

How to Organize Your “Stuff”

Objective

To identify tools to organize the “stuff” in your life that keeps getting misplaced or lost.

You Should Know

Do you frequently misplace things? Lots of people do. But as you know, this can be a real problem and a cause of stress that you just don’t need. Being disorganized impacts your daily life and can be an annoyance to those around you.

Can you think of some ways that problems being organized has affected your life?

What to Do

If you have difficulty managing your paperwork, you can create a filing system to store important papers and documents. This will also help you identify things that are outdated or no longer needed, which can be thrown away. The system can consist of furniture like a file cabinet, shelving, or bookcase. Labeling folders for each type of paperwork and keeping your papers in these folders will save you from hunting things down.

1. Start by reviewing the places where you have put documents in the past, and think about how easy or hard it has been to find them.
2. Identify a single location where you can store each type of paperwork to find it quickly and easily.
3. Think about what system will work best for you to manage and review the paperwork: bookcase, filing cabinet, desk organizer, etc.
4. Identify which documents and paperwork you no longer need, and recycle or discard them.

Ask for help if you need to organize your papers. Some people are simply better at this than others.

Who do you know that can help you with this type of organization?

If you frequently lose items like keys, glasses, and your cell phone, you can create a system for keeping like things together in one specific location. For example, you can use a designated bowl or box to keep your keys or wallet when you come home.

Again, you may want to talk to a loved one about the best ways to keep your “stuff” organized.

Different people have different tools to keep them organized. Here are some helpful tools:

- A write-on/wipe-off whiteboard or digital whiteboard app.
- Sticky notes.
- A Bluetooth “key tracker” that works with a mobile phone.
- Clear plastic boxes.
- Drawer organizer.
- Desktop organizer (that holds pencils, tape, file folders, etc.).

Ask some people you know how they keep their things organized. Write down the tools they use or the ideas they have below.

Now give some of these ideas a try. List the tools or ideas that you have to help you be more organized and make a note of how they helped you.

Organization Tool/Idea	How Did It Help?

Reflections on This Exercise

What do you see as the biggest obstacle for “getting organized”?

What is a way that your life would be different if you were more organized?

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?
