



## NEAT SPACES EZINE MARCH 2007

Brought to you by Wendy Hollick, Professional Organizer

### THIS MONTH: CLUTTER - MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

The definition of clutter is postponed decisions.

Over the past five years I have encountered many memorable organizing tasks and questions. Some of the most frequently asked questions and their answers are shared with you below.

**Q: Where do I start?**

A: Start with an area that causes you the most stress. Tackle one small job at a time, like the closet or the junk drawer. Pace yourself and enjoy the benefits of your newly organized space.

**Q: What do I do with all these plastic containers in my kitchen? This cupboard is scary.**

A: Take a good look - you only need to keep as many plastic containers that would fit on two shelves of your fridge. Toss the ones that are discoloured or missing lids and ones that you have too many of one size. Sort them into baskets - all the round containers and their lids in one and all the square or rectangular ones and their lids in another one. Placing them in baskets makes it easier to keep them from falling out of the cupboard when you open the door, and you have the lid and bottom together for easy retrieval. Refrain from purchasing any new ones till you really need them.



**Q: I have so many metal hangers. What do I do with them all?**

A: I always look for a solution on how to reuse or recycle an item as an alternative to the landfill. Most dry cleaners will take back the metal hangers and plastic covers. A second option is to contact your city's waste management department to see if they take metal hangers in the blue box. Some cities do.

**Q: What do I do with mismatched socks, holey socks and clothing that is too stained or ripped to wear?**

A: There are green donation bins around your city that take clothing and rag donations and in turn the "rags" are then sold to the city who turn these items into asphalt for our roads. The Canadian Diabetes Clothesline program have also confirmed that any clothing donations that are in poor condition are sold to the city for the same purpose. Next time you are in the car, look down at the black asphalt, you may be driving over my old sweater. It feels good to recycle!

**Q: My bedroom is a disaster - I can't tell my clean clothes from those that need to be laundered. I trip over things. I have more stuff in my closet than clothes. Help! How can I make my bedroom look like a bedroom instead of a storage unit?**

A: Yikes! How can we feel relaxed in a room that has turned into a dumping ground? Nothing should be in your bedroom other than what belongs in a bedroom. That includes photo albums, wrapping paper, items to be gifted, extra furniture that has no place to call home, clothing that no longer fits you or your children, home office supplies, paper, bills, school work, old newspapers, magazines and books you are no longer reading, dog leash... A place for everything and everything in its place! Start by removing all items that are not related to dressing or sleeping. Sort these items as you remove them and return them to their place. Ahhh, now have a good sleep!

**Q: My linen closet is one huge pile of bedding and towels. How can I keep it tidy and easier to find things?**

A: Purge sheets and towels that are not in good condition (remember the asphalt tip) and donate those that are reusable. Place each bedding set in the pillow case so that all pieces for that set are together and easy to find when you change the bedding. Try placing towels in the bathroom under the sink or rolled up in a basket on the floor. Place the towels in each bathroom that they are used in. Saves time and inconvenience when you forget to take a clean towel with you when you shower or have a bath.

**Q: What do I do with old batteries, paint, make-up and cleaning chemicals I no longer have a use for?**

A: STOP before you place these items in a garbage bag headed for the curb! These items should be disposed of at your chemical waste management site located at your municipal landfill for no charge. (As part of my service, I will take and drop off these items for you for a nominal charge of \$10.00).

**Q: I have a lot of piles of paper on my desk and around my office, but I know where everything is. Why should I bother organizing it?**

A: The average person wastes about 150 hours per year looking for things. Even though you may have an idea of where everything is, the time it takes you to find the paper you're looking for is time that could be used for activities that will help you reach your business goals. And if you work with other people, they could waste a lot of time if someone needs to look for any of your files when you're not in the office. Also, just working in a cluttered office can interfere with your productivity, because there are too many things to distract you from the task at hand.



**Q: What is the best filing system ?**

A: The system that will work best for you will depend on the way your mind categorizes information, the nature and volume of the information you keep on file, and whether other people need to access the files in your absence. There are many different organizing styles, and what works for you may not make sense to someone else. This doesn't mean that one system is better than another, but it does mean you'll need to work together to develop a system that works for everyone. The key is to keep it simple.

And the most frequently asked question of all time:

**Q: Are there really people out there that do this everyday?**

A: YES, we are called PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZERS and we love to help people transform their lives and spaces from chaos to clarity!

To book our services, please send an inquiry email to [neatspaces@coqeco.ca](mailto:neatspaces@coqeco.ca).

**Felton's Law:**

Any mess than can happen - will!  
~Sandra Felton

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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