

# I plan to get organized for my for my New Year's resolution

I am not an organized person. It's a confession I freely make. Ask my co-workers. They'll open one of the drawers in my desk and verify it's true. Sure they'll find folders with clearly marked labels, but I guarantee the contents do not match that label.

I do my best to hide my imperfection. Right now the surface of my desk is quite spotless, everything in its place.

My home is the same way. Let me know you're coming over and I guarantee the rooms you plan to visit will look very organized, just please don't open those closed doors.

Like so many others, my intentions are always good. Each year, getting organized at home and at work is one of my top resolutions. Then the demands for my time begin and organization is one of the first things I throw out the window.

I decided to make the resolution again this year after finding a post-it note on my computer screen. On it was written a name and a phone number that I did not recognize. By the way, Ann, if you still need to talk to me, please call back.

This year I decided to consult an expert about my goal. Becky Edwards of Roy has been teaching organization seminars for years.

Her classes have varied from organizing the home to organizing time.

"Basically simplifying and getting peace in your life," Edwards said in describing her philosophy on organization.

While Edwards isn't currently teaching classes (having young twins will do that to a person), she is consulting on a new Web site that will be launched in mid-January, [myorganizedlife.com](http://myorganizedlife.com).

Edwards readily admits she was not always an organized person. She grew up in a big family, and said her home wasn't always organized. It was always a struggle for her mother, she said.

Then she went to college and actually had orderly roommates. It was a real eye-opener for her.

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Housekeeping

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Edwards warned that beginning an organization plan can be tough at first. It's time consuming and can become stressful. But, she promised, the time invested will return a hundredfold.

"It's about putting order in your life ... decluttering and organizing your life so you have the time for what makes you happy."

For beginners, like myself, she recommends small steps, rather than the crash-and-burn approach some people take.

She suggested dedicating just 15 minutes a day, at first, to decluttering one room.

Edwards said a common problem that many have is zig-zag organizing. They start cleaning up one room, find something that belongs in another room, take it to that room and discover something there that doesn't belong and head for another room.

"Attack one small area until it's complete," Edwards said. "Then it makes you feel like you've accomplished something."

Another common problem is the vast amount of items in our homes.

"The root of everyone's problem with organizing is they have too much stuff," Edwards said.

A commonly known figure among organizers is that most people tend to use only 20 percent of the items they own most of the time. But getting rid of things can be difficult.

Edwards encourages people to stretch their comfort zone just a little.

She suggests they put items they haven't used in a long time into a box, seal it and label it.

If the items in that box don't get used in the next month, get rid of them.

Once that initial step is taken, it gets easier and easier to declutter, she said.

Finally, Edwards offered three simple steps for beginning your own organization plan.

First, sort everything in one room into piles - canned goods with canned goods, etc. Second, declutter. Throw away expired items, donate items you don't use to a thrift store or elsewhere.

Finally, give everything a home. Edwards said like items should be put away together. She suggested using labels and containers to further organize things.

It's a New Year's resolution anyone can keep if they just invest a little time, Edwards said.

So if you'll excuse me, I've got some decluttering to do.

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