

Organized By Design THIS POST WAS WRITTEN BY [Diana Mahoney](#)

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“The measure of your life will not be in what you accumulate, but in what you give away.” It’s the perfect sentiment to take inventory of what you have and what you don’t need. Maybe it’s just the message to help you jumpstart your resolution to GET ORGANIZED in 2011! ***This is the year you will do it!*** Orderliness does not just happen; you need a plan. In fact, if you think you may need some support in your plans to be organized this year, **Claudia Smith of [Clear Your Clutter Consulting](#)** is teaching an organizing class through the City of Davis on February 6, 2011. You can call 530-756-5626 to get more information from the city directly, or check out her [website](#) to learn more about her consultations and group trainings.

I contacted Claudia directly to get her recommendations on the best ways to gear up for a clutter-free 2011! Claudia’s professional tips are grouped into three areas: personal, general household and office.

Personal

Make certain that you are finding balance in how you structure your day. Start the New Year by devoting yourself to taking care of yourself in addition to all of the external demands in your life.

Avoid telling yourself “I’ll do it later”. If you can accomplish something in two minutes or less, do it in the moment. ***Remember, keeping up with life is easier than catching up!***

Keep only the time commitments you need or love. Practice the art of saying “NO” to any unnecessary requests for your time. Say goodbye to time commitments that don’t enrich your life in some way.

Remember to always follow through on what you do. For example, allow time to put everything away after a shopping trip, take time to load the breakfast dishes prior to heading out the door.



General Household

Pick a calendar system that you love and use it to schedule everything.

Make a commitment to keeping only the material things you need or love.

Reduce the volume in any area of your home and office that are overflowing or just plain full.

Group “Like with Like” items. Whether it’s office supplies or holiday décor, group similar items together. Separate things into broad categories, then get more detailed as you progress.

Contain your stuff: measure the area first, and then go buy the perfect container to store your beautifully organized things. Be picky, consider things like lid or no lid, see through, plastic or wicker, etc.

Maintain you system by returning things where they belong throughout the day. **Clutter is postponed action!** Label till it hurts. Once those containers are in place and full of the things you truly value, be sure to label them so everyone knows what goes where.

Office

Deal with your mail thoroughly, every day. Resist the urge to look for the interesting things and just stacking the rest. Always put your bills in one specific spot and get as many bills as possible on auto pay. Toss the junk in the recycle bin immediately. Buy a quality shredder and use it daily.

Horizontal papers are a recipe for losing important papers and for unnecessary frustration. Learn to get your papers in order in labeled vertical files.

Limit yourself – only check email, Twitter or Facebook at certain times in the day. Deal with your email thoroughly and set up organized email folders on your computer.



Now, there's another area in the home that can become out of control without proper maintenance, and that spot is the clothes closet! I got in touch with another area professional organizer, **Brandy Reissig of [Straighten Up Your Act](#)**, to get her top tips for getting closets off to a well-organized start for 2011. Here are Brandy's no-nonsense steps how to get started:

START WITH A CLEAN SLATE

Pull out everything (yes, everything) that's currently in your closet.

Keep in mind, as you're doing so, that you probably only wear 20% of your clothes on a regular basis, 10% of them are for special occasions, and the other 70% of them are probably never used at all.

SEPARATE CLOTHES INTO 3 PILES

A. **Keep Pile** – Clothes you love and wear at least once a month AND clothes you love and wear at least twice a year (special occasion wardrobe). If you don't love it or wear it often, it doesn't belong in this pile.

B. **Donate/ Dumpster** – Clothes that are outdated, stained, don't fit anymore, too much of a hassle to repair it....Now here's the fun part. Grab a large plastic garbage bag and dump everything (yes, everything) from your B pile into it. Bring it to your local charity organization first thing in the morning or dump it now.

C. **Repairs** – Clothes that need minor repairs such as sewing a hem or replacing a button. Move this pile to the front door to go to the repair shop – if not completed within 2 weeks, move to the donate pile!



ORGANIZE YOUR KEEPERS

Sort everything in your “**A**” pile by category of clothing (blouses, skirts, pants, suits, etc.) When done sorting, start with one category and take an item of clothing one at a time, and hang it in the closet. **Important Note: If you found something that didn't belong in the closet in the first place, don't put it there again.**

FINAL THOUGHTS

Don't overstuff. There should be plenty of room in your closet to get an item in or out. If there's not, consider thinning out your wardrobe a little more. The goal here is quality, not quantity. Don't buy another thing to wear without first determining if you really need it. Some people like to discard something they're not really happy with anymore, for a new item.



CELEBRATE

Congratulations! You're done. Don't you feel great?! You deserve a special reward for your hard work. Treat yourself to dinner out with your spouse or friends, schedule a massage, or rent and watch a favorite movie. Be happy.....Your closet is!

Call Brandy Reissig of [Straighten Up Your Act](#) at 916-425-7018 for more information about her professional organizing services.

Thank you Brandy and Claudia for contributing your expertise for the readers of Davis Life Magazine! Happy New Year to everyone – may you reach all your goals in good health, and with the love of family and friends around you!

~**Diana Mahoney, The Design Partner**

Original images are re-designed rooms by Diana Mahoney

