

Shared habits of organized people

The beginning of the year is an ideal time to get organized and set oneself up for productive months ahead. It's also a good opportunity to take inventory of seldom-used items and clear out as much clutter as possible.

The amount of stuff the average person owns can affect how easy or difficult it is for that person to get organized. Professional organizer Regina Lark estimates the average American home contains 300,000 items. And

it's not just adults who love to collect and keep things, as kids contribute to the problem, too. The average 10-year-old owns 238 toys, playing with just 12 in a typical day.

All of these belongings contribute to disorganization and lost time. A study by Esure Home Insurance found looking for lost items accounts for 10 minutes of wasted time each day.

Getting organized can take perseverance.

However, it is possible. Use these strategies to get organized in the months ahead.

- **Observe the "one-in, one-out" rule.** Practice the rule of giving away or discarding one item per each new item that comes into your home. This approach can keep a cap on the new things you own.

- **Skip the freebies.** Resist the temptation to accept items that are being given away by family, friends, retailers, etc. Politely refuse these un-

necessary items, which will only pile up.

- **Rent items rather than buying them.** Renting rather than buying is another way to stay organized. Avid readers can rely on the public library for their weekly reads. Instead of purchasing new formal wear to wear to a wedding, rent tuxedos, suits or evening gowns.

- **Make lists of what needs to be done.** Writing down tasks can help them become more manageable, and a list can also ensure a task is fully completed. Physically checking off a to-do list can be quite satisfying, providing motivation to finish the rest of the list.

- **Take a catch-up day.** Those who feel bogged down by a backlog of responsibilities can take a day off from work to catch up

on chores and tasks. Fit a few things in over the course of the day.

- **Plan ahead for meals and other tasks.** Use the calendar to plan out the week or the month. When you know what to expect, instead of spending time figuring out what to make or which task to do each day, you can be more efficient about getting it done.

Getting organized is a common goal. It's entirely achievable with a positive attitude and some dedication.



Best wishes for a great New Year!

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