

GETTING STARTED

10 Key principles you need to know before you start your next organizing project!



By Nikki Kinzer

Ready to make a change.

You are ready and have decided to make a change. It doesn't matter the reason why so much as it matters that you are finally ready to move forward. You want to be more organized in your home, your work, your family, and your time. We all have our struggles. We all have to start somewhere!

Being organized is more than having a clean home. It means you have taken the time and invested the energy required to change the way you live. It means you have developed the habits required to make the change, and you have realized the results. It means you choose to trade disorder for order, stress and chaos for freedom.

In *Getting Started*, I'm going to show you the 10 key principles that will illustrate what you can expect, and how you can prepare for your organizing journey. With this knowledge, you will be one step closer to reaching your goals.

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Key Principle #1: No Quick Fixes

There is no quick fix to getting organized, particularly if you have multiple projects to tackle in your home. Many times we think we can get our projects done in a day, or a weekend. For some spaces, that may be true; if you're looking to organize a closet or a small room. But if you have been living with disorganization for some time, it's going to take some organizing muscle get through the process.

Organization does not have to look perfect. This is not about pretty boxes and labeled bins. *Being organized means you are able to find your things in your home without wasting time. It means being happy and content with your space.* This will look different for everyone.

The process will take longer than you expect. What you think will take an hour will likely 2-3. A large portion of your time will be spent making decisions. Deciding what to keep, what to get rid of, where is it going to go. It will take a considerable toll on you, not only physically, but emotionally as well.

Key Principle #2: Commitment

Deciding to get organized represents a commitment. Putting things in their proper place is only part of the process. Even more important than finding the right home for all your stuff is this: if you want your project to succeed, you will need to change your negative habits that brought you to a disorganized state in the first place.

Habits can be hard to break and hard to obtain. Be gracious to yourself and your family as you are trying out new systems. It will take time for everyone to get used to doing things a new way. There will be challenges, however if you stay committed and focused, you will get through those rough patches. It's hard work, and it takes time, but the payoff in the end is living a less stressful, more carefree lifestyle!

Quick Tip: Schedule Organizing Sessions on your calendar. Scheduling it means you are making a priority to getting it done.

Key Principle #3: Involve your Family - Set goals and have a plan!

Unless you live by yourself, then it is going to be really important to get your whole family involved in this process. If you want a more organized lifestyle, everyone in the home needs to participate in order for it to stay organized. You want their support in the process. Make sure everyone understands what is going on, and what is expected from them.

Set up goals as a family. Let each member contribute to what is important to him or her. How do you want your home to feel and operate? What have been the issues so far, and what is going to be done, to correct them? Decide what the priorities are and make a plan. Decide who will be doing what, when, and how you are going to do it. Set deadlines. Having a plan in place is going to be your roadmap to getting your projects done. Knowing where you are going is half the battle!

“The goal you set must be challenging. At the same time, it should be realistic and attainable, not impossible to reach. It should be challenging enough to make you stretch, but not so far that you break.” – *Rick Hansen*

Key Principle #4: Track your Progress

You will get frustrated. You will feel you are not getting as much done as you hoped. You wanted all this to be done yesterday! It almost always takes longer than what people expect. Don't give up.

I suggest, prior to working on a project, start a tally sheet and track your time. Start with the day and how many minutes or hours you worked that day, and write down what you did. Track how many donation bags you gave away. Take before, during, and after pictures. This is a terrific way to visually track your progress.

Quick Tip: The items you are taking too long to decide whether to keep or toss, I suggest you put them in a box for 6 months. Within the 6 months, if you do not retrieve anything out of the box, or even think about the box, donate the box! Put this on your calendar!

Key Principle #5: Start Small

Don't try to organize your whole home at once, or convince yourself that you can do it all in a weekend. You'll get frustrated and overwhelmed by trying to do it all at once. Starting small is the best, most efficient way to begin.

While you are planning out your process, decide on what areas in your home frustrate you the most. What items in your home do you constantly lose or feel most annoyed by? This can help decide where to start.

Start a room and then break that space into smaller pieces. For example: drawers, cupboards, shelves, and closets. Do one space at a time. You could start with the easiest drawer or the hardest; it's up to you and your style. The point is just getting started!

Quick Tip: Work to music. Open your windows. Have fun!

Key Principle #6: Avoid Multi-tasking

Our society has taught us that multi-tasking is a great skill to have. In organizing – not so much! Work on one space at a time! It is too easy to feel you are not accomplishing your goals if you have several spaces being redone at the same time. Start, finish, and move on.

Quick Tip: Plan your organizing sessions when you feel your best. If you are a morning person, then schedule an hour when you first wake up to get your “to-do list” done. You will be more efficient and see more progress by working when you are most motivated. A good indication you need a break is when simple decisions seem harder to make.

Key Principle #7: Embrace the Mess!

It will get messy! To clear out a room or a closet – you have to make a mess to sort it all out. You will be taking everything out, touching everything, and making piles. Try not to focus too much on the mess and just know there is an end in sight.

Messes mean progress! You are one step closer to your goal. If you are not able to finish a project all the way, write down where you left off, and put the remaining piles out of the way until you can get back to the project. It is normal to find yourself moving items from one room to the other. Don't worry too much about the items being shifted until you are placing those items in permanent homes.

Quick tip: Get your donation items out of your house right away. Instead of piling them up in a corner, take them straight to the car and go that day.

Key Principle #8: Wait to Buy Product

You will want to buy stuff. Bins, shelves, labels, stickers, the works. That's because, once you have you a plan in place, your gut will kick in and tell you that the best way to get organized is to hide disorganization behind organizing tools. Your motivation will be high, so the first great sale at The Container Store, you will want to go and buy all of the fancy organizing products you see on the market. Force yourself to wait! Don't waste your time or your money. *Do not buy any new products at the beginning of your project.*

Instead, make sure you have sorted through all of your items first. Once you know what you are keeping, you can decide how best to store it. You need to have correct measurements, so you do not buy containers that are too small or too big. Make sure every container, bin, and file has a purpose.

Being organized is a process of learning and discovery, of determining what to keep, and putting it back where it belongs. You can have all the best organizing gadgets, bins, and baskets available, but without a process, you will not build the right habits you'll need to stay organized.

Key Principle #10: Evaluate

There is no right or wrong way to organize. What works today may not work tomorrow. Schedules change, and our priorities can look different, season-by-season. What works for one individual is not a guarantee it will work for you. What matters is that you are trying new ways to make your system better *for you*.

You may set up a system and then realize it is just too hard to maintain. That is when you need to take a step back and evaluate what is going on. What needs to change to make this work? Take the time to figure it out so you can continue improving and continue on your road to success. Do more research, ask a friend what they do, call a professional organizer. There are many solutions to a problem, you just have to look for the answer!

“Every worthwhile accomplishment, big or little, has its stages of drudgery and triumph; a beginning, a struggle an a victory.” - *Ghandi*

Key Principle #9: Celebrate Your Successes

Get the whole family involved, no matter how big or small the success! Celebrate the 10 minutes you worked on a drawer today. When a whole room is finished, celebrate that, too. Recognize when someone in your family is making a strong effort and illustrating positive change. Talk about the feelings you have when the home is organized. Give each other support and praise. You are in this together. Do something fun as a treat, like going to a movie or visiting your favorite restaurant.

“Desire is the key to motivation, but it’s the determination and commitment to and unrelenting pursuit of your goal- a commitmenet to excellence – that will enable you to attain the success you seek.” - *Mario Andretti*

Getting Started with Take Control Organizing

Take Control Organizing helps individuals and families to build positive life habit, reduce stress, and take back control in their lives.

With clutter, comes chaos.

With chaos, comes stress.

We have all been there, buried under the stress that comes from disorder. Maybe you can't find a report you spent hours creating, because it's buried somewhere on your desk. Maybe you can't find your left shoe, but you swear you left it by your front door just the other day. Maybe you were already running a few minutes late when you reached into your pocket for your car keys to find nothing there, and the wave just hit you that you are going to miss your interview altogether.

Wherever you are, no matter how frustrated you have been, there is hope. You have a choice.

Being disorganized is a state.

It doesn't matter how you arrived, it matters that you are here. You recognize that your house may be cluttered, your schedule in disarray, your outlook confused. More importantly, you recognize that you want to do something about it, to exchange your current state for something better.

Being organized is way of life.

Being organized is more than having a clean home. It means that you have taken the time, and invested the energy required to change the way that you live. It means that you have developed the habits required to make the change, and you have realized the results. It means that you choose to trade disorder for order, stress and chaos for freedom.

Living Easy

But it doesn't have to be difficult. With guidance, developing a new lifestyle might be as simple as having a filing system that works for you, or opening a door to a closet that is clean and organized.

Organized does not mean Spartan

If you are afraid that any investment you make in becoming organized will affect your 25-year Nutcracker collection, or require you to donate your 100th pair of shoes to charity, don't worry. Everyone has their unique passions, and so everyone should have a system that works for them, a system that includes quirks, causes, cases, and even 25-years worth of collectibles.

Being organized means taking control of your life. It means understanding the inventory of your space and schedule. It means opening doors to new opportunities to create, to complete projects, to introduce innovation, clarity, and peace into your home with ease.

It means taking small steps that can change your life for the better.

An Organizing Professional and You

For some, achieving an organized lifestyle might be as simple as keeping up with this site (and others) for tips, tricks, and resources to implement over time. For others, it might be more challenging.

Take Control Organizing serves a broad range of needs, from large projects, helping you to define systems for living in your home, eliminating clutter and debris, to more modest projects focused on lifestyle, closet renovations, kitchen usability audits, and more. Whatever your need, Take Control Organizing is here to help you take back control and discover the benefits of organized living for yourself.

About TCO

Take Control Organizing helps individuals and families to build positive life habit, reduce stress, and take back control in their lives.

We specialize in personal and residential organizing both hands on organizing and virtual organizing. TCO can help you take control of your chaos and teach you new habits to live organized and in peace.

For more tips, ideas, and product reviews, please visit our website and blog at takecontrolorganizing.com.

Sincerely,

Nikki Kinzer



Take Control Organizing offers a wealth of tools, tips, and techniques to help you get organized and stay in control. We invite you to join our community online!

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