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NEAT SPACES EZINE - DECEMBER 2007

Brought to you by Wendy Hollick, Professional Organizer

Here it is, that time of year again, and so much to do! Don't worry - it's not too late to get organized! And if you need a little help with your holiday preparations or decluttering your home before entertaining, don't hesitate to give me a call.

I would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from my family to yours.

TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Ah, the holidays. We are all a little stressed around the Holidays, because it seems like everything has to be done at once.

It is an endless cycle of cleaning the house, getting cards ready for mailing, writing many lists and then comes the shopping, wrapping and planning of the holiday meal. What if I were to give you some hints, to help to take some of the stress out of the Holidays?

- **Plan early** - this helps to reduce your stress and last minutes panics about what hasn't been done yet, what you may have forgotten and what is left to do.
- **Let others help you** - Delegating is a good thing. Accept help from others and share the load.
- **Use a notebook** - this helps to keep all your lists in one place.
- **Clutter-free gifts** - gift certificates, food/beverage, tickets to show/performance, gifts of your time.
- **Keep it simple** - it is the time together with friends and family that makes this time of year special, not how extravagant and stressed out you are getting it that way.

Entertaining

- Instead of a sit down meal, make it buffet style and let everyone sit where they choose.
- Make things ahead of time so all you have to do is heat and serve.
- Have everyone bring a favorite dish to pass.
- Plan a joint party with another family member and have someone to share the work.
- Instead of a meal, have homemade breads, cookies, muffins or cakes.

- Everyone loves Pizza, even during the Holidays; have a good variety on hand.

Cleaning

- Do the dusting and get the cobwebs off of the walls; save the carpet cleaning, you will need it after the celebrations.
- Vacuuming takes away the dust, pet hair and refreshes a room; plus, if you put baking soda on the carpeting, will give your room a fresh scent.
- Wipe over the kitchen cabinets after you have finished with the dishes on a weekend. It will give the kitchen a clean fresh look.
- It takes only 10 minutes to wash the outside of the refrigerator, stove, microwave and dishwasher.

Wrapping Center

- Set up a wrapping center in the spare room, basement, or a corner of the living room.
- Keep all of your paper, gift tags, tape, a pen, scissors and ribbon handy. I use my husband's nail (carpenter's) apron for everything except the tape. It is always handy and I do not lose it under the wrapping paper.
- Tape a large bag to the back of a chair for garbage and stickers and a smaller bag to hold bows for the presents.
- Take your paper toweling off the dispenser and use it for holding your ribbon.
- Keep all of the wrapping paper cutoffs to use for smaller packages.

Packing up after the holidays

- Label all of your boxes with a list of what is inside.
- Put all of your outside lights and decorations in a separate box that has easy access for next year.
- Pack all of your festive towels, pot holders, tablecloths and placemats in one box.
- Put a red and green 'X' on boxes that have Christmas items in them; use magic markers or use colored construction paper for your labels.
- Try to put all of the breakables in one box and use shredded junk mail to fill up the gaps in the boxes.

Small Hints

- Take the stress out of this Holiday season and give yourself time to enjoy the holidays by using shortcuts.
- Keep track of what you purchase for a certain person from year after year; you may be able to purchase an accessory to go with it.
- Keep your lists with you, so if you find a bargain you know who will receive it and can add it to your list.

Organization can help you to make this year's Holiday season stress free and a holiday to REALLY look forward to.

Jan Hayner, Professional Organizer

Article by Jan Hayner, a Professional Organizer that likes to find ways to Work Smarter-NOT Harder. She has more tips and hints at [Organizing Your Life THE EASY WAY](#) get her free pamphlets and newsletter and order her new book, '101 Hints for Around the Home'.

I hope you enjoyed this issue of the NEAT SPACES EZINE. Please feel free to forward it to your friends and colleagues.

If there are topics you would like to read about in future issues, please let me know!

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