

Develop good organizational habits

Good habits go a long way in maintaining order.

Tackle learning one habit at a time and then another, until you have a whole system developed from the group of habits.

VOW OF DAILY MAINTENANCE

Post these daily vows, say them daily, and do them daily!

- 1. I will make up my bed daily as soon as I get out. Maybe even before.**
- 2. I will hang up my clothes. No clothes shall ever touch my floor or be piled on the bed.**
- 3. I will put up what I am using so I will never have to go back and pick up.**
- 4. I will do any job immediately if it takes 30 seconds or less.**
- 5. I will never ever overcrowd my schedules to the point that I have to leave junk out “just for now” because I am too busy.**

Rules of the Game of Organizing

1. Envision winning. Picture your room organized.
2. Choose to play. Commit to the effort.
3. Organizing is a process, not a one-time effort. It takes practice.
4. Aim to score. Order and beauty are the highest goals.
5. Strategize. Figure out where things go and when you'll put objects away. Be specific. Write it down.
6. Get equipped with storage containers-shelves, drawers, file cabinets, and containers.
7. Avoid perfectionism and procrastination. Just do it. Be a player, not a bench warmer.
8. Enlist a coach or cheerleaders among friends and family to encourage you.
9. Keep playing: put items away as you go.
10. The more you play, the better you'll get

The Bed Sets the Tone

Your bed is by far the biggest piece of furniture in your room. How it looks has a strong impact on the rest of the room. Make it up every day as soon as you get out of it. That act sets a "can-do" tone for the rest of the day.

Keep on Top of Things

Keep surfaces as clear as possible. If you set down a book or paper on an already cluttered surface, because of the figure-ground problem, you will not be able to see it among the other things. (Figure-ground problem means that it is difficult to distinguish the things that are on the surface from the surface itself. It's a type of visual attention problem.)

Stay in the Habit

Hang on to habits you set up. An example is that if you decide to take your books to your room every time you come home, stick by that habit.

Run an Escort Service

Make a home for everything and take it home each time. If your hair scrunches don't have any place to go, they will fly around the room landing on your dresser, bathroom surfaces, and on the floor under the bed skirt. If you have a special place like a plastic basket (preferably labeled HAIR SCRUNCHES), they will have a home to go to. Be sure to immediately escort each item into the home, which you have made for it. Obviously this applies to everything in your room.

Set up basic systems and be rigid in following them

Choose a place for any keys you have and ALWAYS put them there. Hint: If you still have a problem keeping up with those keys, look for a special key chain that beeps when you whistle or clap. Sounds like a good idea for the TV remote control, too. But that's another story.

Mary had a habit of leaving the house keys hanging in the door when she opened the door. To solve the problem, she attached the keys to her purse with a string so that she could not get into the house with her purse without removing the keys from the lock.

Look for ways to set up your life so you have immediate and foolproof success without effort.

Become a Signer

Hang up signs as reminders. Put up written reminders like CLOSE THE DOOR or MAKE THE BED if you constantly overlook doing these things. Signs are only effective for a short time because people start to overlook them as they become familiar.

Another idea is to take a picture of your room when it is at its best. Post that picture on the wall of your room as an inspiration to keep your room really nice.

Use Reminders that Stick

Use sticky note reminders. Some things are easily forgotten. Put notes in easy to see spots. An example would be to put a note on the front door the night before that says, Take signed field trip note to school. Or stick a note on your purse saying, Tell mom I will be home late today. Don't strain your brain trying to remember all this stuff. Put it on paper and forget it.

Put up a check off list for jobs that require a sequence that is hard to remember and/or complete. If you have trouble completely straightening the bathroom, following your morning get-off-to-school schedule, or doing some other step-by-step task you do regularly, make a check list of the steps, put this list under a plastic sheet, and check them off with a water soluble pen designed to write on plastic.

Put things in your way as reminders. As soon as you make your lunch, put it by the door you use to exit for school. Prop your books for the next day by the door the night before school.

Spy On Yourself

Use the Old Toilet Paper Roll Spyglass Trick. We get so used to seeing our clutter that we don't really notice the mess around us. In order to see exactly what it looks like, look through an empty toilet paper roll or cup your hands to make a spyglass. Be prepared for a shock at what you see around your room. Then start clearing it out one small section at a time.



Make it Fun!

Make cleaning fun or at least more pleasant. Think of combining fun with cleaning or taking time during cleaning to look at the beauty you re-create. Here are some tips on combining fun with cleaning:

- Play music, especially energetic music, while cleaning
- Spot clean: Stand in one spot and see how much you can clean before moving to a new spot.
- Clean and give. Decide to give one item or one bag full to the poor and clean until you meet that goal. Be generous!
- Set a timer for each task and race the clock to get done before the bell rings.
- Talk on the phone while you clean. Set up to talk with a friend who is also cleaning and encourage each other to finish.
- Don't leave home until you meet your cleaning goals.
- Have a lock in. Lock yourself in your room until you complete a task.
- Race a song. Try to complete a cleaning task while you listen to a song.
- Don't go over the messy limit. Set a messy limit, such as you can pile clean clothes on your desk chair until the pile is too high to push in the chair.
- Keep track of your clothes. Write what you wore on your calendar. That way you can check it before choosing the next day's outfit. It saves pulling things of the closet.
- Use boxes to toss and clean. Have boxes set up around the room, one for dirty clothes, one for things that belong elsewhere, etc.. Toss items into the right boxes then empty one box at a time, putting those items where they belong.
- When you take a break, sit in your room and look at what you accomplished. Enjoy the beauty you created!