

A IS FOR ASSIGN

Assigning homes to your belongings is a critical step in the organizing process. And here's why.....it's where two amazing benefits are rooted! These benefits save you time and energy. And they radically reduce frustration and stress.

Benefit #1: Dedicated homes help you lay your hands on what you need when you need it. You'll know exactly where your stuff is - it's in its home!

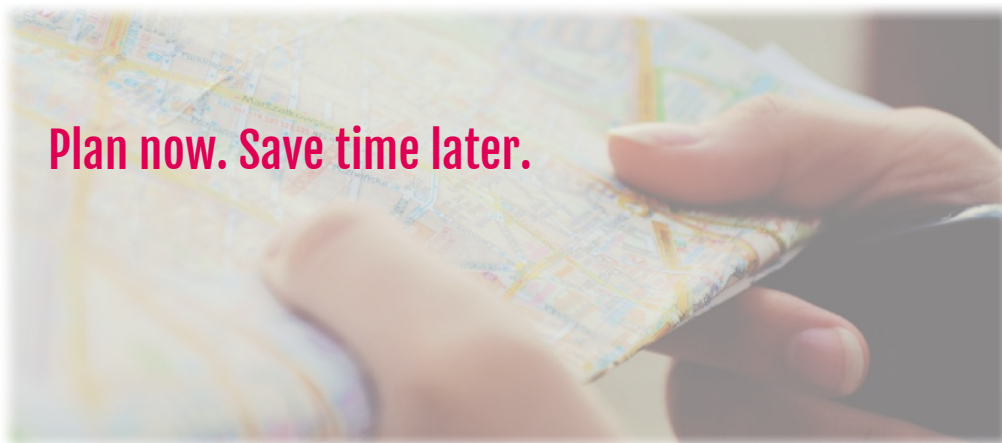
Benefit #2: Dedicated homes keep clutter at bay. The visual clutter on our homes is so often a result of homeless items. You can't ever really put something away, if you don't know where away is, right? Designating a home solves that problem.

This sounds pretty terrific, right? You might even be thinking....

Cool beans, I'll go assign homes right now! And then I'll be all set.

And you'd be right if.....you put some real thought into where things are going to 'live'.

Yes indeed, assigning homes is a planning process, one that definitely requires your thinking cap. Now, I know analyzing can be exhausting, but all this front end work is an investment in your future. An investment that is going to pay you back every single day! No jokes.



ASSIGNING HOMES - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

It's counter productive to put something away in a spot that doesn't make sense. I'm sure that's not a revelation of epic proportions, but it's very easy to forget. I find people often get caught up in putting stuff where they think it 'should' go. But there is no right or wrong, it's all about what works for you. [If you missed the related blog post, you can find it here.](#) It's well worth the read!

Case Study

I once had a client who was budding photographer, and we turned her pantry into storage for her equipment. It worked like a charm since she rarely cooked, but it wasn't immediately intuitive.

Her thinking (and I confess, initially even mine) discounted that space because it's 'supposed to be for food'. But once we started talking about what mattered in her life it became obvious that cooking was nowhere on her list of priorities.

The pantry wasn't the only viable solution. She could have used her spare bedroom for her camera equipment, there was plenty of space. But she really valued having it available for company - she loved being able to host people on a moments notice. And she didn't want to worry her guests with warnings about the equipment.

Plus she wanted to be able to pack her project bags quickly and easily. And the kitchen with its counters made staging super simple. Additionally, the kitchen door opened right to the garage so she truly could load and unload with maximum ease. Using the pantry really was the ideal solution.

What matters is that it works for you!

ASSIGNING HOMES - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Before you assign a home to any belonging, you need ask yourself where and how you use the item. Make it accessible for those scenarios. Remember, it doesn't have to make sense to anyone but you.

If you always write letters in the living room, put your writing supplies in the living room. If you clip coupons in bed, put scissors in your night stand. Whatever you do, make it intuitive to you.

If your child likes big bubbles in the bath every night and you've resorted to using a chef's whisk to make that happen then put the whisk in the bathroom (sounds crazy, but I have a client who swears that this makes the biggest bubbles ever!). Buy a second one for the kitchen if it's something you regularly use, if not, don't feel obligated to replace it.



ASSIGNING HOMES - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Not only should things live where you use them, they should be housed in a way that makes sense based on how often they are used.

- Something that is used daily should get the most accessible spot, also known as prime real estate. Often this is right out in the open. Perhaps on a counter or table top. Think of a toaster or salt and peppers shakers. They often sit out, ready to use.
- Something that is used weekly should get the next most accessible spot. This might be at the front of a cabinet, usually at eye level so you can see it immediately, or in an easy reach drawer. In any event, the effort to retrieve the item should be minimal.
- Something used monthly can be placed in a spot that may require you to exert a bit of effort to access it, like a high shelf or a low cabinet.
- Something that is used rarely can go in the least accessible spot, you may even have to walk to retrieve it. A good example is seasonal decorations. They can be stored in a garage or attic, essentially archived away, but still available when needed.

An office desk is usually arranged following these guide lines. Most are set with pens, stapler, action files and note paper sitting out on top, within easy reach of the worker. The desk drawer usually holds items like extra pens, staple remover, tacks, scissors. The desk file drawer will hold the go-to files, while the stand alone file cabinet usually holds files that are accessed less often. Archival files are generally sent off site.



ASSIGNING HOMES - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Once you give an item a proper home, share that information with everyone in the house. (Make a big deal about it - it's important everyone understands where the item will live.) If you have to, label the location! Sometimes it helps to actually contain the item, like in a bin or a basket.

Now go a step a further and make sure that effort pays off for the long haul:

Create a household policy to ALWAYS put the item back in its home after use.

That action alone, putting an item away immediately after use, will go further than any other action in terms of keeping your space organized.

The rationale is simple: stray un-homed items contribute to visual clutter. And visual clutter creates mental clutter. Why? Because our outer environment affects our inner environment.

Chaos Outside = Chaos Inside.

Finally, ease of use should drive placement of everyday items. Strive to make it as effortless as possible to access your things. If you have made your items easily retrievable, you have also made them easily returnable by default. You can use the handy guide on the next page to help you decide where things might live.

Here are four old-fashioned rules that can change the quality of your daily life beginning today:

- 1. If you take it out, put it back.**
- 2. If you open it, close it.**
- 3. If you throw it down, pick it up.**
- 4. If you take it off, hang it up.**

From Simple Abundance, by Sarah Ban Breathnach

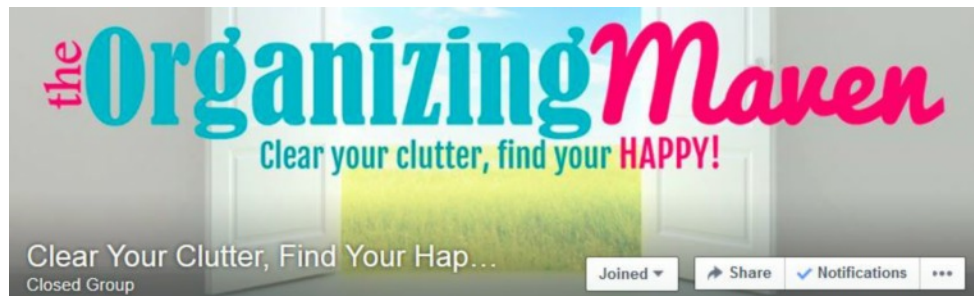
	Frequency of Use	Example	Ideal Home Location
1	Daily	Coffee Maker, Salt & Pepper Shakers	<p>Access effortlessly.</p> <p>Out in the open, or the most convenient, easiest to access drawer or shelf.</p> <p>Between eye and waist level.</p> <p>Grab with a single movement. Nothing should hinder retrieval or replacement.</p>
2	Weekly	Blender, Crock Pot	<p>Access with minimal effort.</p> <p>Behind doors, in a drawer, on a shelf that requires reaching up or bending slightly.</p> <p>Can be slightly above or below eye/waist level.</p>
3	Monthly	Roasting Pan, Rolling Pin	<p>Access with moderate effort.</p> <p>Can be behind #2 items. May require moving of items.</p> <p>May be well below or above eye/waist level. May require a step stool or bending down.</p>
4	Yearly/Seasonal	Holiday Tableware, Cookie Press	<p>Access with significant effort.</p> <p>Very lowest, very highest shelves. Behind other objects. Can be stored outside of the use location (e.g., garage, attic).</p>

the OrganizingMaven { Clear your clutter... ...find your HAPPY! }

QUESTIONS & FREE RESOURCES!

If you have questions, please feel free to [pop over to Facebook](#) and ask away! And if you're so inclined, I'd be thrilled if you'd take a moment and hit the 'like' button.

You can also [join our private Facebook group](#) for ideas, support, and special members only goodies! You can find us [here](#). Just click the join group button and I'll let you in.



And if you haven't already, you might want to [sign up for the E.S.C.A.P.E. Clutter and Get Organized E-Course](#). You'll learn how to declutter, organize, and simplify your whole life in six simple steps.....and it's free!



If you're so inclined, I'd love to connect (actually, I'd be thrilled!). I'm probably in some of the same places you are....and I am sharing all kinds of great stuff.

