

How
to Organize
Your Home
in
SEVEN
Easy Steps

*A Little Book for
Working Mums*



Jeanette O'Donnell

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in Seven Easy Steps**

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By

Jeanette O'Donnell

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Strategic Book Group

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I would like to thank my husband John for his support while I spent hours writing this book, and my children for believing in me.

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CHAPTER ONE

Don't tell me. You are a working woman with a family, trying desperately to run your home by simultaneously cooking, cleaning, doing homework, and running a taxi service. I know the feeling.

The house is constantly in disarray: shoes, clothes, paperwork, dishes, and ironing scattered about. On top of all of those chores, you probably have animals to feed, groom and clean up after. The kids wanted them, right? This sprang from the usual story: "I'll look after them, Mum; I'll feed them, Mum." But it is you who ends up handling the pets. Yes, you.

I can show you how you can regain

control without throwing in the towel, and taking to the hills in desperation.

I have made this task easier by splitting the problem into seven separate days. You can do this, believe me. Gaining control is just a matter of taking a step back, sitting down with a cup of tea, and reading this book.

What have you got to lose? Whatever day it is when you are reading this, decide to start on Monday, knowing there is help at hand.

Assessing the Situation

Take a look around your home. What do you see?

Make a mental note of the items that do not belong where they are right now.

Now, think of a place in your home—an unused room, or a corner somewhere—that is not actually serving any purpose. Perhaps a part of your laundry can be used.

Next, set up the area you have chosen. Start by purchasing five plastic washing baskets; square baskets will work well as they will fit side by side on the floor. A small filing cabinet can fit beside the baskets with a tray or basket on top. Place a chair, a small table, and a paper shredder here too. If you have room, a bookcase would be excellent. This should be plenty to get started.

You have an idea where the problem areas are, so let's start.

Set aside a little time each day, it might be prior to work or after, or whenever you

can fit in only one-half to one hour. This is all the time you will need each day. If you have more spare moments, great, but don't go beyond one hour, as this is a reasonable start.

MONDAY

DAY ONE

Pick up one of your baskets and go into the kitchen.

What do you see that doesn't belong in this room? Gather up all miscellaneous paperwork. For example, notes the children have brought home from school or from sport teams, bills, letters, books, and magazines. Place them all in the basket. Now go into the next room of your choice with this same basket. Do exactly the same, gathering all the paperwork, gradually working your way from room to room. When you have collected all the paperwork, take it to the place you have designated, and put it down. This is basket one. If there is anything that is needed from this stash, you will know where it is.

Let the rest of the family know where the paper basket is, and that you expect them to put everything relating to these contents into this basket—not scattered

throughout the house. By explaining this, everyone will know where to find misplaced paperwork. This task shouldn't have taken you too long, so keep going.

Pick up your second basket and go around the house for your second collection. This collection includes clothing—even shoes and socks. Put them all in your basket. Take this basket and put it next to basket number one.

Pick up your third basket.

This time, collect up odds and ends like keys, jewellery, nail scissors, and makeup or any other bits and pieces that do not belong here. Place them in your basket and put it next to basket two.

You have made an excellent start!

TUESDAY

DAY TWO

Go to your first basket and start sorting out the paperwork. Make separate piles marked “urgent,” “not urgent,” or “magazines,” “books,” and finally, “throwaway paper.” Deal with the urgent paperwork first. Place all the bills, children’s school or sport forms and other important items you need to deal with immediately into the tray on top of your filing cabinet. This way you know that these need to be dealt with later, but are top priority. Place all magazines and books you want to keep, into basket four. If you have a bookshelf, the books can be placed there. Take the paper you want to throw out, shred it and place the shredded paper into basket five. You can take this to the recycle bin later. Newspapers or unwanted magazines can be included in this pile too.

Basket one should now be empty. If you

have time, tackle the bill and form tray.
Make a nice cup of tea and relax. You are
doing really well!

WEDNESDAY

DAY THREE

Go to your baskets and tackle basket two. Get the family to come into the area and take anything that belongs to them out of the basket and put these items where they belong.

Basket two will now be empty.

Now, tackle basket three while your family is motivated, and get them to take all their possessions from this basket and put them away.

TIP: Make sure you have a key holder next to your front door so that keys can be hung up as everyone passes it.

Now basket three is empty. Go back to your tray on top of the filing cabinet and see if there is anything left that needs to be attended to. If things have to be filed, the cabinet is within reach. Make a list of bills to be paid and their due date. Sign all the necessary forms. Your tray is now empty.

Now, put your feet up, you have deserved it. Take a warm bath before bed. You should be feeling much better, knowing how much you have achieved.

THURSDAY

DAY FOUR

Take a look around the house. How many misplaced items have accumulated again? Hopefully not many, so the basket gathering process should only take a few minutes. Once that is done, you can go on to the next step.

Sit down with a pad and pencil and make a list of meals you want to make for the next week. Decide what meals you will have, and on which day.

Create a shopping list and take it with you on your next trip to the supermarket. When making a meal, double the quantity and freeze it, so that by the end of the

TIP: Use a slow cooker and fill it with meat and/or vegetables. They freeze quite well and will provide a lot of meals.

week, you will have seven meals in the freezer for another week.

Our grandparents always made the same meal on the same day of the week. They usually had roast on Sunday, so used the leftovers for rissoles or stew on Mondays. This worked well since Mondays were always laundry day. While this is not necessary for today's lifestyle, we can still learn from their practical skills.

FRIDAY

DAY FIVE

This day will be used to finish all the things you cannot fit into your one-half to one-hour day chores.

For example, pets that need to be fed, cooking the evening meal, clearing the table and stacking the dishwasher, or emptying the dishwasher, putting out the recycling, making the lunches for the next day, or taking out the garbage. I'm sure you will find more to add to this list. Next to each task, write the name of the family member to whom it should be assigned. Every member of the family should have a task, or two. Explain to them that by working together as a family, you will all benefit.

TIP: Place a plastic colander in the shower alcove to hold shampoo bottles. The alcove will look much tidier. Also, place an old hand towel near the shower and inform everyone that the last person in the shower at night, or in the morning, is responsible for drying the shower alcove with the towel. You will be amazed at how this reduces the cleaning time of this area.

SATURDAY

DAY SIX

Use your allocated time today to do the laundry. While that is going, you can check your baskets. You should have time to gather misplaced items while the wash is going. You may even have time to go grocery shopping.

TIP: Each family member should bring any dirty clothes out to the laundry basket, including their bed linens. School-age children are quite capable of changing their own bed, and they will soon get the message if you stick to the same routine.

When the laundry is done, sort each piece of clothing into either “no ironing” or “ironing” piles. Fold the clothes that do not need ironing and have each family member come and take their respective pile and put their clothes where they belong. Include this chore on their list of tasks.

SUNDAY

DAY SEVEN

You put away the clothes that did not need ironing on Saturday, so today will be designated as ironing day. These may or may not be clothes that your family will need for the coming week. However, you should be able to get all the ironing done in the allocated time.

In my next chapter we will tackle seven more steps to add to what you have already achieved.

Congratulations and keep up the good work! Enjoy your day!

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