

EXPERT TIP

“Organization is not just within the four walls of your house. In the garage, a planned combination of floor space, cabinetry and hanging storage can provide space for all your needs. Like the house, when cleaning the garage, make three piles—things to keep, things to get rid of and things to donate.”

—Dave McClintic, owner, Premier Garage of Maryland

5. Once you have selected an area, go through the contents.

Donate or hold a garage sale for anything you haven't worn or used in about 2 years. These items take up space and probably won't be missed.

6. Look for wasted space.

“Build shelves above hanging rods,” LaBella offers. Over doors and underneath beds is valuable real estate that's often overlooked.

7. “Put a little extra money into buying good products,”

Sachs says. “For paperwork, buy a good filing cabinet with full-extension drawers. Most people will not keep up with their filing if the drawers don't open all the way and the files are so full that you can barely squeeze one more piece of paper in.”

8. “During the decision-making process, avoid keeping items

that need to be repaired, unless you plan on taking them to be fixed immediately. Discard stained or torn items. Donate items you no longer use or love. If something doesn't belong to you, write a note to call the person to have them pick it up,” Ross says.

9. “Try to stay focused,”

Ross recommends. “If you come across items that you haven't seen in a while, try not to spend 15 minutes reminiscing.”

10. Ross advises you only purchase containers, shelves and

other organizers when all sorting has been done and you can see what's left.

11. Make sure that the items you need most often are the

easiest to access. Likewise, place the items you don't need as often on a higher shelf or in another area.

12. “Take frequent breaks,”

Ross reminds.

Motivation matters

If you need a boost to get started, Sachs encourages thoughts about “how you can eliminate frustration and wasted time looking for lost and misplaced items—how much easier and peaceful your life can be by being organized.” Ross adds, “If you can visualize your cars in the garage and some organized shelves and storage cabinets, it will help you to stay motivated.”

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Look for wasted space. Prime examples include over doors and underneath beds. These spots are valuable real estate in your home and are often overlooked.



Professional organizer Heather Coccozza suggests choosing containers that are either transparent or that you can easily label to help immediately identify the contents.

Photos courtesy of The Container Store