

Too Much Stuff!

Purging excess possessions can help you lose pounds, too.

Are you living in a house filled with clutter? Getting organized and tossing what you don't need will help you gain greater control over your life—and your weight. The biggest nightmare for most of us? Storage areas. Here are two easy steps to place you on an organized path.



Sort It, Purge It

Whether it's the basement, garage, or attic, you don't spend much time in these areas, so it's easy to lose track of what's actually being stored there. Just as you need to step on the scale to assess where you stand with your weight, it's necessary to pull all of your stuff out of its storage space to assess what you own. To start, remove everything from all three areas (if it's a nice day, haul everything outdoors if you can). Next, group items into categories, such as sports equipment, gardening tools, and holiday decorations. Then decide what you're going to keep and place the rest in three large garbage bags: one for recycling, one for trash, and one for items to donate or sell.



Link Your Weight to Your Space

Now, organize your storage spaces in a way that can spur weight loss. For example, if you want to resume playing tennis, make sure your racquet is easy to see and reach. Put off-season sports gear (e.g., downhill skis or ice skates) in large plastic storage bins on a top shelf. Also, if your basement or garage serves as your home gym, keep it neat and organized so that you'll be more likely to want to use it. Keep items like hand weights and a yoga mat clearly visible—you're less likely to "forget" to work out if you see them every day. »



Blame it on the clutter! On average, American women spend a total of one hour a day searching for something.

ILLUSTRATION: CHUCK GONZALES.



Clutter Busters!

These quickie space savers require minimal handyman skills.

MOUNT

hooks, racks, and pegboards. You can hang everything, from bikes and garden hoses to fishing rods and flashlights, reserving floor space for other things.

CRAWFORD PEGBOARD KIT, \$14.99, ACEHARDWARE.COM.

USE

a desk or workbench for stowing tools. Fill glass jars with nails and screws. Hang saws, drills, duct tape, and extension cords on a pegboard so that they are always within easy reach.

PLACE

shovels, gardening tools, and gloves in an oversize bucket. Put sharp tools, electronic gadgets, lawn mowers, and fertilizers in a locked shed or cabinet to keep out of reach of children.

CREATE

a laundry zone. Hang wet clothes on a coat rack, hangers, or a drying rack, and install a shelf above your washer and dryer to keep detergent, dryer sheets, and stain removers accessible.

PURCHASE

plastic bins for your children's sporting gear. Keep cleats, skates, and kneepads together. Fill a mesh laundry bag with soccer balls and basketballs.

RUBBERMAID SPORT ORGANIZING STATION, \$39.99, AMAZON.COM.

» On the outside of every box (even clear plastic ones) in your storage spaces place a label, listing exactly what's inside. This will save you the time and hassle of hunting through boxes. Be as specific as possible (for example, rather than "holiday decorations," write "ornaments and tinsel"). **WW**

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