

## **Helpful Rule: Keep as much off the floor as possible.**

Hang it.

Shelf it

Store it

If your messy is only cluttered and somewhat messy, you can use this system.

### **Around the Room Organizing System**

Warning: This method only works for the not-too-messy zones. It's the 1-2-3 system of using 3 containers to sort out the mess. Start with 3 boxes that have removable lids (buy them at an office supply store). If a box fills, get another container. The throw-away can be a trash bag.

Label the containers: "Give away," "Throw away," and "Put Somewhere Else".

Starting at the door of one room, work your way around pieces of furniture, opening drawers, nooks, crannies, closets and the like. When you have worked for about an hour, pause and deal with the boxes.

1. Put the top on the Store Elsewhere box (bankers' boxes come with detachable tops) and put it aside.
2. Trot the Throw Away stuff to the trash immediately.
3. Bag the Give Away items and put them in the car for a drop off at the nearest charity as soon as possible. If you are going to give it to a friend, do it ASAHP (as soon as humanly possible) or you will have Give Away clutter clogging up your room.

Continue that day if you have time and energy, or pick up where you left off the next day. When you have made it around the room, group the things in your Store elsewhere box (or boxes) and store them with other birds of a feather (with like items)

If you want a method for a huge mess that has piled up, try the next system

### **Moving Mountains or Three S's Plus 1 Maintenance System**

This method works for a HUGE MESS!

Organizing can be boiled down into three words that contain all the information needed to organize every area of life. Those words are:

1. **Sort-** You have heard the saying, "A place for everything and everything in its place." This is okay as far as it goes but it leaves out another very important old saying, "Birds of a feather flock together." This means to keep similar items in the same place.

## **Group everything that is alike together in one place.**

Buy several white boxes at the office supply store. They are about 12 by 15 inches. Each of these boxes represents a gathering place for your various items scattered around or stored in the wrong place.

- Label each box with large letters using a broad tipped marker. Use typing paper taped to the box if you don't want to write on the box (perfectionist that you are). You can have a photo center, craft center, music center, art center, computer center, make-up center, clothes center, one for each child's room centers, book center, etc.
- If you have lots of loose papers scattered around, put those in a box labeled "Papers."
- This is temporary. As you put these papers in, separate the different groups into colored file folders. If possible, keep the folders vertical. Label the folders.
- Label two other boxes THROW AWAY and GIVE AWAY for stuff you don't want to keep.
- You may also need a PUT ELSEWHERE box for things that you will want to put somewhere else in the house.

The label idea is very important. Don't try to keep the various centers and their locations in your mind as you work around your room.

Insist that those birds flock together. Without centers for similar types of items, it can be hard getting things rounded up for an activity and trying to remember where all the stuff is squirreled away. Often, with no real reason for item locations, things weren't returned to the same place after use. It took time and effort to gather everything.

Give up this ineffective system and starting grouping similar items.

Example: Susie tossed her hairbrush on her dresser, gel and mousse under the bathroom sink, and barrettes in various drawers. Now she keeps all her hair supplies together in one drawer, with dividers that separate barrettes by colors.

Sometimes, because of the layout of the room, everything in the same category cannot be stored together. The BIRDS OF A FEATHER RULE should not be broken lightly. But if you must, split the things only into two groups and put a note on each grouping stating the location of the other part of the group.

## **Get Organizing!**

- With your white boxes labeled and placed strategically around the room, near where you want the centers to be located, begin filling the boxes. We call this the Mt. Vesuvius method because you stand in the center of the room and, with volcanic energy, explode those out-of-place items into the proper boxes.
- Don't forget the drawers, nooks, crannies, and cupboards, and miscellaneous containers.
- If one clothes box fills up, put the lid on, and put another open box on top to fill up with clothes.
- Do this with every category. Soon, your room should be de-cluttered and sorted into boxes. Now you have to deal with the boxes. But before you store, simplify things a bit.

## 2. Simplify

Simplifying means separating the things you want to keep from things that you need to discard. You have probably done this as you filled the Give Away and Throw Away boxes while you were creating your centers.

Take the stuff in those boxes out ASAP to the nearest charity or trashcan.

- However, as you fill these “center” boxes, you may notice that you have duplicates of some things. You might discover fifty pairs of undies and five bottles of glue once you grouped things. Get rid of duplicate items! When you find you have an overabundance of certain items, it’s not as hard to place them in the Give-away box.
- Maybe you have more shoes that you like than you have shoe storage space. Sometimes we have to bite the bullet and choose to let go of some perfectly good things. It is not easy. But living in crowded chaos is not easy either.

### **You may deal with three issues when you start to simplify**

1. Things kept for the past. These are reminders of important memories. A part of you still cherishes the belongings, which were important earlier in life. Some of these can stay if you can find a place for them. But some need to go.

- Take a picture of them and make a scrapbook in their memory.
- Set them out for three days and put up a memorial plaque honoring them.
- Put them in an ambivalence box, put a future date on the box (how far in the future is your call), and take the box away unopened on that date. Up until that date you can retrieve anything you feel you absolutely must. Your mind will adjust slowly to the idea that the things are leaving. That will make it less painful for you.

2. Things kept for the future. Somehow you fear that you will not have what is needed later, if you don’t hold on to a bunch of unnecessary stuff now. People who don’t fear the future, don’t keep stuff “just in case.” Deal with the fear by talking courageously to yourself and getting rid of things is the only way out.

3. Things kept to define yourself. Even though you don’t paint any more, you keep the paints to declare by their presence that you are a painter. This is true of unused exercise equipment, musical instruments no longer played, and the like. Decide who you want to be now and in your future, and be content with that. Although it’s fine to try a lot of things on for size, nobody can be everything.

## 3. STORE

That means to move items to a permanent place to keep them. Or, for some items, keep them in a storage area temporarily until you are ready to let go.

Empty one box at a time and arrange them in the chosen area. Unload each box as time allows.

- Have enough storage. Buy a bookcase or add shelves as needed.
- For small items of the same type you can buy some clear containers to store them. This can be good for keeping markers, tools, makeup, or other items together. This keeps them more visible when putting them on a shelf or in a cabinet.
- Store items near where they will be needed. So hair and makeup items should be in the bathroom, office supplies in a desk or work area or in a nearby closet.
- Seasonal items like Christmas decorations can be put in an attic or closet and pulled out when needed. These can go in colored plastic tubs to keep them clean and free of dust.