

3 Top Tips to Getting Your Home Organized

May 7, 2012

Springtime. Aside from hay fever, summer plans and wrapping up the school year, spring cleaning comes to mind. And if you've got too many to-dos on your mind, reorganizing your home may fall to the bottom of your list. But thanks to the advice and expertise shared by Jody Driscoll and Elissa Misner of [Girlfriends Help](#) during an exclusive interview with KFSF, you may just feel inspired to put it at the top!



Tell us a bit about [Girlfriends Help](#). What inspired you to begin [Girlfriends Help](#)?

In 2006, over a cup of coffee, we (Jody Driscoll and Elissa Misner) were trying to figure out what type of business we wanted to start now that our children were a bit older. Knowing what our skills were in both organizing and coordinating busy schedules we decided to launch Girlfriends Help. Our business is designed to help others, especially moms, organize their lives, homes, families and in some cases, their businesses. Having raised 5 kids between the two of us and living in the Bay Area for over 20 years, we knew Girlfriends Help was exactly what other people would need. We understood the frustrations that families feel when it seems that their home is in chaos, tasks don't seem to be getting done and that school permission slip is lost in a pile of papers... again. Our name really does describe who we are: Two girlfriends with no judgments, good advice, a keen eye for organizing and a sense of humor that makes whatever seems overwhelming a little lighter.

How do we begin the process of getting our home organized? What

are some easy organizational strategies? (Tip #1)

Having a few simple systems set up in your home will help keep things organized. Baskets strategically placed throughout the house can accommodate shoes, books, toys, small electronics, mail and periodicals. Anything that you're not tossing and can become unsightly, are best held in baskets until you have sufficient time to sort through them later.

Most of us are overwhelmed by the amount of paper that comes into our lives! Have a recycle bin easily accessible and allow yourself a few minutes to go through your mail as soon as you get home. Recycle all the flyers and junk mail immediately, preventing them from making their way into your home. By staying on top of the incoming mail and paper deluge, you're pretty much guaranteed that those important papers you've been looking for are in that basket you've already set out.

Could you tell us specifically about how to keep our kids' room organized? (Tip #2)

As we said above, simple systems and special areas set up for kids will teach them stay organized and keep their rooms from becoming disaster areas. Here are a few basic items that have worked well for our clients:

- 1.) Large baskets or sturdy containers for holding shoes, toys, stuffed animals, and sports equipment.
- 2.) Clear bins sized accordingly for smaller toys and collections. If you're short on space under bed bins are good for doll collections or logos.
- 3.) Hooks placed at the appropriate level, in the closet, on the wall or behind the door for backpacks, clothing, pajamas and jewelry.
- 4.) If you have the luxury of an extra dresser drawer, use it to stash your child's next sized clothing. You're guaranteed to find them when the time comes. Subsequently, keep the clothes your child has grown out of in a large bin in a nearby closet for future use or to give away.

When, in your opinion, is the best time of day and/or year to keep up with organizing our living space? (Tip #3)

Try to find a small amount of time every week to sort and purge. Even spending 10 or 15 minutes a few times a week in cluttered areas can make a big difference. We recommend doing this at a time of the day when you are focused and energized, and only in one area at a time. And by all means, include the entire family. Maintaining an orderly home is a collaborative effort.

The best time of year: May/June is the best time to go through all the

papers, artwork and projects that have built up during the school year. (This pertains to preschool as well.) If you tackle those piles before summer ends, it will give you the luxury of starting fresh once September rolls around.

You two are really pros! What can we expect from a normal engagement?

All our work with potential clients starts with a free/no obligation consultation. We take a look around then sit down and listen to our client's needs and goals. Based upon what we hear, we help potential clients identify their priorities and determine the scope of the work. We discuss their budget and what can be successfully accomplished within the budget.

In the past six years, we have tackled projects, both small and large. For example, we have managed moves from old homes to new homes, categorized one family's 10,000+ photos, and organized various rooms in a home, from the garage to an office, a baby's nursery to a teen's bedroom. We have provided seasonal help, addressed holiday cards, new baby and wedding announcements, and managed vendors for special occasions. At the end of each project, we have relaxed, satisfied clients who can find things and feel in control of their environment. It's a bit of a cliché but most of our clients will tell us that they feel like they can "breathe" now that their home is organized and jobs that have been on their lists forever are finally done. We have found through our personal and work experience it makes such a difference to reach out and ask for some help.

Being parents yourselves, what are some of your favorite Kid Friendly places in the Bay Area?

Jody loves the hike out to the ocean from [Tennessee Valley Road](#) in Marin. It's a great way to spend a day with the family, it is fun for all ages and there are some fun detours you can take to spot wildlife.

Elissa enjoys going to the [Friends of the Library Bookstore at Fort Mason](#). Not only is it a great place to find first rate used books, CD's and DVD's, but they have a cart out front for donating your unwanted books.

We have special memories of meeting at the Presidio Heights playground when our oldest boys were toddlers. They're both in college now! The park was equal distance from our respective apartments, so we'd meet and spend countless hours there with our kids playing, pretending and having picnics. It was time well spent and definitely cemented our special friendship.

Your tips are helpful as well as simple. Thank you Jody and Elissa for interviewing with us! We appreciate your time and value your expertise!

Contact Jody and Elissa to set up a consultation or for more information: organize@girlfriendshelp.com.



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One Response to *3 Top Tips to Getting Your Home Organized*

Felipe Boadella says:

July 7, 2012 at 8:42 pm

Goog article. I find that now that I'm a grandmother I have a new good intrusion into my house. My grandchildren's toys and where to put them. One more thing to keep organized and fit into my life. Good suggestions though. I could use thses ladies. Felipe
