

Getting And Keeping Your Kitchen Clean & Organized



By
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Introduction

Keeping an organized kitchen through the ups and downs of family life isn't easy.

Here are a few quick and easy kitchen organizing ideas to help get you started.

- If you make the storage options decorative and fun, it's doesn't seem as much like work.
- Giving things away to charity not only helps someone else, but it helps you stay more organized by freeing up valuable space.
- In order for the house to stay organized, the whole family has to be involved. If you are starting a new routine, be sure to explain the new rules to everyone, practice it for a few days, reminding everyone what needs done. If you stay consistent, it won't be long before your whole home is in order.

Use the suggestions in this report to organize your kitchen even further. Tackle just one section per month and you will have a beautiful organized home in just a few months. Once you've gone through all the decluttering and organizing, keeping your kitchen clean is much less of a challenge and will take no time at all.

Let's get started,



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Organizing the Kitchen and Dining Room

When you set out to get your home organized, the kitchen and dining rooms have a distinct challenge as compared to the rest of the house. Unlike other rooms that may only require cleaning once a week, these rooms require multiple cleanings a day. But, with some organizational strategy, you can save time on these jobs and keep the clutter down.

First, take inventory of the kitchen with all of your pots and pans and utensils. Store things based on function. Keep the baking items in one cupboard near the oven. Keep preparation equipment near your work area, whether it's the table, an island or a workspace on wheels.

These portable workspaces are very nice to have. They quite often have storage space built in and can be put in a corner, closet or pantry when not in use.

A great space saver is a pot rack that can be hung from the ceiling. They are fairly easy to install, but you have to make sure you use the right kind of anchor bolts that will support the weight of the rack and pans. Most hardware stores can help you with this.

The pantry and freezer can also be a challenge if you are space challenged. If you take stock of what you have and develop a master shopping list, it can cut back on having too much of one item. One woman used an enclosed bookshelf in her hallway to store extra canned goods and kitchen gadgets that she couldn't find room for in her cupboards. It's a smart use of space and visitors to the home are none the wiser.

The dining room has other challenges, as the dining room table tends to be a clutter magnet. Mail gets dropped there, homework and school projects are done there, and last but not least, meals are eaten there - unless the clutter has taken over. The key to solving this problem is retraining the family to not put things on the dining room table. Have junk mail thrown out as soon as it comes, instead of looking at it later. Have a new place specifically designated for mail, especially bills. A slim basket on the wall is a great place for mail.

If you have a sideboard, it can also be a clutter magnet, so decorate it with some nice knickknacks that don't allow room for clutter to gather. Large serving dishes can be arranged nicely with flowers in a vase, or other favorite items.

Disorder creates a stressful environment and you don't need this adding strain for your family at meal time. Keep the dining room warm, cozy and clutter free and enjoy the time you have to sit down and eat as a family.



Quick Kitchen Cleaning Tips

It's said the kitchen is the most lived in room in many households, unfortunately this means it can also be the messiest! Here are some quick kitchen cleaning tips to help you keep the mess and clutter to a minimum.

- Clean the kitchen cabinets, stove, refrigerator and counters with baking soda.
- Sweep and mop your kitchen floor.
- To remove skid marks on linoleum rub the spot with toothpaste before washing the floor.
- Remove all clutter from your counter top; that includes dishes, glasses, utensils cups and other items you may have lying around.
- Store as many appliances as you can in the cabinets.
- Clean your sink with olive oil.
- Replace your dish rag regularly, as well as the sponge or scrub you use for washing.
- To remove hard-water build-up in a teapot or kettle, pour in two cups of vinegar and bring to a boil. Let simmer for about 10 minutes, then rinse well.
- To clean the coffee maker: Pour straight vinegar into it as if you are making the coffee, no filter is needed. Turn the coffee maker on as if you were making a pot of coffee. Repeat this with a new batch of vinegar until it runs clear of calcium deposits.

Cleaning is a matter of preparation, determination and time management. As you can see, all your kitchen needs now is a light once-over, and you are ready for the marathon of cooking and baking to begin.

Quick Refrigerator Cleaning Tips

You've decided to clean the refrigerator; you've put it off long enough! Since you have the time and the patience; let's give you some quick refrigerator cleaning tips to hurry along the process.

- Take everything out of the refrigerator.
- Throw away outdated cans, jars and plastic bottles.
- Take out the vegetable bins; wash and dry.
- Use a sponge or wet cloth to clean the shelving and the inside of the door. You may want to use baking soda as the cleaning agent.
- Put back whatever items you have left.
- Put the bins back, and sprinkle a bit of baking soda in each.
- Place an opened box of baking soda towards the back top shelf.
- Clean the entire refrigerator; top sides and doors and Voila!

You're done! That was easy enough, right? Well that's because you have been cleaning it religiously every month. Alas, there are some refrigerators which have not been so lucky, and cleaning will require more time.

To keep your refrigerator clean so that a simple once-over is required, here are some additional tips to follow.

- Use tin foil under your milk cartons to prevent leaking.
- Use food containers to store your leftovers.
- Change the box of baking soda every three months.

- Keep the temperature at the manufacturer's recommendation.
- Try not to accumulate more than two items. Check certain items before buying them. Oftentimes, we buy too much of one item, and it just stays in the refrigerator for months on end.
- Keep your vegetables in zip lock bags to maintain their freshness.
- Defrost your freezer at least once a month. Don't forget to place a box of baking soda in there as well.

By following these simple tips, your next cleaning will be easier and faster.

Kitchen & Meal Time Organizing Tips

Most families spend a lot of time in their kitchens. In many households the kitchen is really the heart of the home. You definitely want to make this room a relaxing family space but also practical to make family meal times and cooking as stress free as possible.

Here are a few kitchen organizing tips to help get you started:

Organize Your Work Stations – To make cooking easier you want to make sure you have everything you need close at hand. Have an area for preparing the meals. It's good to keep your spices and seasonings close to this area. You'll also want to have chopping boards, knives and mixing spoons close at hand. Have another area for serving and keep all your dishes, serving spoons, place mats and utensils there.

By incorporating work stations into your kitchen and keeping everything you need near each work station, you'll save a lot of time.

Organize Your Fridge – Clean out your fridge and organize things in categories to make finding them easier when you're in a rush. It's a good idea to keep all your dairy products together. Place cold cuts in tightly sealed plastic containers and label them. This will keep them fresh and also make it easier to find. You can do the same thing with cheese and left over foods.

Separate your fruit and salad items from your other vegetables so that you can find them easier. Often times you'll forget you have those tomatoes in the back drawer and buy more. By keeping things organized you'll waste and spend less.

Organize Your Pantry - Arrange your pantry or cupboards according to foods. For example keep all your canned goods in one place and cereal in another. Keep the items you use most within easy reach and put away those appliances you never seem to use. They're just taking up counter top space.

Plan Your Meals – This is by far the easiest way to organize your meal times. Take a few minutes and write out a meal plan and shopping list for the upcoming week. Buy everything in advance and stock up on items you use regularly and

have a long shelf life. Then stick your menu on your fridge, glance at it each morning and plan ahead. Thaw any meat that needs thawing or chop and add your items to your crock pot.



More General Tips



How To Creatively Combine Childcare and Housecleaning

When we were children, our moms took care of us and cleaned the house usually without the benefit of any help whatsoever. They seemed to manage it all! Today, families seem busier than ever and spending time cleaning the house can often be overwhelming. If you are a mom with children, and feel the strain of caring for them while trying to keep your home as clean as possible, here are some tips on how to creatively combine childcare and housecleaning at the same time.

There are two schools of thought: While some moms may suggest children are more important than cleaning the house; others would take the point of view that without being a neat freak, you can still keep your house modestly clean. Which brings us to our first tip: readjust your thinking about how perfect the house should look, and just concentrate on doing what you can, when you can. If the children are napping; take the time to dust each room. If you have toddlers; have them play in the playpen for about 15 minutes giving you ample time to vacuum.

Try not to accomplish everything in one day; set up a schedule and give yourself 15-20 minutes each day to finish a particular chore. After the children have gone to bed, use the time to wash the kitchen floor; or finish a load of laundry. On the weekends, ask your husband or children to help you. Or, assign simple tasks; whether it's asking the children to tidy their rooms, or having your husband take care of the children while you tend to the house.

While housecleaning is necessary, it doesn't have to be perfected by any stretch of the imagination. What good is a clean house if you are totally exhausted by the end of the day? Just take it one day at a time; and limit your expectations.

Avoiding The Morning Rush

It's stressful isn't it? Having to get all those things ready, trying not to forget anything, not to mention bickering kids, tantrums about what to wear or the sleepy head who doesn't want to wake up. No, the morning rush isn't any fun but luckily there are a few things you can do to bring peace back into your family's morning routine.

Prepare Ahead – Sounds simple enough but did you know you could actually leave just about everything ready for the next day? It might take a few extra minutes out of your evening but you'll be much faster if you prepare everything once the kids are asleep rather than rushing in the morning.

Lay out the kids clothes for the next day - Include things like hair clips, socks and shoes. And don't forget to lay out your clothes too.

Leave breakfast ready (or nearly ready) - Depending on what you have for breakfast you can often pre-prepare a lot of it. If you have pancakes make the batter the night before and stick it in the fridge. If you have cereal and toast, leave the cereal out, bowls, spoons and bread. You can even set the table to save time.

Pre-Pack Lunch Boxes - If your kids take a packed lunch to school prepare it the night before. Most things like sandwiches will be fine left in the fridge overnight.

Pack Their School Bags – Look through their bags and make sure there aren't any last minute dates or events you've overlooked. Pack all their books and things in their bags and leave everything by the front door.

Get The Kids Involved – The responsibility of getting the kids to school shouldn't completely lie on your shoulders. As soon as children are old enough to help out then they should. Even the youngest of kids can help.

Make a Chart – If your kids (like most kids) are forgetful, make a chart for each one which explains in order all the things they need to do in the morning. You can draw pictures for the really young ones and write a description for the older ones. For example, you can have a picture of a toothbrush, then the school clothes, hair brush, etc.

Talk to your kids about the list beforehand and explain it to them. Then stick it up in a prominent place in their rooms and the next time they ask you “mom, what do I do know?” tell them to go look at their list. This is a great way of getting kids a little more involved and to start teaching them responsibility.

By preparing ahead you can't avoid all of your family's morning stresses but it will certainly help a lot, and who knows you may even have time for that extra cup of coffee.

Time Saving Tips for Moms

Time is a precious commodity and those who learn to use theirs wisely will always be ahead of the game. First the bad news, the one thing you can't do is add more hours to your day. No matter what, it's just not going to happen. The good news, you can do certain things to make every precious minute count and in turn leave you with more free time.

Plan ahead

Don't go anywhere without a list. Especially if you have the kids with you, you're more likely to forget something without a list. So, don't go on your errand run or shopping trip without a list. Also try to go shopping in the evenings when there are less people in the store. Why waste an hour fighting the crowds when you can be done in 30 minutes. Better yet, do your shopping online.

Meal Plan

Plan meals for the upcoming week and write your shopping list according to the meals. Make sure you stick the meal plan on the fridge so you can know what foods need to be thawed daily, etc. This will save you a lot of time and money.

NOTE: For a menu plan and free grocery list go to www.MenuPlanningCentral.com

Buy in Bulk

If you have the space plan ahead and buy things in bulk. You'll save money and precious time by not having to go to the supermarket so often.

Pay Your Bills Electronically

If you can do this then you should. You will save a lot of time by not having to write out and mail checks. If you really can't or choose not to do this, then set up a work station and keep your checkbook, stamp, envelopes, pens close at hand. You can also have a calendar with all your important dates and appointments written on there. Go a step further and have an inbox for mail and papers that need to be files. You'll never waste time looking for these things again.

Don't Let The Housework Pile Up

There's nothing worst than spending your weekends cleaning. If you do a little bit each day you won't ever need to spend a whole day cleaning. For example, do a load of laundry daily rather than letting it all pile up for Saturday, same thing with the vacuuming and other tasks. Once the weekend comes around the

house should be fairly organized. You may just have to give the bathroom and kitchen a good clean, leaving you with plenty of time to enjoy your family.

Organize Your Life

Spend a little time organizing your house, the time spent doing this will save you a lot of time and hassle in return. Have a set place for everything. For example, have a place near the front door where you can hang your keys and purse. Don't forget items like umbrellas, hats, gloves and scarves for those rainy or cold days. Set up storage for the kids toys or all magazines and books.

Recommended Resource



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