

Less Stuff for Less Stress

By Jamie Leggatt

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Most people only use 20 per cent of what they have 80 per cent of the time. Sound familiar? If so, perhaps getting organized should be on your list of New Year's resolutions.

"Organizing is not about getting rid of things, it's about identifying what's important to you and giving you easy access to it," said Sherry Borsheim, a personal organizer with Simple Solutions.

She suggests that getting organized can be simple if broken down into "doable chunks".

"Most people don't know where to begin, the job is too overwhelming and so they never take the time," said Borsheim of the biggest stumbling block.

Unfortunately, being unorganized is not only more complicated than being organized, but it also takes more time.

"People don't realize that once they are better organized, they get things done in less time and free themselves to do the things that they really want to do," she said.

So, now that you want to get organized, where do you start? Borsheim suggests that the first question to ask yourself is why do you want to get a certain area of your home or life organized? What's the payoff for you and what is your compelling reason to make this change?

Once you know why you're really ready to get organized, determine what area in your life or home is troubling you the most. For example, in most homes piles of paper laying everywhere is the culprit. If this is the case, you can create a customized system to handle all the paper coming and going through the household.

Now that you have an area or room of the house to focus on, ask yourself how the room functions. Build on what's working and fix everything that isn't.

"Always work in one area at a time. A common mistake people make is starting in one room, then they run to another room to put something away, or see another mess and before you know it, they are all over the house and not accomplishing anything. I call this yo-yo organizing and like yo-yo dieting, this doesn't work," said Borsheim.

If there is a big room that needs to be organized, like the garage or kitchen, set up some time in your calendar to accomplish the task at hand. Estimate how long you think it will take and block out a minimum or two to four hours per week until you have the first project done, suggests Borsheim. Remember to reward yourself along the way.

With time blocked off your calendar to clean the clutter, make sure you develop a game plan. Ask yourself how you plan on accomplishing the task, what items do you need in the room and where are you going to store them in the room? Do you know what your most compelling reason is for getting their room organized? That reason may help you determine how to organize things.

"Always start with the visible clutter first to receive immediate dramatic results," said Borsheim.

In the sorting phase you will need four boxes labelled, charity, recycle, toss and other room. As you go through the sorting phase, anything that doesn't belong in the room goes in one of these boxes. At the end of your session, take care of the things in each box. This will help you from getting sidetracked.

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Once you have everything organized, Borsheim believes that it doesn't take much effort to keep it that way.

"The key to keeping your home or life organized is to take 15 – 30 minutes everyday to pick up things around the house or plan for your next day. An organized room should take no more than five to 10 minutes to clean up, no matter how messy it gets," she said.

Cleaning away the clutter is a great way to reduce stress and feel better overall.

"Getting organized is a clarifying, cleansing way of connecting to what's really important to you. You should enjoy the process and reward yourself along the way," said Borsheim. "Be aware of the cost of clutter – it costs time and space to take care of things you don't use."

This year, take control of the clutter and get organized. Make time to do it yourself, or call in an expert. Sherry Borsheim with Simple Solutions can be reached at 604-233-7076. Visit her at www.sherryborsheim.com