



Store it where you use it

Often, people store items where they think they belong instead of where they are most conveniently accessed. For example, instead of storing all of your linens in the linen closet in the hallway, you can store bed sheets and blankets in the bedroom closet, towels and washcloths in the bathroom, and linen tablecloths and napkins in the dining room. This would free up the entire linen closet for another use!

If you reach for it often, reach it easily

Are you storing the cleaning products and tools you use weekly in a hard-to-reach corner closet while your barely-used guest pillows and comforter are within easy reach? Switch them around so that the infrequently used items are not taking up the most valuable storage real estate in your home.

Re-assess regularly

Are the crayons and scissors still being stored out of the kids' reach even though they are now in 4th grade? Sometimes we make things harder on ourselves when we forget to reassess our current needs. Conduct a periodic review to make sure your system still makes sense.

Don't fight it, fix it!

Drawers that get stuck, doors missing a hinge, over-full filing cabinets...at best you are wasting minutes every time you use them; at worst you aren't utilizing this valuable storage space at all because it is such a nuisance. A one-time investment to fix these mechanical issues will pay dividends later.

Test drive before you buy

Use free containers and storage items you already have on hand to test out a new storage plan before you spend any money to make it match your decor. You don't want to find out it isn't functional *after* you've dropped good money on all those brand-new baskets, bins, and shelves. Use cardboard boxes or extra laundry baskets for a couple of weeks first.

Get everyone on board

Getting organized is one thing...*staying* organized is a group effort that requires commitment from the whole household. Set up simple daily, weekly and monthly tasks of 5-10 minutes for each family member to help maintain an orderly environment. Tasks should be age-appropriate so that everyone can be involved. If everyone is doing his part, it should work. If it isn't working, identify the cause and make appropriate adjustments immediately.