the medical bill I need to remember to check? Help!

A Start by keeping your home office free of unrelated items. It's hard to use the space as an office if you have to dig through everything else that's in the way.

It's great to have a filing system, but are you actually able to use it? If your file cabinet has too many papers inside, it makes filing difficult and you are less likely to do it. Purge your file cabinet regularly to ensure that out-of-date or unnecessary papers aren't taking up valuable space.

To handle ongoing papers, set up an inbox area on your desk. I like vertical filing systems, because they take up less space and it's easy to see what you have going on. Label a

file for each category that you need, either "school," "work," "home" or "finances." Also include a file labeled "take action." This is where you can temporarily put the invitation you need to RSVP to or the medical bill that needs to be checked on. These files are your go-to place for the papers that you need easy access to for a short period of time.

When you have taken care of an item in ongoing file, move that paper to your filing system, shred or toss.

Set aside time each day to process items from your ongoing files and take 10 to 15 minutes at the end of each day to clear your desk area and put papers either into your ongoing filing system on your desktop or into your file cabinet. This will go a long way to preventing paper overload!



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Women's History In the Making

In honor of Women's History Month, here's a tiny tribute to a brand-new historic woman: Lilly Ledbetter.

In 1979 Lilly Ledbetter was a plant supervisor at Goodyear Tire Company in Alabama. She had worked there for 20 years when someone slipped her a note showing that men doing the same job were paid more than she was. She sued. Her case went all the way to the Supreme Court, but she lost when the court said she should



have sued when the pay decisions were made, within the 180-day statutory time limit.

Fortunately, women like Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi took up her case. And in January, President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act into law. She was there to see the culmination of her 10-year fight, giving women a chance to challenge pay discrimination whenever they spot it.

— Amy Simon



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LAP 02/09



Q In my kitchen I have several different sized pans, all of which I use, stored in one cabinet. These include everything from 8-inch square cake pans to 10-inch round pans with removable bottoms, from muffin tins to popover pans, large pans for sheet cake to smaller bundt pans. I have to take them all out to get to the ones I need. And in the heat of the moment, I don't usually put the pans back neatly. Is there any way to store these neatly and conveniently?

A Depending on your cabinet space, there are different ways to solve the problem and make getting to them and putting them away much simpler.

Tall narrow cabinet space is great for housing muffin tins, square pans, popover pans and large pans for sheet cakes vertically. Then you can easily see what you have and retrieve what you need. You can either have slots built in to store each piece in a compartment or purchase a bakeware organizer (available for \$7.79 at organize.com). If you don't have a tall narrow cabinet, see if you can raise a shelf in one of your regular cabinets high enough to hold pans this way.

Also consider installing pull-out shelving, which will make accessing your bakeware easier. A deep drawer can be used in the same way if you are able to divide the space into individual compartments for each piece you plan on storing there. Again, either build in the slots or place your bakeware organizer inside the drawer.

For small, round cake pans and bundt pans, think horizontal. You can buy modular shelves in a variety of shapes and sizes (around \$5-\$20 at www.containerstore.com) to divide the cabinet space and hold one or two items on each shelf. Keeping them separate this way will help you avoid stacking all your items on top of each other.



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Green Is the Best Revenge

Somewhere between "geek-o" products that are green but dorky, and "chic-o" products more devoted to cool than to their cause, you'll find Revenge Is ... (www.revengeis.com). This L.A. company's eco products just plain work.

Their T-shirts (\$38), for instance, are available in grey or black made from recycled plastic bottles blended with organic cotton. They look and fit great and are among the most comfortable shirts I've ever worn. And it doesn't hurt that they are printed with timely slogans like "Revenge is ... Energy Independence."

The Tuck-Away Reusable Bag (\$10.95) also used to be a plastic bottle, and says so. It's big enough to hold at least two plastic grocery bags' worth of stuff, but folds down to just 2"x4". It easily clips to a purse or belt loop, so you're never caught shopping without it.

But my hands-down fave is the Hybrid Mug (\$18.95). It holds 14-ounces of your favorite hot or cold drink, and maintains the temperature for hours. The sleek stainless steel cups are spill proof, fit into your car's drink holder, and come with a mesh tea strainer so you can make your favorite brew right in the cup.



On top of it all, the company donates 10% of profits to charitable causes dedicated to helping shift our society in a more environmentally responsible direction.

— Christina Elston



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Q Can you recommend a method for keeping things useful and accessible in the all-important "junk drawer"?

A One of the major problems with junk drawers is that they get filled so fast with stuff that it's impossible to know what you have in there or to find anything when you need it.

My best recommendation to keep items from accumulating in a junk drawer is to get rid of the junk drawer! We think we need one, but if we can get used to creating homes for everything that we use – and taking the extra seconds to put them away after we use them – then bye, bye junk drawer.

Here's how you can turn the drawer you currently use as a "junk drawer" into a drawer for things you use and can access with ease.

First empty out the junk from the drawer to find out what is in there. Separate the items into categories – place like items together. Have a trash can handy and as you go, toss anything that can be thrown away. Next, take any items that don't belong there or have homes elsewhere and put them away. Whatever is left are the items that you want to keep in your now "non-junk" drawer.

Use drawer dividers to create sections within the drawer. The type you use will depend on the items that need to be contained. You can search online at your favorite stores by typing "drawer organizers." Be sure to measure your drawer ahead of time and check that the piece you purchase will fit.

When you are tempted to just throw something into your now "non-junk" drawer, interrupt that thought and ask yourself, "Where does the item belong?" Then take the extra seconds to go and put it there. It doesn't take as long as you think to put things away once you've done the job of creating a home for them.

To watch a How To Demo for organizing a junk drawer, visit www.SupremeOrganization.com.

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An Envelope For Your Gems

Where to park your jewelry when you need to take it off and bring it along?

Whether it's a purse, gym bag, suitcase or pocket, you're just asking for it to get lost – or at very least emerge in an awful tangle. But not with Gemvelopes (\$24.99-\$45, www.gemvelopes.com).



These handy pouches are just five inches square, but they're big on organization. Each includes a cushion to hold stud earrings (you just poke them through and put on the back), a snap-tight strap where you slide on rings, bracelets or necklaces, and a little pocket for other items. The jewelry and cushion are kept in place by four fold-over flaps, and the whole thing is secured with a snap and a pretty ribbon.

The pouches come in a bunch of fun colors and prints, from lovely red or blue flowers to wild green leopard. Now I can "ohm" out at yoga class without worrying about losing an earring or knotting a necklace.

– Christina Elston

Hold My Purse

Gals on the go tend to be attached to their handbags. Whether it was the big-budget culmination of a long search or a passing fancy on sale at your local discount shop, you don't want to park it on the floor – even in the most adorable



little bar or bistro. Instead, consider a Luxe Link Purse Charm (\$35-\$79, www.luxellink.com).

These glamorous gadgets clip onto the outside of your bag as a nifty accessory. But unclip them and they form a portable hook that can safely dangle your purse from any table top.

– C.E.



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LAP 62009



Q Can you recommend some gadgets/containers/storage devices that make a big difference in your organizational world? Is there a bin or drawer or bucket or something that is just the cat's meow?

A When you are in the middle of an organizing project and done with the sorting and purging, there is nothing better than having just the right container in which to house your newly organized items. Keep your choice as simple and appealing to the eye as possible and always purge before you purchase. Remember to measure the space, drawer, shelf, etc. so you will know exactly how big, deep and wide the container or item you will be buying needs to be.

Here are three of my favorite containers for the kitchen. My all-time favorite is the OXO Pop Container (\$7.99-\$16.99 each, www.oxo.com). Use these stackable airtight containers to store dry foods such as cereal, flour, sugar, snacks or pasta. They are square or rectangular – which I prefer over round as they create a more uniform look and enable you to use every inch of space – and come in lots of sizes. They look great, and are easy to grab off the shelf and open.

Another nifty item is the SimpleHuman Grocery Bag Holder (\$9.99, www.simplehuman.com). They attach to a wall or the inside of a cupboard and can attractively house all the grocery

bags you may need. You know what to do with the rest.

A third simple but effective solution for kitchen cabinets is a turntable (\$9.99-\$24.99, www.containerstore.com). These work really well for canned goods or condiments and prevent you having to rummage around looking for things at the back of your cabinet. Have all labels facing outwards to make it easier to locate items.



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Flip Flop Time

As you transition to flip flops this summer, wear them for just a few hours at a time at first to give your shin muscles a chance to adapt, preventing tendonitis, says Dr. Tzvi Bar- David of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.



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WOMEN'S PAGES



Q My two kids, ages 8 (a girl) and 4 (a boy) share a room. Their closet is a disaster. I have a big bin in there where I store some of their school artwork and some shelves that are filled with games and "organizing" containers.

But they can't get to anything now, and there's no room for shoes, which are becoming a hobby for my daughter. Help!

A Keeping items on a level where children can reach them is so important. Take a few hours when the kids aren't around to go through everything in their closet. Discard anything that is old, torn, or your kids have outgrown. Go through their artwork and select your very favorite pieces and separate into smaller bins, one for each child. Let the rest go! When space is limited and shared, you want to only keep things there that they love, use, wear and play with often.

Divide the closet into "his" and "hers" sides. Contain their clothes in size-appropriate bins or baskets that are clearly labeled. For your 4-year-old, use pictures of socks, T-shirts, etc. on the outside so he knows what goes where.

Place a low, horizontal shoe rack on the floor and let that be the home for their most frequently worn shoes. Place the rest of your daughter's shoes in clear plastic shoe bins on the higher shelves or in an over-the-door shoe rack, and take two pictures of each pair. Post one on the outside of the shoe bin - which will probably hold more than one pair each - and the other on the inside door of the closet. Each day, your daughter can choose which shoes she will wear from the photos. If they are on the higher shelves, you can get them down for her that day and put them back.

If possible, add shelves on the lower levels of the closet so they can reach their clothes and use the higher shelves to house the additional shoes, artwork boxes, games or off-season clothes. A low stepping stool can also help them reach a little higher than they might be able to at the moment.



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Q In our living room, we have a huge set of bookshelves that are bursting at the seams and often a mess. They get lots of use, and hold everything from photo albums to cookbooks to our favorite novels. What is the best way to keep these neat?

A Sounds like it's time to do some purging and re-arranging! Take it one shelf at a time. Pull out and set aside any book that you don't really need or want to keep any longer. These can be donated to a library, community book drive or hospital.

Remove any children's books and make room for them in your kids' bedrooms. If possible, move the cookbooks to the kitchen so you will have them close at hand when you need them. Photo albums tend to be large and cumbersome, so gather them up and place them on the lowest of your bookshelves.

The less you have in any given space, the easier it is to manage. Now that you have created some room on your shelves, create zones for the different genres of books that you own. Keep fiction, nonfiction, travel, special interest, etc. in their own groups. How many shelves you will need for each grouping will depend on how many

books you have in that particular genre. Work around what you already have in place. If you have two rows that have mostly novels on them, remove any book that isn't a novel and designate those shelves to novels.

There are many different ways to organize and arrange books on a shelf. Once they have been separated by genre, they can be organized alphabetically or by size from the tallest through the shortest. I like this way as it looks more streamlined, but it depends on your personal preference here. Larger books can be placed horizontally and used as bookends.

Arrange the books so that they are lined up in a straight line and position them towards the front of the shelf so they look neat and are easily accessible. This will also help you avoid placing any objects, ornaments or photos in frames in front of your books, which would clutter your newly organized shelves and make them look messy.



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Q I have a family of four and a slender, side-by-side refrigerator-freezer combo. The food in the freezer tends to get all jumbled up and disorganized, and I can never seem to find what I need without unloading the entire thing onto the counter. I would love to make more efficient use of the freezer, so that I could take advantage of deals at the supermarket and stock up more often. How do I get it organized?

A There's nothing worse than trying to get dinner on the table for a hungry, tired family only to open the freezer door and cause an avalanche while attempting to grab a bag of frozen broccoli.

With your freezer, as with any area you need to get under better control, the old rules of organization apply. You want to make items easy to retrieve and put back. Start by taking everything out. Throw away anything that has been in there longer than it should or has freezer burn. Separate the rest by food type – meats, breads, frozen vegetables, fruit, etc.

To avoid the jumbled mess of anything going anywhere, create sections for your food categories by using each shelf for one product type only. Maximize shelf

space by using stackable, reusable, square or rectangle containers to hold pre-cooked meals, leftovers, soups, stews, etc. Measure your freezer's width and depth and be sure to choose containers that fit the space well.

If you have the shelf height, portable shelves are a good way to create more space on an existing shelf. This is also a great way to avoid stacking too many containers on top of each other. Label the side of each container so you will know what is inside. Remember to include the date and even the number of people the contents will feed.

To keep bags of frozen vegetables or fruit contained, stand them up in clear plastic bins. This will make it super easy to find them when you need them and stop unruly take-over of your freezer space.

When you don't have a lot of room, avoid overbuying food to go into your freezer, even if the deals are hard to resist. Keep a list on the outside of your freezer of its contents and check off what you use as you go.



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for Halloween and beyond so that they're easy to find when needed?

Q At our house, October marks the first of many journeys into rarely visited closets and cabinets to hunt down decorations. Or worse, buying new decorations because I can't find the old ones. What is the best way to pack and store decorations

A Now is definitely the time to get your holiday decorations organized so you can enjoy a stress-free holiday season. A decoration inventory list will help you keep track of which ornaments you have and what goes where in your home.

Set aside a few hours to gather all your decorations. Separate them by holiday. Decide which you want to keep and use and which to discard or give away. Divide the ones you are keeping by the room they will be used to decorate, and make a list of the decorations for each room.

When it's time to store them, keep oversized decorations in their original packaging where possible. Ornament boxes with adjustable dividers are available to store smaller decorations. Wrap each item in tissue paper for extra protection. Wrap holiday lights around a board or holiday light organizer to keep them from tangling.

Use one or more large plastic storage bins per room to hold the boxes and lights. Label the outside of the bin with the holiday, a few bullet points about the contents and the room the decorations are for. Also include fragile stickers on the outside of any boxes containing breakable items.

Find an area large enough to hold all your holiday decorations, and store them together. Since you only need get to them once a year, definitely make use of overhead, attic or garage space.

Keep a copy of your decoration inventory list on your computer. Update it annually for each room whenever you add or discard decorations and you'll always know what you have and where to find it when the holidays roll around.

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> FAMILY SUKKOT CELEBRATION

Sunday, October 4, 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Dine, dance, and create art in celebration of the Jewish harvest holiday, with special evening hours for Noah's Ark.

> WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE: FAMILY DAY

Sunday, October 11, Drop in anytime 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Delight in a *Where the Wild Things Are*-inspired day of art-making, music, and storytelling.

> FAMILY SLEEPOVER ABOARD NOAH'S ARK

Saturday, October 17, 6:00 p.m.-Sunday, October 18, 9:15 a.m.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to spend the night inside the Noah's Ark galleries!



For more information, sail to www.skirball.org.

The Skirball will be closed Saturday, October 3 in observance of Sukkot.

2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90049
www.skirball.org • (310) 440-4500
Exit 405 Freeway at Skirball Cir Dr
Free parking; or take Metro Rapid Bus 761
Closed Mondays





Ask the
Super-Organized Mom

Q I hate grocery shopping, and there's even more of it to do during the holidays. How can I organize my trips so they're as short and infrequent as possible?

A During the holiday season we have way more on our plates than we'd like, but there are ways to spread the load of holiday food shopping.

First, map out your holiday celebrations. Decide what you will make, bake or contribute to any event and what your holiday meals will be. Next, write down the all ingredients needed for each dish. Don't forget items that fall outside of regular recipes, such as snacks, cookies, fruit and beverages.

Once you've completed your list, check off items that you know you have and won't need to purchase. Divide the rest of the items into two categories: items that can be purchased ahead of time, and items that need to be purchased close to the day they will be used. Each time you do your regular grocery shopping in the weeks running up to the holiday, add a few items from your list of non-perishables.

Grocery shopping only needs to happen once or twice a week. Plan your family's meals for the coming week, check your cabinets, fridge and freezer and write down ingredients you will need to make those meals. Keep a list going on your refrigerator and write down items as you run out of them. List items by the store in which you buy them. Plan to shop during the least busy times of day, early in the morning or later in the evening if possible. With your lists and meal plans, your grocery shopping will go much more smoothly.



Jodie Watson is the founder and president of Supreme Organization (www.SupremeOrganization.com), and the organizational expert on Real Simple. Real Life., a lifestyle makeover show for women on the TLC Network. Send your questions for Jodie through the "Ask the Columnists" link at LAParent.com.



Get Handy! Get Organized!

Ask our columnists for help at LAParent.com. Submit your question today.

Inspirational Facts

Serving Size	436.9 x 350.5 cm
Specimen	
John Bakkeasert	
	% Daily Value
Cuteness	113%
Wonder	98%
Amazement	144%
Delight	95%
Video Games	0%

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John Bakkeasert, Specimen (John Bakkeasert), 2009. A pair of larvae with UV coating mounted on Specimens. This work was commissioned for the Getty. February 28-May 7, 2009. by J. Paul Getty Museum. ©2009 John Bakkeasert.

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