

GET ORGANIZED!

50 Tips for You

by the members of
Professional Organizers of New Mexico



PONM

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZERS
OF NEW MEXICO

www.nmorganizers.com

Introduction

This e-booklet was written to offer you organizing tips, tried and true suggestions to help you get started and remain more in control. Since no two of you are alike, we offer a variety of tips for you to peruse and choose. Select one that appeals to you and try it for several weeks to develop a new habit. Then come back and choose another.



The e-booklet was written by professional organizers who are members of both the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) and the Professional Organizers of New Mexico (PONM).

We wish you good luck in using these tips to become better organized, and stand ready to help you if needed. Contact any of us through the PONM website, www.nmorganizer.com

PONM is committed to bringing members of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) together through networking, professional growth, education, support and public awareness.

Closets

1. Arrange like items by type and color to make getting dressed faster and easier. – *Brenda*
2. If your closet has a fixed shelf and one or two rods, consider a custom-built or do-it-yourself closet system to increase flexibility and storage space. – *Carolyn*
3. Donate or discard anything with dusty shoulders when you are cleaning out your closet. – *Elizabeth*
4. Practice the *one in, one out* rule. For example, if you have five white blouses and you buy a new one, determine which one no longer fits or flatters you, and get rid of it. That way you won't overflow your closet space. – *Hazel*
5. Sort the items in your closet with a friend who knows you and will give you honest feedback about your clothes and how becoming they are (or aren't) on you. – *Kit*
6. Find the 20% of the clothes you wear 80% of the time. Hang the remaining clothes backwards in your closet. Designate a time frame (6 mo, 1 yr) then donate what you haven't worn. – *Leigh Ann*
7. Think layers. You won't need to schedule two days a year to switch out your wardrobe. The appropriate clothes will move to the center of your closet and the too heavy or light will move to the sides as the seasons change. You will still have access to shorts in the winter when invited to Hawaii and to sweaters for chilly summer nights. – *Miriam*

Clutter

8. Shop wisely; try not to buy single use items or objects that you don't have a specific use for. – *Carolyn*
9. Keep something only if you love it or use it, not just because someone gave it to you. – *Elizabeth*
10. Place an attractive basket or bin on the counter, or where stuff tends to collect, to corral the clutter. Before the basket overflows, take a few minutes to put everything back where it belongs. – *Hazel*
11. Learn to make decisions. Much of the clutter in homes and work places represents delayed decisions. – *Kit*
12. Start somewhere...anywhere...and go through one pile, box, or drawer at a time. If you start it, finish it. – *Leigh Ann*
13. Create an indecision bin for things that you are just not sure *if* or *where* to keep. By having them all in one place, you can keep them from becoming clutter magnets until you decide. – *Miriam*
14. Give every item a *home* and send it *home* nightly. – *Brenda*

Holiday and Entertaining

- 15.** Place all the empty serving pieces, labeled with the food they will hold, on the table before the party to make sure everything fits and looks nice, then make a list and take a digital picture. – *Elizabeth*

- 16.** Make your overnight guests feel welcome by filling a basket with amenities such as a towel, facecloth, travel sized toiletries, bottle of water, packaged snack, and brochures to local attractions. – *Hazel*

- 17.** Start with the meaning of the celebration; then set goals for the event that honor the meaning; then create the list of tasks that will get you to your goals; put the tasks into your planner, realistically allowing enough time for each of them. – *Kit*

- 18.** Decide on number of guests first, then plan the menu. Make ahead anything that freezes well. – *Leigh Ann*

- 19.** Instead of buying all new paper goods for every event, have a set of plain white dishes and change the candles, flowers and linens to reflect the occasion. – *Miriam*

- 20.** Organize holiday items in appropriate corresponding color containers – red, white, and blue for the 4th of July; orange and brown for Thanksgiving; red and green for Christmas. – *Brenda*

- 21.** Buy generic gift wrap and gift bags that you can use for any occasion. – *Carolyn*

Home Office

- 22.** Set office hours for yourself so when you are at work you can fully focus on the tasks at hand, and when you are at *home* you can truly relax.
– *Hazel*
- 23.** We usually advise you to arrange your work space with everything close at hand, but if you have an excess of energy that you must use up, put the printer across the room. – *Kit*
- 24.** Separate your personal and business files and make sure both are easily accessible whether stored in a desk, file cabinet or boxes. The easier they are to get to, the more likely you are to keep up with your filing. – *Leigh Ann*
- 25.** When you return from a meeting, seminar, or workshop, take the time to put the information into the right place. Ask, “Where will I use this again?” and schedule the action items. – *Miriam*
- 26.** Designate one drawer for home office supplies. Preferably, use a divider tray to separate paper clips, rubber bands, pencils, stamps, calculator, stapler, etc. – *Brenda*
- 27.** Remove anything from the surface of your desk that you don’t need regular access to. – *Carolyn*
- 28.** Make a file called Computer Instructions for those things you do infrequently and can’t remember the correct steps. – *Elizabeth*

Kitchen

- 29.** Plan your meals five to seven days in advance. This will save you both time and money. – *Kit*

- 30.** If you have a pantry or designated area for extras, stock up on the items you use frequently when they go on sale. Be sure to check the expiration dates on the items before purchasing, which may be why the price is reduced. – *Leigh Ann*

- 31.** Reevaluate all the single purpose items. One good chef's knife will do the work of many appliances. – *Miriam*

- 32.** Place dishes and utensils in cabinets and drawers close to the dishwasher for easy unloading and placement. – *Brenda*

- 33.** To keep your kitchen neat, leave out on your counters only the items you use every day. – *Carolyn*

- 34.** Use canisters large enough to hold the entire bag of flour or sugar so you won't have the canister plus a bag in the cabinet. – *Elizabeth*

- 35.** Use medium sized plastic bins to corral related items on pantry shelves, such as small condiments, or various types of pasta. The bins act as drawers so you can pull them out and easily reach the items in back. – *Hazel*

Paper

36. If you consistently have piles of paper on your work surface, try using a vertical file holder and label your folders with the categories in your pile. You will be able to see everything, it takes up less space, looks neater and it eliminates the *bottom of the pile*. – *Leigh Ann*
37. Create a *Waiting for...* spot to keep all the tickets, confirmations, directions, agendas and other documents you need for the future events you have already decided to attend. – *Miriam*
38. Don't allow paper to *grow* on your desk by ignoring it. On a daily basis, set aside a time to read, file, post, respond, and discard paper. – *Brenda*
39. Cancel all unread or unwanted magazine and newspaper subscriptions. – *Carolyn*
40. File paid bills, bank statements, etc. by month instead of vendor. You can do a month's filing in seconds. – *Elizabeth*
41. Sort your mail into a table top *action file* as soon as you enter the house with it. Some suggested categories: To Pay, To Call, To File. Have a trash and/or recycle bin and shredder handy. This way, important papers won't get lost in a *mystery pile*. – *Hazel*
42. Avoid the label *Miscellaneous*. That becomes a black hole, into which things go and are never seen again. – *Kit*

Time

43. Schedule a block of *catch up* time every week to ensure the little things don't get overlooked. – *Miriam*
44. Develop a timeline for chores and errands and stick to it. – *Brenda*
45. Stop volunteering/accepting projects or tasks you do not want to do. Only agree to do things you *must* or *want* to do. – *Carolyn*
46. Use only one calendar that you can carry with you everywhere. – *Elizabeth*
47. Schedule regular time for activities that are important to you, but are not urgent. It won't hurt anything if you don't write or exercise today, but if you don't make a little time for each, on a regular basis, you will never finish that novel or get into shape. – *Hazel*
48. If distractions bother you, get a kitchen timer and set it for ten to fifteen minutes. The ticking sound can help to both remind you to concentrate and to signal the end of the time. Slowly increase the time as possible. – *Kit*
49. If you are always running late, add 10 minutes to your estimated travel time. You'll be amazed! – *Leigh Ann*

And Finally

50. If you need more help getting organized or implementing these tips, contact one of the PONM members listed on the next page.

Katherine D. Anderson, CPO-CD®

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Anderson Organizing Systems

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Kit brings 35 years experience to her clients, including experience with ADHD, mood disorders and hoarding behaviors. She has trained professional organizers internationally and taught at universities and colleges. Truly understanding the problems her clients face, she offers help for individuals and groups through organizing, coaching, seminars and consulting.

Elizabeth Tawney Gross, CPO®

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Since 2003, Elizabeth has been teaching people at all levels of disorganization, how to get, and stay organized at home and work. She is highly trained, compassionate, and listens intently. Combining her organizing with interior redesign expertise she makes rooms beautiful and functional using your belongings and saving you money.

Leigh Ann Hensel

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Buying Time...Organizing Solutions

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Leigh Ann specializes in listening, observing and customizing solutions for your organizational needs in your home or work environment. She provides hands-on organizing or a written plan of action for you do-it-yourselfers. Leigh Ann also teaches Time Management, Project Management and provides training and coaching sessions.

Miriam Ortiz y Pino, CPO®

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More than Organized

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Miriam writes the Streamlined column for the Albuquerque Journal Sage supplement. She is an organizer, simplicity expert, blogger, speaker and coach who loves to help her clients create systems and routines that allow them to experience their work and lives streamlined. Miriam is a Golden Circle member of NAPO.

Brenda J. Steele

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Steele Organizing Solutions

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Brenda assists clients with creative solutions in organizing their homes and time. With a degree in library science, she can guide others through the maze of clutter focusing on categorizing and maintaining order. She encourages her clients to SMILE: Simplify Life, Manage Time, Initiate Change, Lighten Load, and Eliminate Clutter.

Carolyn Taylor, PO

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Organize Your Life

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Carolyn has been in business since 2001 and specializes in senior relocation, space planning, organizing kitchens, garages, closets, custom closet design and installation. She has received certification in real estate staging of vacant or occupied homes and interior redesign.

Hazel Thornton

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Organized For Life

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Hazel is the only organizer in New Mexico with a background in both Engineering and Fine Arts. So what? She can design an organizing system that works for you, and give your space that designer look...without the designer prices...using what you already own!