

# Get Organized To Reduce Stress

By Ramona Creel

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Feeling "stressed" has become a common complaint in our society. Many people have begun to think that stress is an unavoidable part of daily life. Stop and think for a minute about the causes of stress in your life. How many of them are rooted in poor organizational habits? Working long hours trying to "catch up," feeling as though you're constantly rushing from one activity to the next, having no free time for yourself, living or working in a cluttered environment -- these all put tremendous pressure on both the body and the mind.

Just taking the time to organize your life -- whether it's your office environment, your living space, or your schedule -- can take a great weight off of your shoulders. Clients I've worked with reported a greater feeling of accomplishment during their days, spent less of their time dealing with crises, had more time for friends and family, and enjoyed a greater sense of peace with themselves at the end of the day.

But what can you do to get organized? Here are some general guidelines. Take a few minutes to examine your home, your office, and your daily schedule, and see where you might be able to make some adjustments:

## PURGE, PURGE, PURGE!!

We simply have too much stuff. Possessions take up space, time, money, and emotional energy. And quite often, we are expending these valuable resources on items we haven't used in 5 years! If an item is beautiful, useful, or loved, keep it. If not, clear the decks. A good rule of thumb is, "If you haven't used it in the last 12 months, you probably won't use it in the next 12."

## DEAL WITH NEW PAPERWORK RIGHT NOW

Rather than tossing the mail in a pile, sort incoming paperwork as you receive it. Toss the junk mail, envelopes, and inserts, and group the rest according to what you have TO DO to it.

## LOOK CRITICALLY AT YOUR STORAGE

Use the following principles when storing your belongings:

- nearest where they are used
- like items grouped together

- keep climatic concerns in mind
- often-used items more accessible

## LEARN TO SAY NO!!

"No" is the most difficult word in the English language. It is not required that you participate in every activity that comes your way. Choose only those that really mean something to you and KNOW YOUR LIMITS. It is better to tell someone "no" than to accept the additional responsibility, become overwhelmed, and do a shoddy job.

## CONSOLIDATE YOUR ACTIVITIES

Whether you're running errands, doing paperwork, or cleaning the house, try to do a lot of one thing at a time. Do all of your filing THEN make your phone calls THEN sit down and write some letters. Avoid hopping back and forth between activities. Also, arrange your trips geographically so that you aren't returning to the same area three times in one day.

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