



## Avoid Getting Lost In Space: How to Manage the Spaces In Your Life

Whether it's your office, garage, car, kitchen or a closet, there is always some element of space to manage in our lives. This can be challenging for many people, since studies show that 80 percent of what we keep we never use.

So, how do you avoid getting lost in your spaces? The key is to be proactive. Define an area to be reorganized, start with a clean slate and tackle one space at a time.

### **Managing Your Office Space:**

Are you among the 25 percent of workers who save things in piles rather than in files? Is it your style to “spread” out your papers and files all over the desk when you're working? Are you ever stumped as to where to store the odds-and-ends items such as office supplies and important folders that you need handy?

You're not alone. In fact, “Fast Company” magazine found that 48 percent of American executives admit to having a messy desk but claim to know where everything is. However, 12 percent say that although their desk appears organized, they have no idea where to find anything.

So, how do you get your desk back and create a more efficient work area? Always remember that the desk is a place to do work. Period.

Follow this simple acronym -- **ORDER** (organize, retrieve, designate, empty and reorganize) to create and maintain a functional workspace.

- **ORDER**: Put everything you need to reach on your preferred side depending on if you are left or right handed.
- **REMOVE**: Remove items that you do not use every day, such as planner/calendar inserts and office supplies and keep handy only the items you need the most often.
- **DESIGNATE**: Create logical zones to store items that you use together. For example, keep a pen and paper by the phone for messages.
- **EMPTY**: Keep the center area clear at all times to use as your work/writing space.
- **REORGANIZE**: Take a few minutes at the end of each day to clear your work space and tidy your desk so it is a welcoming place to work the next day.

### **Managing Your Garage:**

According to the National Association of Professional Organizers, 50 percent of homeowners rate the garage as the most disorganized place in the house and a place the entire family uses regularly. However, a garage is one of the most commonly used areas of the home.

Rather than use it as a home for our cars, we tend to use the garage as a dumping space for everything from yard supplies to sports equipment to boxes of items without other “homes.” Once



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you start doing that, without really planning your space, you can end up with an indoor junkyard attached to your house.

Here are some helpful tips to finally get your garage back in order.

- Pull everything out and categorize it before you organize it.
- When in doubt, get rid of it.
- Organize items by type such as sports, yard and car supplies. Make a plan of how you will group these items in the garage.
- Organize items so that they are visually clear. If you can see it, you can find it.
- Plan the proper space for your car, including opening all the car doors.
- Make use of vertical space on the walls and ceiling.
- Using a combination of hanging hooks, open shelving and closed cabinets often works well to store the different types of items that a garage holds.
- Use containers to keep all loose items from spreading out.
- Put everything away after you use it and it will remain neat and organized.
- Always consider your safety when organizing the garage.

### **Managing Your Automobile:**

Now that you have organized your garage and have created a new home for your car, take steps to keep your automobile neat and tidy.

- Set a monthly appointment on your calendar to clean out and wash your car.
- Keep handy wipes within reach so you can clean up messes and keep a portable trash can available as well.
- Every day when you exit your car, bring in an armful of car clutter.
- Use one of the many types of over-the-seat organizers to keep maps, umbrellas, gloves, and other essentials at hand.
- Keep tapes and CDs organized in their own holder in the glove compartment or over the visor.
- Consider crates, boxes, or other car organizers and keep your trunk's contents organized by type. Organizers that roll out and fold down are the most useful.
- Put in a hands free unit if you use a cell phone in the car. Make sure nothing can roll around while you are driving by keeping things tidy and in containers.

### **Managing Your Closets and Drawers:**

Are you afraid to tackle closets or those proverbial junk drawers that are stuffed to the point where you can barely cram in another item? The key is to start with one closet or drawer at a time. Use a large garbage bag to toss items you don't need and create a separate sorting area for items you'll keep. Organize one drawer or area of the closet at a time, so you can effectively manage the project without getting overwhelmed. If you dedicate 15 minutes a day to organizing and throwing away things you don't need, this will amount to a full day's work that you spread out over a month. Not only will this afford you a free weekend day to enjoy for yourself, but you'll be able to efficiently tackle an otherwise daunting project.

By taking a proactive approach to keeping the spaces in your life in order, you'll be keeping both your professional and personal life in order too. It's a win-win situation and will give you peace of mind and help you be more productive.