

Better Homes and Gardens®

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Get organized!

Clutter
Solutions

Taming
Paperwork

Ellie
Krieger's
Healthy
Meals





WHERE LIFE HAPPENS

IT'S A NEW DAY Bringing order to chaos starts your year off right. Score an easy triumph by conquering a small project—may we suggest the junk drawer? It might give you the momentum you need to make a sweep of the house.



Expandable bamboo gadget tray (painted white), \$30; crateandbarrel.com



Tucked Away



... but not too far away! Smart storage in every room keeps everyday items carefully ordered and always handy for this family of five.



Living room

Easy organization was built into the renovation of Anne and Chris Lokken's 1902 Victorian in Chicago. "We knew we only wanted rooms that we were actually going to live in, so storage was key," Anne says. Bookshelves in the foyer, for example, help keep the living room clutter-free. They're the perfect welcome to a space used for reading, Anne's book club discussions, or hosting a guest who stops by.

To maximize this home's storage features, we asked organizing expert Donna Smallin for suggestions using Container Store products. Her idea for bookshelves: Keep small items, such as keys and glasses, handy but out of sight by using a decorative box with a lid. Twigg photo box, \$20; containerstore.com

TRY
THIS



Use lightweight toy bins that kids can easily carry when playing and cleaning up. Tribeca bins; \$12 each; containerstore.com

TRY THIS

Family room At the back of the house, Anne and Chris allocated space for a family room where they could spend time with their children, Henry, 9, Miles, 7, and Claire, 3. Here they like to set up board games on the ottoman or watch movies on the wall-mount TV. Storage needs were playtime-focused: “We wanted a place to store toys and games—something that would keep them off the floor,” Anne says. The built-ins under the windows are ideal for bins of playthings. Eventually, these niches will hold the Lökkens’ always-growing book collection or accessories they want to display.





**TRY
THIS**

Create a practical work zone with decorative impact using a row of bulletin boards and colorful wall files. Linen bulletin boards and Circuit wall files, \$30 each; containerstore.com

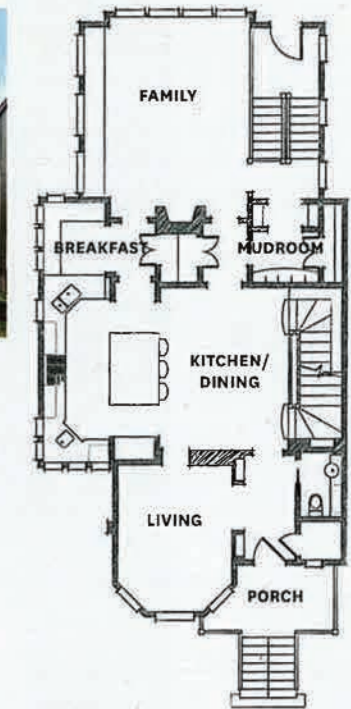
Home office Cabinetry on one wall of the family room includes a desk—a convenient and easy-to-monitor spot for the computer. The desk adjoins a cabinet of DVDs and TV components, while a third cabinet hides the wireless printer. The Lökkens find that having the family command center in a high-traffic area is a good excuse to cull household paper and turn kids' projects into wall art.



TRY THIS

Divvy up cabinet space with an expandable shelf on legs. York shelf, \$20; containerstore.com

Kitchen Because the kitchen is open to much of the main floor, the Lokkens opted to hide most everyday essentials behind cabinet doors and in drawers. Lower cabinets store cups for the kids and other nonbreakable items within easy reach, while those just below the ceiling hold large, occasional-use bowls and platters. The island is a real workhorse, incorporating spots for the microwave, countertop appliances, wine bottles, and cookware.



Project manager John Potter of Morgante-Wilson Architects removed interior walls and bumped out the kitchen wall to stretch the narrow house.

ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS GLOWACKI

Get your kitchen in order!
See BHG.com/kitchen-storage for tips on organizing cabinets and countertops.

Mudroom The mudroom features a wall divided into identical sections, one for each family member, with space for boots, books, and hanging items. Open-top bins on shelves that flank the mudroom doorway make sorting mail and school papers easy.



TRY THIS

Securely mount a pair of large hooks for each family member to ensure space for a coat and bag or backpack.



First steps to cut clutter

Expert Donna Smallin says these low-stress strategies will make you feel more organized instantly.

Don't put it down, put it away. Before you set something down, ask yourself, "Is this where it belongs?" In the beginning, putting things away will feel like work, but it will soon become second nature—and a time-saver. For example, remind yourself that it takes just a minute to hang clothes or toss them in the hamper, and later you won't need to launder or iron clothing left on the floor.

Unclutter as you go. Every morning or evening, walk through your home with a laundry basket or large tote bag, collecting stray items and returning them to their rightful homes. Done regularly, this task should take only five minutes.

Set up systems. Create workstations by gathering in one spot the tools for tasks such as paying bills, sewing, or doing laundry. Designate a bin for library books and videos that need to be returned. ■



TRY THIS

Use an easy-to-customize closet system to make the most of available space. Elfa system, priced per piece; containerstore.com



The mudroom cubbies hold most-used items, while a closet, above, stores extra outerwear and off-season items. Kitchen storage serves specific duties: One end of the island, left, organizes wine bottles and cookbooks; an open-backed cabinet placed in front of a window, above left, spotlights glassware with the feel of a china cabinet.

 **Win a home organization makeover!**

For a chance to win an expert consultation and storage products, see BHG.com/win-storage (details on page 6).