

SIMPLY ORGANIZED

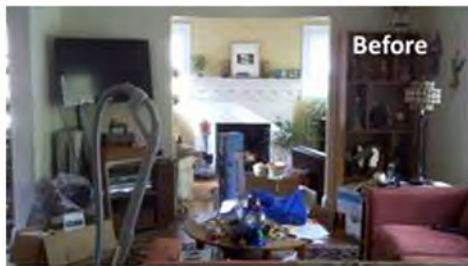
Clutter vs Organizing*



Cheryl Spater
Organizing Specialist

The Difference

Both terms get bandied about when talking about tidying up your home, but organizing and clutter clearing are two very different things. Clearing clutter is actually removing items from your space, while organizing is putting what's left in order. Here's why you need to do both to have a space that feels good and functions efficiently, plus tips on which stage comes first and what to remember at each stage in the process.



Clearing clutter comes first. Attempting to “get organized” before clearing clutter is putting the cart before the horse, and it’s likely to waste not only a lot of energy, but money too — on unnecessary storage containers! Always begin by seeing what you can let go of, and physically remove it from the space before you move on to organizing what’s left.

The garage principle. A good way to picture why you must clear clutter before organizing is what I like to think of as the *garage principle*. Imagine a garage, completely crammed full of stuff: so much stuff that you literally cannot walk in, let alone park a car there. If you were to simply “organize” such a space, it would perhaps look neater, with everything sorted by category and stacked up in attractive containers — but the containers would still reach the roof, and the space still wouldn’t function as anything more than a storage unit. By clearing out the unnecessary junk first, you can create more space, which will help in the next phase when you organize what’s left.

So what is clutter, exactly? Clutter is anything in your home you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful. It would also include anything that simply does not fit within the space you currently have, and anything, material or immaterial, that does not align with the life you truly want to be living.

(continued on next page)



How much clutter clearing is enough? This is something that can spark intense debate. My take is that each of us must answer that question for ourselves. We all have different comfort levels with how much stuff is in our homes — perhaps you are a minimalist at heart, but maybe you are not. For some, being surrounded by a bounty of favorite things is a real joy. If you're honest with yourself and look into your heart, you probably already know which camp you fall into.

Where to begin? The short answer is: It doesn't matter where you begin, as long as you do. That said, consider which area of your home would have the biggest positive impact on your daily life if it was decluttered and organized, and start there. Are mornings chaotic? Perhaps you could start in the entryway so you know right where your essential items are as you walk out the door. Or if getting dinner on the table is a pain, getting your kitchen in proper order could help things run more smoothly. Think about your day, identify a problem area and start there.

Organizing basics. Once the excess stuff (the clutter) has been removed, organizing is much easier. The way to get a space organized depends largely on the type of storage you have available. Here are a few things to keep in mind when you get started organizing:

- Keep like with like (all cutlery together, all papers together).
- Fit drawers with drawer organizers sized for the type of items you plan to store there.
- Organize shelving with stackable storage boxes or bins (good for keeping small items contained) or shelf dividers (good for keeping sweaters from toppling over).
- Organize cabinets with risers (good for dishes) or lazy Susans (good for condiments and other small items).
- Organize surfaces with trays.
- Use clear containers when possible; this makes it easier to find what you are looking for.
- If the container is not see-through, be sure to label the contents.

If you are overwhelmed and can't begin the process, yes organizing is a process, call in a professional like myself to move you forward.

Happy Organizing!

**More tips can be found
on my website:
simplyorganized4you.com**

** Original source Houzz.com, Laura Gaskill contributing author*

