

Spring into an Organized Life and Save

By Linda Chu

Now that the clocks have sprung ahead, signalling a change of seasons, our minds are shifting to warmer, sunnier days to come. An exciting prospect—if it weren't for all those disorganized piles cluttering our path.

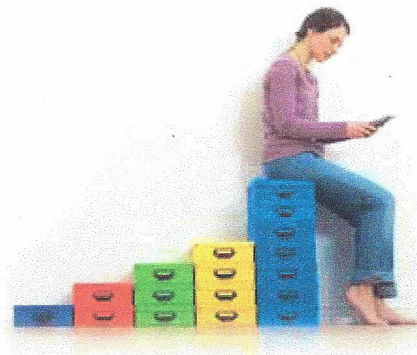
Eight in 10 Canadians are disorganized, especially those with children in the household. While the majority of disorganized Canadians have attempted to become more organized, their efforts have largely been unsuccessful. Unfortunately, disorganized living can be costly—not just in terms of money, but also time and space. Here are a few tips to get more organized and save on all three.

1. Start with the area in your home causing you the most grief. Most likely, this area is the catch-all for all those unfinished tasks and items that did not have a home.
2. Identify items in your piles based on categories and outstanding actions. This might mean seasonal decorations, kids' artwork/memories, or to-do's like bills to pay, consignment, and laundry.
3. Purge, purge, purge. Be clear about your goals for each room in your home. If space is an issue, you may have to let go of some items in order to make room for your intentions.
4. Determine how often you need to access your possessions. Frequency of access plays an important role when developing an organizing system.

5. Choose containers and systems that are conducive to how often you need to access your possessions and information. Archive taxes must be kept but not accessed daily, unlike bills to pay.

Remember that your piles did not collect overnight, so to tackle an entire room in one go may be too overwhelming. Instead, consider my "15 Minute Sort, 15 Second Touch" approach to create momentum.

Set your timer for 15 minutes. Touch everything in your disorganized room and within 15 seconds, make a decision as to which category or action this item belongs to. After your alarm signals 15 minutes, stop and reward yourself. Just don't reward yourself by going out and buying more stuff. . . ■



Linda Chu is a professional organizer, productivity consultant and founder of Out of Chaos, an organizing company that effects change by giving people the tools and knowledge to get organized at work and at home, using customized solutions to manage their space, time, information and piles. Linda served as President of Professional Organizers in Canada and founded the BC Lower Mainland Chapter of the same association. For more information, visit www.outofchaos.ca.