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Here's this month's edition with organizing and redesign ideas.

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HAPPY SUMMER!

Woman's Day's Reasons to Get Organized [9/1/09 issue]:

- Save money by: streamlining bill paying, using gift cards, organizing your kitchen, and returning unwanted stuff
- Be more efficient by: tidying your computer, cleaning up your email, filing, putting things in organized binders
- Feel better by: seriously editing souvenirs, scanning letters, getting rid of intended projects, donating giveaways

CATALOG CONTROL

If you want to reduce the amount of temptation caused by the influx of catalogs, there are a couple things you can do proactively other than throw out every one you get in the mail.



According to ecocycle.org, "contacting the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) and registering with their Mail Preference Service provides an effective way for you to fight the junk mail glut. The DMA does not provide marketers with consumer mailing lists or do name to the do-not-

mail list, register online consumer mailings. They provide their Mail Preference Service to marketers for the sole purpose of removing consumer's names and addresses from their prospect mailing lists. To add your name to the do-not-mail list, register online at <https://www.dmachoice.org/dma/member/regist.action> or download a mail-in form."

You can also check out [Catalog Choice](#). *Catalog Choice is a free service that allows you to decide what gets in your mailbox. Use it to reduce your mailbox clutter, while helping save natural resources.*

You might be interested in a new book I've written, a compilation of organizing and redesign tips and solutions.



Check out "**Common Sense Organizing**", a downloadable e-book, at Lulu.com.



Trying Hard to Stay Organized?

The "S.M.A.R.T." approach* to breaking the clutter habit involves behavior-modification. Try this:

S...set specific goals

M...monitor your actions

A...arrange your environment for success

R...recruit support

T...treat yourself

*from the book *Living SMART: Five Essential Skills to Change Your Health Habits Forever*

Test Your Level of Organization

Could you realistically find the following items at your house in **a minute or less**?

1. a tape measure
2. your child(ren)'s birth certificate(s)
3. needle and thread
4. the username/password for websites you've used
5. business-sized envelope
6. corkscrew
7. deck of cards
8. what you're doing/events planned on Sept. 22 or Dec. 4
9. super glue
10. gravy boat
11. car insurance policy
12. warranty/user guide for washer or dryer
13. a dictionary
14. your library card
15. your dentist's address



If you answered *no* to at least 1/2 the items, review your storage for those types of items. Being organized means you (and others) can find things *easily*!

A key to staying organized is regular maintenance.

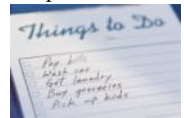
Often I find that clients can get organized, but they can't *stay* organized. For example, a person will take the time to put systems into place, declutter, the whole 9 yards, and then life happens and the organizational level diminishes to almost nothing.

While it is wonderful to get organized, if you want continued success, you need to follow through on a regular and consistent basis. This is most applicable to paperwork, both at home and in the office/workplace.

The old adage "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink" works well to illustrate the problem. You (or

a professional organizer) can organize your papers, filing, bills, etc., but unless you deal with it regularly, the system will crash and burn. Pick a regular time of day or during the week to make sure to manage your desk or paperwork. At that time, you'll want to file things to be filed, check on the status of bill paying, deal with actionable items, clear off your desk or work space, and update your calendar or planner.

It's great to have a To-Do List or plan of what you want to do. But the critical step is the *action plan* of how that To-Do List or plan is going to *get done*. You can make lists or reminders or talk about all the things you would like to organize, do, make or whatever. These lists, however, do not always get accomplished. The paper is put on the refrigerator or stuffed somewhere



and ends up becoming a piece of clutter. Just looking at the list gets us frustrated or overwhelmed, and we end up saying 'never mind'. Here's some additional suggestions:

- Be realistic. Definitely put down things you want done, but keep money, time and resources in mind.
- Be specific. Don't include multi-step, complicated projects on your list; break them down into specific, easier-to-do tasks.
- Put accountability in place. Make specific ways to check as to how you're doing on the list. Have regular reminders or dates to keep you on task. — PM



