



Let us help you get your *dhucks* in a row...

Tips & Tricks

April 2009

Welcome to *Dhucks' Tips & Tricks*

### Stage Four: Organize

Stage One: **Clarify** what you really want

Stage Two: **Let Go** of what doesn't work for you

Stage Three: **Sort** like with like

Stage Four: **Organize**

The goal of organizing is to improve access to your belongings not just to store more in less space. So one of the strategies I start with is identifying organizing zones.

The **Hot Zone** is the zone closest to you and easiest to access.

For your desk: this is the area that you can reach without getting up from your chair. The top of your desk, that center drawer and even that filing drawer is prime real estate, so keep it for items that you use routinely. The easiest access file drawer(s) should have the most current and active files.

For your clothes: this is everything in your closet that you can access without a step stool or the dresser that is in your room. Do not use your closet as storage for out of season clothing or clothes that don't currently fit. And when putting your clothes in the drawers, make sure you can open the drawer easily and are able to access each item.

For your hobbies & crafts: this is the area closest to where you work. Keep the projects that you are currently working on closest and limit the cabinet, drawer or container to only those items that you need for the current project or what you use most often.

For your kitchen: this is the shelves and cupboards and drawers you can access without getting on your hands & knees or using a step stool. Again if you use it routinely, it should be the easiest to access. Do not store that turkey fryer that you use once a year here or store that gadget that you use every day at the back of the cabinet.

Another way to identify the **hot zone** is where things are naturally placed. My mail **hot zone** is a basket near the front door. We enter with our hands full of things and start shedding items as we go. The entry table is a natural place for our cell phones, our keys and our mail, so that's where we keep them.

The **Warm Zone** is the next easiest to access. It's for items that you use but don't need access to routinely.

For your desk: this may be a bookshelf behind you or across the room. This

may be the very top shelves or the very bottom ones. Any place that is in the vicinity but you have to make more of an effort to reach it. Another **warm zone** in the office is the bottom-most file drawer. You usually have to kneel to read the labels or hurt your back trying. Keep the files that are no longer current but aren't ready to be archived just yet. (Remember to sort through this file and let go of anything that you don't need before you move it to the **warm zone**).

For your clothes: that top shelf or the far back corner in your closet can be your **warm zone**. Another closet in a guest room or the space under your bed can also be used as a **warm zone** for your out of season clothes.

The **warm zone** can be a top shelf that you need a step ladder to get to, it can be a labeled container stacked in the garage that only takes a minute to access. If you have to crawl over numerous piles and stacks, open a few containers to "see what's in it" then that is not a **warm** storage area. When identifying your **warm zone**, don't take up someone else's **hot zone** to hold more of *your* things.

The **Cold Zone** may be more difficult to access and take longer to get to.

This zone is for storing those items that you use at the most once a year, if at all, but you can't get rid of yet (like tax files). **Cold zones** can be at the bottom of the pile, down the hall or even in another building. Keep in mind, you still need to make the decision that it is worth your time, your effort, your space and your energy to keep. This is not intended to be a dead zone.

One last suggestion on organizing. As you are organizing, think about how you will maintain it. Next month we will cover maintenance, but for now think about how easy it will be to return an item to its designated home. Make it as easy as possible. I learned long ago that I rarely put an item back if I have to pick up or move or handle something else to do it. So my rule of thumb is no stacking or organizing items more than two deep of unlike objects.

Whether you organize one shelf at a time or a whole room, you are creating. So...

**\*\* create organization \*\***

**\*\* create order \*\* create space \*\* create beauty \*\* create energy \*\* create fun \*\***

**\*\* create the life you want \*\***

Shawndra

Three Rules of Work: Out of clutter find simplicity;  
>From discord find harmony; In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.  
~Albert Einstein



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