

CUT THE CLUTTER AND GET ORGANIZED

Denise G. Dias

*Sedgwick County Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences*

*Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station
and Cooperative Extension Service*

IS CLUTTER A PROBLEM AT YOUR HOUSE?

Do you ...

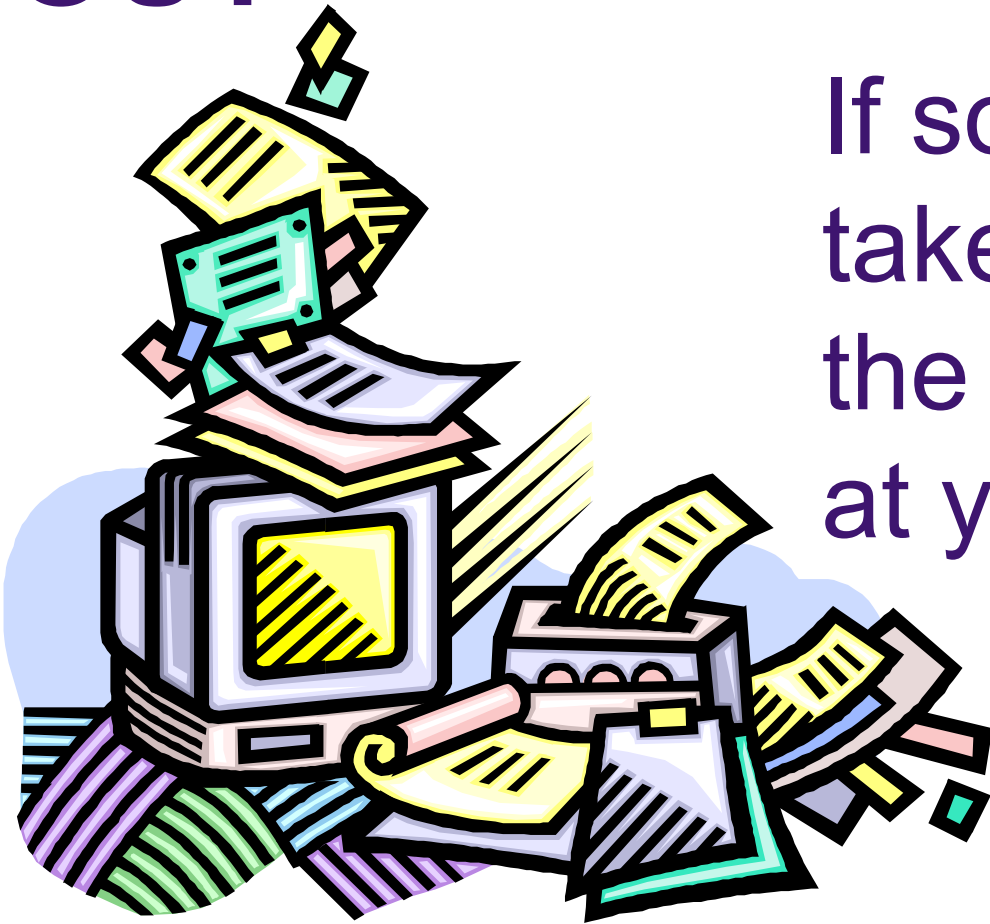
- say, “This house is a mess” more than three times a week?
- move something every time you want to sit down?
- have piles of paper all over the house?

IS CLUTTER A PROBLEM AT YOUR HOUSE?

Do you ...

- have brimming closets and drawers?
- spend lots of time looking for things?
- frequently hear, “I can’t find it”?
- serve as the family’s chief picker-upper?

DOES THIS SOUND LIKE YOU?



If so, it's time to take control of the clutter at your house.

START WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE



Cleaning is a chore.
Taking a positive
approach will encourage
family members to
become involved.

CLUTTER IS A FAMILY AFFAIR

- Choose a convenient time for everyone to discuss plans for clutter control.
- It is unfair to expect one person to restore order.
- All family members share the responsibility for picking up after themselves.



SOURCES OF CLUTTER

- Newspapers and magazines
- Mail and bills
- Books and papers
- Toys and games
- Hobby materials

SOURCES OF CLUTTER

- Cleaning supplies
- Tools and hardware
- Clothes
- Outerwear: Hats, mittens and boots
- Laundry and Ironing

MAKE A CHART

Source of Clutter	When to Sort	Who is Responsible?
Newspapers, magazines	weekly	John
Mail, bills, books, papers	daily	Jane
Toys and games	daily	Susie
Hobby Materials	weekly	Jane
Cleaning supplies and Laundry	Daily, weekly, monthly, and annually	Jane and Susie
Tools and Hardware	weekly	John and John Jr.
Clothing	Every 3 months	Everyone
Outerwear	daily	Everyone

MAKE TIME

- Set aside several Saturday mornings to work as a family on big cleanups.
- Use the box approach to sort clutter: Keep, Store, Throw Away Give Away/Sell and Maybe.



THE KEEP BOX

- This is the put away or storage box.
- Sort like items together.
- Return items to their places.
- Create “centers” for work, such as cleaning, desk/office, cooking, baking, makeup, tools, etc.

THE STORAGE BOX

- Store these items for use at a later time.



GIVE AWAY

- Sell these items at your next yard sale **OR** give them to secondhand stores.



THE THROW AWAY BOX

- Throw away these items. A trip to the recycling center or dump may be in order.



THE MAYBE BOX



- Go through this box one more time and sort items into the other boxes.

MAINTAINING A CLUTTER-FREE HOME

- Everyone needs to do a little bit every day.
- It is everyone's "job" to keep items picked up and put away.
- Tasks need to be appropriate for ages and abilities.
- Share your ideas and expectations of what is expected and acceptable.

PLAN FOR SUCCESS

- What are everyone's daily and weekly responsibilities?
- What are the acceptable standards?
- What are the consequences if the jobs are not completed?
- Caution: Some members may object. Stay firm and do not do their share of the work, or you will end up getting it back! It will take at least 2 weeks for the jobs to become routine.

RELAX AND CELEBRATE A CLUTTER-FREE HOME



ORGANIZING YOUR CLOSET

A Three-Step System for Wardrobe Storage

STEP ONE: HOW MUCH CLOTHING?

- We often keep all of our clothes, compacting them tighter and tighter.
- Clothes we don't wear are clutter.
- Most garments need 2 to 3 inches of space for hanging. It also depends on the length and width of the garment.

TEN THINGS TO GET RID OF NOW!

1. Anything with a stain, hole, or tear.
2. Clothing or accessories you like, but look funny on you.
3. Purses you no longer use.
4. Outdated clothing or accessories.
5. Ratty weekend clothes
6. Clothing that does not fit.
7. Worn shoes.
8. Anything of a lower quality than your regular wardrobe.
9. Dead lingerie.
10. The good coat that won't fit over your other clothes.

STEP TWO: WHERE IS STORAGE NEEDED?



- 10 percent of the space of a home is allocated for storage. Therefore, a 1,500 square-foot house has 150 square feet of storage.
- Where is this space?
- Is it used appropriately?

STEP THREE: ORGANIZE

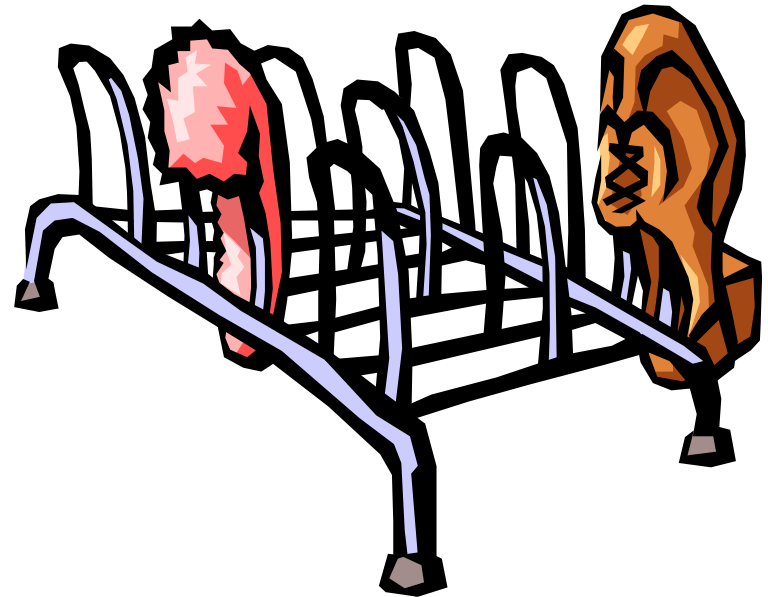
- Learn to maximize your space by consulting a redesign expert, studying home design books or visiting home organization stores.
- Everything should be visible at a glance because you wear what you see.
- Some suggestions: shoe shelves, sweater shelves, hanging racks, and a wall rack for jewelry and scarves.
- Precise measuring is essential.

**WHAT DO YOU DO WITH
THE LITTLE THINGS
THAT DRIVE YOU CRAZY?**

HOW TO STORE ...

Shoes –

- Shelving
- Stacked and labeled boxes
- Racks for the door or floor



HOW TO STORE ...

Scarves –

- Fold and store in transparent drawers
- Hang on a kitchen mug rack
- Hang on a pants hanger
- Clothes-pin to a regular hanger
- Hang over towel bars on the wall or door

HOW TO STORE ...

Jewelry –

- Plastic mesh wall grid
- Kitchen utensil divider
- Hardware store nail organizer
- Small plastic chest of mini drawers

HOW TO STORE ...

Hosiery –

- Separate by color
- Store in clear bags in a drawer
- Store in shopping bags on a hanger
- Store in clear plastic shoe boxes



HOW TO STORE ...

Bags –

- Store flat, loosely stuffed with tissue paper
- Stack gently, so they don't lose their shape
- Store in a drawer
- Try using a giant lazy Susan

NEED MORE SPACE?

Look for storage in other areas of your home to store out-of-season clothing:

- Other closets,
- Guest room closet,
- Utility room,
- Under the bed in another room

GETTING READY TO GO OUT TO DINNER WAS NEVER SO EASY!



Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

Publications from Kansas State University are available on the World Wide Web at: www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu

Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved.

In each case, credit Denise Dias, Cut the Clutter and Get Organized, Presentation, Kansas State University, July 2009.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

EP161

July 2009

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, John D. Floros, Director.