



Neat Freak News

Bimonthly organizational tips for home, work and life.

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NEAT FREAK NEWS: Summer 2008

Even an organizer can procrastinate. My June newsletter kind of slipped into mid-July as I readied our family for our summer vacation. But hey, isn't that what summer is all about? Slowing down, being with the ones you love, and making time to do things you enjoy...like spending two lazy, sun-drenched weeks at the beach? So go ahead, relax, soak up the sun...when you stay organized (at least *most* of the year) you free up time to do what is really important to you.

This month I'm continuing my year-long series on organizing your home, top to bottom. You can buy books that will tell you how to do this, but hey...why not read it here for free! Check out my newsletter every other month, follow my advice (as much as you can stand), and by the end of 2008, I guarantee you'll be living with less and have more room to breathe. Enjoy.

YOUR BATHROOM

I've got bathroom on the brain because we're about to re-do our master bath (you can check out my blog for photographic evidence of why the time has come). My bathroom is a room that just makes you want to get in and get out as fast as you can. But it doesn't have to be that way! By following a few simple organizational tips, your bathroom can become a room you enjoy, a place of peace where you pamper yourself and perhaps even linger for a moment or two.

Cut countertop clutter

Take a look at the items living on your countertop. If there are things sitting out that you don't use every day, then it's time to relocate or pitch them. Countertop clutter makes it hard to clean, and these items easily collect dust and moisture. Consider plastic drawers under the sink for less frequently used toiletries or cosmetics.

Use hooks

Before I've had my morning coffee, I need to keep it simple. Neatly folding a towel to hang on a towel rack just feels like too much work for me. Use strong metal hooks for towels, robes, even tools like hairdryers or curling irons for easy storage without much effort.

Purge regularly

This rule applies to every room in the house, but perhaps most importantly in the bathroom. This just seems to be a room where things will sit for 10-12 years. Check

expiration dates regularly on medicines, vitamins and cosmetics. Follow the “when in doubt, throw it out” rule for bathroom items. If you can’t remember when you purchased it, let it go. And if you travel frequently and enjoy raiding the hotel bathroom for miniature soaps, shampoos and shower caps, keep your three favorites and donate the rest to a local homeless shelter.

Caddy for cleaning

Regular cleaning can be a snap if you have all the tools you need readily available. Purchase a small cleaning caddy that fits under your sink and stock it with your favorite supplies. I personally find that a good ol’ Clorox Wipe can clean just about anything in the bathroom. Keep a pair of rubber gloves and a good sponge on hand and you’re ready for a wipe down at a moment’s notice.

Keep the peace in shared space

If drawer space is limited or non-existent in a shared bathroom, give each individual a personalized bin or caddy filled with their own necessities that can come and go with them. For young children, color code bathroom items such as toothbrushes and hairbrushes and store items where they can reach them independently. If you constantly suffer from bathroom traffic jams, consider establishing another space in your home where cosmetics can be applied or hair can be styled.

Get creative with storage

Consider clever storage tools that make use of vertical space such as wall mounted cabinets or recessed shelving. Baskets are excellent tools for holding towels, a cutlery tray can quickly become a drawer sorter for cosmetics, and storage turntables intended for the kitchen work great under the sink for holding everything from medication to shampoo.

In the next Neat Freak News, look for tools to help you tame the toys in your home.

FREAKIE FREEBIES FOR SUMMER

Become a Bag Lady! Keep bags ready for all of your summer activities so you don’t have to waste fun-in-the-sun-time packing up to go. Here are a few of my favorites:

**Pool Bag stocked with sunscreen, sunglasses, towels, spare change for snacks, and goggles.

**Library Bag where we toss the books we’ve read and need to return, our library card, and a notecard to job down must-reads.

**Farmer’s Market Bag stocked with small bills and a few extra plastic bags so I can reuse what I have.

**Park Bag stocked with prepackaged snacks, sunscreen, extra hats and a water bottle.

PRODUCT SHOUT OUT!

True confession, I used to keep all of my Internet passwords in a vintage “Garfield” notepad that I recycled from some old school supplies (yes, those were MY old school supplies...so you can only imagine how old that notepad was!). But then I found this cool Internet Password Organizer and Garfield had to go. This handy-dandy reinforced spiral notebook has 122 pages, alphabetized tabs, and is discreet...so no snoopy person will know it holds all of your password secrets. Check out InternetPasswordOrganizer.com to get your own.