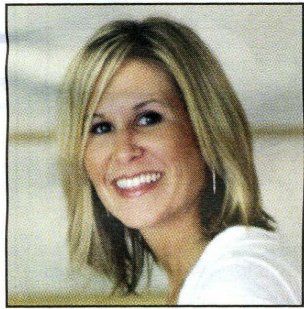


# Organize Your Living Space



BY: JESSICA DOLAN,  
ROOM TO BREATHE HOME  
& OFFICE ORGANIZING

Dear Jessica,  
I've adopted many of your excellent suggestions and have seen some definite improvement in keeping the amount of clutter and piles of paperwork in our home under control. My problem is, I can't seem to get my husband and son to follow my lead in putting things away when they are finished with something.

Their stuff still seems to be left all over the place! Any suggestions? Thanks!  
Teri, State College

Teri,  
Now this is a challenging

Mention the Women's Journal! It identifies you!

question. Are you up for the challenge? I see this situation all too often with my clients. It can certainly be frustrating for one who is organized, or on the way to organization, to share space with those who are not. My hopes are that once your husband and son see how being organized can greatly reduce household stress, household spending, and the amount of time spent on chores they will come around.

My guess is that your home didn't reach the status of disorganized overnight, so it will also take some time for them to adjust as well. Just another quick thought to ponder...your husband and son may think that part of a nurturing mother or wife is to clean up after them, but they need to realize that, in turn, you need the help from them in this process. Does this make sense?

### How to be and stay organized as a family:

- Happy Habits. Remember that getting and staying organized is not a onetime event that happens magical-

ly. It will take time to break old habits and develop new ones. Give yourself at least 21 days to try something new.

- Fine Tuning. Here again, there's no magic solution to getting organized, but there's also no right or wrong either. You have to find what works the best for you and your family members individually. I also try to find the easiest, quickest and most logical method for each individual. What works for you, may not work at all for your son or husband.
- Family Affair. Family is the key word here; you're not the only one who lives in your home. You should also not be the only one to put things away or clean. I typically suggest that you write up a Ta-Da List with all the tasks you would like some help with. Allow your husband and son to pick the tasks they wouldn't mind performing. You'll find this is much easier than assigning a task someone abhors

doing. Also, make sure to include a reward at the bottom of that list.

- Stick To Your Guns. By no means should that reward be given if the tasks have not been completed. If something has gone undone, ask the individual what kept them from completing the task and rework your system or method.
- Take it Home. Every Single Night the entire household should take 10-15 minutes to pick up everything that belongs to them and put the item in its correct home. If it takes much longer than this something in your system isn't working as efficiently as it should and you'll need to adjust accordingly. Everyone will love waking to a new, clutter-free day!
- Rewards! Make sure to reward yourself and your family for their hard work! You all deserve to spend a day at the movies or playin' in the sunshine or whatever else your family enjoys. Plus, you'll have guilt-free time to do this now.

Now here's where the challenging part begins. If you've tried all of the above and still aren't getting the help you need you may want to take drastic measures. Okay, well maybe not drastic, but don't let your son or husband know that. If you find their stuff lying around the house, feel free to gather it all up in one big box and hide that box somewhere really good. They will either:

1. forget all about the item and never ask for it again or
2. ask you if you've seen the item.

You're response will be "Hmmm, it's too bad that item didn't make its way home or you would've been able to easily find it." They'll quickly start to catch on! And if they still don't quite get it; then feel free to only give them their items back once they start completing their chosen task again. Make 'em earn it! Please, please, please let me and the other struggling mothers know how you make out.

Good luck, not that you need it!