

Kitchens—Where it all happens everyday!

Kitchens are often the most popular and well used rooms in our homes. Much activity goes on in a kitchen besides the actual cooking and meal preparation. It is also the gathering place for much family interaction and the storage area for all food and dishes and cooking utensils and other paraphernalia that happens to land on the counter tops.

When it comes to organizing a kitchen you need to plan to set aside a day or a series of hours in several days. It is a big undertaking, but the results are very rewarding. The essential idea is to store items nearest to the area where they will be used. There are four stages to the process of reorganizing a kitchen.

- Sort- The first step is to take out all items and sort in boxes or laundry baskets, sorting by function, ie:
 - * Items used to cook including pots, pans, bowls, knives, utensils
 - * Ingredients for baking and meal preparation including spices, condiments
 - * Canned goods, sorted by category ie vegetables, fruits, meals, soups, etc
 - *Packaged goods including cereals, cookies, chips, etc
 - *Stove essentials like oils, sprays, seasonings, potholders
 - *Items for cleanup including dishwasher soap, dish soap, sink cleaner etc
 - *Serving dishes, baking dishes, dinnerware, silverware
 - *Cookbooks, recipe collections instruction booklets
- * Discard- This step is essential, and you can create two bins or areas to discard items. One bin is for trash and items that are outdated or have not been used. Be tough and if in doubt throw it out. The other bin is for items to be donated. You will be very surprised at what has been in your cupboards!
- * Plan- Take a fresh look at the kitchen and develop a plan to put items close to the area where they are most useful ie. glasses and dishes near the sink or dishwasher.
 - * look at the available space and experiment with new storage ideas like stackable shelf inserts to increase usable space vertically or spice racks that step up to allow better visibility of the spices.
 - *measure the drawers and shelves and take a trip to a home improvement store or look online for ideas to maximize your storage space. Find dividers and containers to store a group of items. This will keep your spaces much more organized.
- Commit- Make some resolutions that the whole household can implement to maintain the new order of things. This is a very important step and a meeting involving the family will help to establish new patterns of behavior. New habits take 30 days to establish. Keep a close watch on the progress and reward yourself and your family for bringing a new sense of beauty, order and tranquility to your kitchen.