

SPOT ON SPACE MANAGEMENT

STOP CLUTTER AT THE DOOR

IT'S FRUSTRATING, IT'S CONSTANT AND IT NEEDS TO BE STOPPED AT THE DOOR: CLUTTER!

Whether it sneaks in unnoticed, or blatantly marches past, clutter enters everyone's house the same way--through the door! Using a few of these simple strategies below, busy professionals and multi-tasking moms alike can tame clutter at the source and gain some control.

Clothing

- Provide each family member with a roomy "drop" basket to contain items such as backpacks, books, mittens, school projects, etc. This will ensure that little ends up on the floor or is trailed through the house. (No excuses for misplaced items either!).
- Hide or group the clutter. Store footwear under an entry bench; hang coats on wall racks.
- Designate a decorative bowl near your front or back door for all car and house keys.
- Peg and 3M removable hooks are an underused clutter buster. Keep kids' gear in order. In a mud room, hang pegs about 3 feet high so little ones can hang up coats and backpacks as soon as they step inside. Have hooks at adult height or a coat rack for guests.
- In your coat closet, hang a shoe organizer on the back of the door. The pockets are perfect for storing hats, scarves, and gloves.

Space, time and energy savers.

- Use pant hangers to hang scarves instead of folding them and taking up so much room in baskets.
- Dropping items into an In-and-Out basket not only serves as a visual reminder but also gives you somewhere to put stuff that's on it's way somewhere else.
- Put things you use or reach for frequently (keys, purses) on waist level shelves and things you rarely use on higher ones.
- If you have the room, a blanket-type box or chest can store smaller seasonal sports equipment and provide a place to sit on shoes.
- Keep heavier sports gear in deep plastic bins in the garage or near your home entrance to keep mud, dirt, and grass outside.

Maintaining organization

- Make staying organized a team effort. Each evening, you and the kids do the "five minute fury." Return sports equipment, toys, dishes, etc., to their proper place *before* you read them a story.
- Each season, everyone takes a day or two to cull unused shoes, jackets, hats, mitts, etc. Schedule these days in your calendar and stick to it!
- If you want kids to help, adapt rooms to their size and ability. For example, place hooks inside closets at their level. Make organizing fun with colour coded containers or by making it a "see how fast you can do it" game. Rewards help too!

Paper

- Designate a basket or shelf area for mail. Keep a small recycle bin near your entryway, hidden under a foyer table for junk mail.
- Open mail at the door. Immediately throw out the envelopes and filler, so that you're carrying only needed papers to the filing system.
- In the kitchen, have larger containers designated for specific paper collections like kids art, home work, and school notices. A three-tier drawer system or wall mounted file holder will let you sort papers, rather than absently pile them.

Rethink things

Garage sales and flea markets offer items which can be repurposed to support your quest for organization. For holding items like hair bands or hardware use small boxes and containers headed for landfill.

New stages in life means no system works forever. Look at your organizational setup every 3 months or so. If clutter is building back up rethink your methods.

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