

SIMPLIFYING YOUR LIFE WITH **GREEN** ORGANIZING

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Most of us know that the “green” movement is all about reducing, reusing, recycling and repurposing. It’s about finding your stuff so you are not buying more of something you already own (and just can’t find). When you simplify your life, you are freeing yourself of the burden of maintaining “stuff.” The question you need to ask yourself is, “Do I own this stuff or does it own me?”



“The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of non-essentials.”

—Lin Yutang



Reducing is about having less to maintain and more space in our homes. It's about refusing to bring new items into the house without removing something. You can't keep bringing in clothes, shoes, books, furniture, etc., without taking some of the items out. Reducing is about weeding out the things you don't love so that you can find what you *do* love.

Reusing refers to passing on unused items to people who can really use them. Most things that we keep stored for use "someday" never get used. Don't fall into this trap. Let the items go to someone else who will actually use them.

Recycling is the most commonly recognized part of the "green" movement. Separate out recyclable items from trash. Donate unwanted items like clothing, furniture and old electronic items to a charitable organization.

Repurposing is rethinking how you might use a particular item. Pinterest is the perfect website for finding ways to repurpose just about anything. From recovering diaper boxes with a cute fabric and using them to store your child's toys to using a Tic Tac box to store bobby pins.



OTHER GREEN ORGANIZING TIPS:

- Choose quality items over quantity. Remember the old saying “less is more.”
- Buy cleaning products that are non-toxic to you and to the Earth.
- Remove your name from junk mail lists.
- Opt in for emailed bank statements, utility bills, credit card bills and credit card statements. This will stop the paper coming into your house.
- An organized house is a more easily cleaned house. Lose the clutter and cut down on the time spent dusting and moving piles of paper.
- Purchase sustainable products—these are things like bamboo, cotton or corn, which can be replenished at the same rate that they are consumed. Bamboo, the fastest-growing plant on Earth, is becoming one of the most significant and versatile natural resources. Look for it in fabrics and other household items.
- Bring your own bag or carry your purchases without a bag.
- Look for ways to save energy around your house. Good examples are unplugging electronics that are not in use (like cell phone rechargers) and using solar powered items.
- Give gifts that are experiences, not things—a movie, a day at the zoo or the baseball park.



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GREEN ORGANIZING PRODUCTS

To help you get started, here are a few organizing products you might find useful.



Tote bag

I carry a reusable tote into grocery stores and office supply places so I don't have to take a plastic bag. It took some getting used to, as far as remembering to carry it into the store, but it's a habit I am developing.

Office Depot
\$1.99 each



100% Recycled Hanging Folders

Reuse the hanging folders that you already have but if you need new ones, these work great.

Office Depot
\$10.49



File Folders

Great earthtone colors that would accent any filing cabinet.

Office Max
\$24.99



Cardboard Paper Magazine Box

If you are trying to get away from plastic, these desk accessories are a great alternative.

Office Max
\$16.99



Earthwrite Recycled Pencils

Made from 100 percent pre-consumer waste materials and non-toxic.

Office Max

\$1.99

Green Works All Purpose Cleaner

Perfect for home or office. Made with naturally derived cleaning ingredients. Leaves behind no harsh chemical residue. Safe to use on a wide variety of surfaces.

Office Depot

\$4.99



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