

March, 2009 **Create Space You Love**

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Getting organized is about improving your quality of life. In this questionable economy, that becomes even more important. Getting organized means you can improve your life without spending much more than time and energy. It means cutting out wasteful things, like unused stuff and space, and maximizing the space and stuff you do have to the best advantage. This helps us deal with the uncertainties of life while opening up our lives and our homes to new opportunities.

March is here, and with it, Spring! So, now is a great time to get organized and create a home you love! Let me recommend new uses for current spaces, or a re-purposing of your home!

There are professionals out there who specialize in Staging and Re-Design ([email my friend Donna if you would like to hire one!](#)). This concept applies to making small changes (as opposed to completely re-decorating your home) to make it as desirable as possible. It is often applied to real estate, as in staging your home for a quick sale, but we all can benefit from these ideas to get a home we love, even if it is the one where we already live!

Walk around your house with a clipboard, room by room (we always feel on-task and organized when we're carrying a clipboard, don't we?). Imagine you are a potential buyer for your home, and view your spaces with a new, objective but critical eye. What would you change? What are the really good parts of your home you would like to enhance?

A few obvious, low cost and quick improvements we can make in our home are:

Scrub until it shines

Look out: Clean the windows then throw them open!

Look down: Clean under furniture, scrub stains from carpeting.

Look up: Dust those ceiling fans before you turn them on.

Cut the Clutter: Of course I was going to say that, but it is true.

And may I even suggest removing furniture that does not have a purpose?

I have seen a room with 7 side tables and seating for 6. You do the math. Clear some floor space.

Fix the little stuff that ends up being big.

Tighten the drippy faucets, touch up the woodwork paint, replace burnt out light bulbs.

Tidy up the house plants or replant them in matching pots.

Create a welcoming entrance, inside and out.

Inside: Even if you don't have a foyer, you can create one with a bench or chair, a coat rack, a mirror on the wall, and a table with a basket for your keys and the mail.

Outside:

Repair your stairs and railing, wash down or re-paint your door.

Clear out all the winter stuff, like shovels, sleds and boots.

Hang a flag, focus on spring, and when it is warm enough, plant a few big plants in matching pots.

A fresh coat of paint can work wonders for your space and your attachment to it!

Did you know, I have a 7 room house with a basement? Yet, we have an exercise space, an office, a reading room, a music room, a crafts room, a play room and a games room, in addition to bedrooms, living rooms and dining room. How is this possible?

Multi-purpose your space: My office is just a custom-built desk and storage cabinet in our family room. Yet it has work space, storage space, computer and phone lines, plus seating for clients or friends. Also, I don't work while the whole family is home and in the family room, so I don't mind sharing the space.

We have also created walk ways like hallways through heavily traveled spaces, to encourage the flow of people and stuff, simply through furniture and area rug placement.

Create boundaries within rooms: We have dedicated a corner of the living room to our family's music hobby. We store the guitar, flute, drums and music in that space, plus there is great lighting, music stands and a CD player.

Dedicate storage space to specific items or categories of times: When we're looking for a music item, there is only one place we store those items. So when it is time to rehearse, there is no searching for lost items. We can get right to it.

Dedicated storage helps us respond to new opportunities. A client has a chance to make some extra money with consulting, but she needs to find her most recent resume to update and send it. This is much easier if all her papers are stored in one location in her home. Knowing where that information is decreases response time and increases her chances of making some extra money. We have the chance to re-finance our home, taking advantage of these low interest rates, and thankfully we know right where our current mortgage information is.

Make room in your home for what is important to you and your family. We need to be a fit family, so all the sports paraphernalia has its own closet near the back door, easily accessible to all. And we clear the clutter and arrange the garage every spring to easily access our bikes.

Limit rooms to 3 or 4 uses, maximum, per most real estate agents or stagers. Define an extra bedroom as a guest space and home office, and that will tell you what does and does not belong in that room. When we have rooms that do not have a clear purpose, they typically end up being a catch-all dumping ground for clutter. If left undefined, it could end up as a guest / office / exercise / TV / craft / storage / etc., space, and that is a lot of purpose, and therefore clutter!, for one small bedroom.

Take this opportunity to look around your home, decide what 4 or 5 themes are really important to your family, and re-imagine your home. A little creativity and effort, and you'll have new spaces and opportunities opening up all around you!

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