

Organize to simplify your life

As the holiday season comes to a close, it's common to look around and see a new pile of toys and clothes or anything else accumulated during the past month and a half. However, figuring out what to do with all this new "stuff" can be a lot easier than most people think.

January is national Get Organized (GO) month, and a great time to jump start a New Year's resolution to make your life more manageable. It's time to get to work!

When feeling overwhelmed, many resources can help to make the organizing process easier. Recruit friends and family to help keep the focus on the task at hand and create ac-



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nizer if you are concerned about privacy or exposing your "mess" to close friends and family.

Now that there are two people in the room, get started. Try to keep the time frame reasonable, one to three hours per sitting, and be mindful of your energy level. I tell my clients

countability. Many times this can be an embarrassing issue, and that's understandable. Consider hiring a profes-

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sional organizer if you are concerned about privacy or exposing your "mess" to close friends and family. Consider hiring a professional organizer if you are concerned about privacy or exposing your "mess" to close friends and family.

After everything is sorted, take a closer look, and get rid of some of those items. The reduction process is often the hardest, since most of the time the items were, at one time, loved. However, there is no reason to keep objects that are broken, used up, outdated or disliked. Keep a trash can

close at hand, as well as a box for items that can be donated.

Take a look at what is left. This is what needs to go back into that coat closet, junk drawer or family room. Each pile of "keep" items will need a home in the space. Decide what will fit where. It should be easier to see if certain items can benefit from organizing tools at this point. Sometimes plastic bins, baskets and wall hooks will be incredibly helpful to organize most spaces.

In order to keep the new organized system in place, revisit the space often. If the space is something often utilized, like the kitchen or bathroom, take 5 to 15 minutes at the end of

FYI

Amy Trager will present "Let's Get Organized!" at 2 p.m. Jan. 20 at the Joliet Barnes and Noble. It is free and will last an hour.

each day to make sure items are in their "home." For a less-visited space, once a week may be all that is needed.

Remember, this is a realistic goal. It can be done — and now's the time to do it.

Amy Trager is a professional organizer working in the greater Chicago area. For more information or questions, contact Amy at www.amytrager.com