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JANUARY IS 'GET ORGANIZED MONTH'



DELORES JOHNSON/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

On Friday, Coletta Williams surveys the task ahead. With the help of a professional, she already has organized other rooms in her Virginia Beach home and is now ready to tackle what was supposed to be the office. With January being Get Organized Month, an association of professional organizers suggests that the key to a healthier life is getting rid of the clutter.

If it's not 'beautiful, useful or loved,' get rid of it

BY SUSAN E. WHITE
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ORGANIZING THE HOME

The kitchen

- ▶ Things that work together should be stored together, such as baking pans, electrical appliances, plastic containers (with lids), pots and pans, and large platters and bowls.
- ▶ Rotate food staples out of your pantry. Create menus to use dated canned goods.
- ▶ Store glasses near the sink or the refrigerator.

The home office

- ▶ Scan documents when possible and store them electronically.
- ▶ Eliminate subscriptions to unread

something. Now I know where everything is."

According to the National Association of Professional Organizers, Williams is among

publications and remove yourself from mailing lists.

- ▶ Sort, file and purge electronic information regularly.

The children's room

- ▶ Keep labeled bins on lower shelves so a child can put away the toys.
- ▶ Provide low hooks to hang up sweaters, pajamas, jackets, book bags, etc.

The garage and storage area

- ▶ Sort, purge, then store fixtures and treasures you want to keep in labeled containers.

said Barry Izsak, president of the organizers group. The association has designated January as Get Organized Month.

Whether it's gutting the

- ▶ Consider floor-to-ceiling possibilities for shelving, racks, stackable drawers, hooks and pegboards.

The closets

- ▶ Discard or donate clothes that haven't been worn in the past year.
- ▶ Decide what can be hidden away in containers under the bed, on top of shelves or in drawers.
- ▶ Group shirts together, pants together, dresses, etc.

Source: *The National Association of Professional Organizers*

not think to be beautiful, useful or loved," he said. "Just because Aunt Sally gave it to you is not reason enough to keep it. Even Aunt Sally may

TO FIND HELP

For more information on organizing or to find a professional organizer, go to www.napo.net.

knowing when it's time to toss that chipped coffee mug or to donate that pair of decades-old shoes.

Losing 125 pounds over the past several years motivated Williams to make other changes. She hired Nancy Watson, a Virginia Beach professional organizer, to help her fine-tune her management skills. Watson immediately took charge.

She first encouraged Williams to assess broken appliances, including a dysfunctional dryer that required three cycle runs to sufficiently dry clothes. Williams bought a new washer and dryer.

"So often, people bring

collection. Some were sold on eBay and others were given away.

Parting with possessions can be difficult. Watson offers to haul away the discarded items in her truck-sized Mercury Grand Marquis. "That way, they immediately cut the ties," she said.

Keeping things simple when organizing is important, Izsak said. Tasks should be taken on one at a time, he said. "The main thing is stick to a system."

In Williams' home, there's still much organizing left to do, including that room above the garage that once was an office. Williams spent part of Friday morning sorting through the clutter, including books and electronic equipment. She hopes to turn the space into a bedroom for her 27-year-old son, who recently moved back home.

Williams said she is finally

"The way I used to clean, I would just put stuff in a paper bag and put it in the closet," said Williams, a comptroller resources manager at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base. "Then you'd forget about it until you needed

a growing group of people cleaning the clutter from their lives this year.

"Getting organized has become one of the top New Year's resolutions, along with losing weight, going back to the gym and quitting smoking,"

garage or collecting clothes for Goodwill, the key to a healthier home and life is reducing the stress that an overabundance of stuff often creates, Izsak said.

"There's a saying: Have nothing in your home you do

have wondered why you held onto it for so long."

Many big-name hardware stores offer classes on organizing, such as how to install shelving. But some people, including Williams, have greater challenges, such as

things into a home and they don't know how to use them or they break, and it's too hard to find out what to do to fix it," Watson said.

Watson tossed old towels from linen closets and urged Williams to downsize her doll

getting some balance back in her life. "It's hard to let go and to admit mistakes and to move on," she said. "But I'm finally getting it."

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