

2012 is officially here and accompanying it is a list of resolutions we all hope to concur: from loosing those dreaded holiday pounds, taking better care of our skin, to organizing our life. These New Year to-do's may seem simple, but each takes perseverance to accomplish. Thanks to The Container Store, resolution #3 on your list will be less daunting. Public Relations Manager of The Container Store, Olescia Hanson, has a few great tips to help you start organizing for the New Year.



AZ Foothills: What is the first step one should take toward organizing their home for the New Year?

OH: First step is to start in one place. If you have several areas in your home you want to get under control, start with just one. You decide which one to start with — is it the area that gives you the biggest headache, or the area that guests to your home most easily see? Whatever your priorities, select one area and stick to it. Many attempts at organization fail when the task of cleaning up the entire house seems daunting and folks give up. When you complete one area, celebrate and then move on to the next.

AZ Foothills: What is the rule of thumb when it is time to discard of something?

OH: Once you've selected an area, go through the contents. Use the two-year rule of thumb — if you haven't worn it or used it in two years, it's time to say goodbye to it. These items take up valuable space and probably won't be missed.

AZ Foothills: What is the most common question you get from customers looking to organize their home for the New Year?

OH: I think most customers struggle with simply getting started. We encourage you to come in and chat with one of our organization experts in the store. We'll ask questions to find the right solution for your organization challenge.



AZ Foothills: What advice would you give someone looking to organize his or her home?

OH: No matter what area you're organizing or how much space you have, we would recommend your readers follow these 12 simple tips to create a well-organized, efficient space.

## 1. Start in one place

If you have several areas in your home you want to get under control, start with just one. You decide which one to start with — is it the area that gives you the biggest headache, or the area that guests to your home most easily see? Whatever your priorities, select one area and stick to it. Many attempts at organization fail when the task of cleaning up the entire house seems daunting and folks give up. When you complete one area, celebrate and then move on to the next.

## 2. Allow plenty of time

Don't expect organization to happen overnight. Depending on the area to be organized, schedule a couple of hours each day to work on getting the area organized. Getting a garage whipped into shape will take more time than it takes to organize a linen closet.

## 3. Clean house

Once you've selected an area, go through the contents. Donate or hold a garage sale for anything you don't or can't wear or use any more. Use the two year rule of thumb — if you haven't worn it in two years, it's time to say goodbye to it. These items take up valuable space and probably won't be missed.



## 4. Take inventory

After you've removed extraneous items, take a look at what remains. Does it belong here? Does it make sense to keep it here? Is there another place where you've got more room to keep it, or another area where it would be more easily accessible for its purpose? For example, take that professional-grade mixer that you've been keeping in the back of your closet and move it to the kitchen. When it's time to tackle that area of the home, you can incorporate the mixer into the new storage plan for the kitchen.

## 5. Look for wasted space

If you're in need of more storage space, think creatively about additional areas that you can put to work. Prime examples include over doors and underneath beds. These areas are valuable real estate in your home and are often overlooked.

## 6. Maximize vertical space

If you don't have a lot of room to work with, a surefire way to instantly create more space is to go "up." Instead of only having a couple of shelves to house your kitchen items, take them up to the ceiling to really maximize the vertical space — you'll store the things you need less frequently on the higher shelves.



## 7. Divide the space

By adding additional shelves to a single shelf, or by using containers that stack atop one another, you can divide the vertical space and make efficient use of the area you have to work with. By dividing the space, you eliminate the possibility of stacking tall piles of clothing, papers or other items that are destined to topple over.

## 8. Keep it moving

Consider storage options on wheels: to allow for greater flexibility and to help keep the clutter under control. Carts can hold an assortment of accessories in a small amount of space, and can be wheeled back into a closet or storage area when not in use.

## 9. Organize with color

Whether you're working to organize the family room or striving to get your home office under control, use color to enhance your efforts. Assign each child a different colored container to keep his or her belongings in and keep them responsible for cleaning up after themselves. Organize projects, bills and other important papers by function and color in your home office.



## 10. Visibility

## Organization 101

Written by Elizabeth Liberatore

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The three rules to organization are visibility, accessibility and flexibility. Choose containers that are either transparent or that you can easily label to help immediately identify the contents and will help save valuable time.

### 11. Accessibility

Make sure that the items you need most often are the easiest to access. Likewise, place the items you don't need to get to as often on a higher shelf or in another area.

### 12. Flexibility

Select a storage system that can adapt to your changing needs. That way, you can reconfigure and reuse solutions to solve a variety of storage and organization problems.

Now that you have taken Organizing 101, roll up those sleeves and start making your New Year's resolution a new lifestyle. The Container Store just kicked off their Annual elfa Sale--everything elfa in the store is 30 percent off along with 30 percent off elfa installation! So grab all the containers, labels, bins and boxes you need to start clearing out 2011's clutter. Happy organizing!

For additional information visit: [www.thecontainerstore.com](http://www.thecontainerstore.com).