

ON RIDGELY'S RADAR

LIVING IN STYLE

Getting Organized: Cleaning out Your Desk, Computer and Phone

Step 1: Tackle the Big Stuff

1. Take everything off your desk, by that I mean all the stacks of paper, junk... anything that is covering, littering the space. Except of course your computer, light or anything stationary like a phone that is plugged in.
2. Wipe down the entire desk, the monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc... Flip your keyboard upside down; get the leftover cookie crumbs out of there. Some people like to use one of these [air vacuums blowers](#) or a [dust blower](#) (this is a good weekly task)
3. Empty the drawers and vacuum in there... so many dust bunnies - eeeew! (I do this twice a year)

Step 2: The Hard Part... Putting it all back!

1. Put back all the essential items on or in your desk; stapler, pen holder etc.
2. SLOWLY: go through each pile of things you took off and out of your desk.
3. Touch each item ONCE. Pick it up decide where it goes; [Shredder](#), [Scanner](#), Garbage, Drawer, File or maybe a Ring Binder.
4. This can lead to another organizing task: Create new files or tabs in your ring binder, or on your computer. Keep your [Label Maker](#) close by!

Step 3: Your Computer...Now that your desk is a clean, open work space (Yippee!) with extra room in the drawers and shelves around you. You did tackle those areas too??? Let's get to those HIDDEN unorganized areas that only you (and your IT person!) can see.

1. Files: Make NEW files for the year (and as needed through the year). I like to keep it Simple. I start with a Main Subject and then put sub categories inside the main folder. Less ways to get in trouble and lose items. AND your family will thank you when they need to find something. For Example: the Main Folder would be Photographs and the inside folders would be with date first (this is important as it will file them in chronological order) 2015 Photos / 2016 Photos / 2017 Photos etc.
2. Move, Sort, File and Organize Documents: Do you have random Docs, Photos, etc. saved to your desktop or hanging out at the end of all your folders? Time to get them to their home base. One at a time, find a file folder for each one of them. Feel free to DELETE any unnecessary or duplicate docs.

Step 4: Your Inbox... It's time to get rid of those millions of unopened junk emails clogging up your Inbox? Yup! Unsubscribe and Delete

1. Mailing Lists One by One: As new emails arrive, instead of hitting delete, open it and scrolling down to the bottom and unsubscribe
2. Searching and Deleting: For all those millions of unread, unopened emails that are clearly junk do a huge search for "unsubscribe" and "email preferences," then open and unsubscribed to the ones you don't want and then DELETE everything.
3. Bulk Mailing Lists: There is a service called [Unroll.me](#) that you can use to do it for you. This is a great service and can save lots of time. It is FREE
4. Trash – Don't forget to delete your trash folder when you are all done. You will be amazed at how much space that can take up and you have already moved on from those emails. Good Bye!
5. Schedule Emails: Gmail users can add [Boomerang](#) to schedule emails to be sent later or to be delivered to your Inbox when you can respond properly. This is a life saver!

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Step 5: Your Cell Phone... Let me guess, your storage is full again???

1. For iPhone Users: Take a look at your Settings/ General / Storage & iCloud Usage / Manage Storage – see what is taking up the most space. Amazingly all those texts can be a culprit and if you have a million Apps you don't use they can add up to a lot of storage.
2. Delete Apps you do not use regularly
3. Turn off cellular data to Apps you want to keep but don't use very often (reminder you will need to turn the cellular service back on to use them)
4. Go through your texts and make sure you save any images you want and delete the conversations that are no longer needed
5. Emails – you should have already reduced this in Step 4, but you may find this is still a big file and need more trimming
6. Photos – Save everything to your cloud or backup of choice and delete the ones you don't need to look at or post to Instagram. My rule of thumb is to keep the current 6 months on my phone and delete the rest once they have been saved elsewhere.

Step 6: Save, Store, Backup. Yes, that thing you always forget about...until it is too late

- External Cloud Backup: I use [Dropbox](#) for all my images and documents. I can access them from any computer, my phone and/ or iPad. I organized all my files and folders BEFORE moving them all to my Dropbox. That way everything was organized and easy to find from the get go.
- [External Hard Drive](#): I have an external hard drive that I have with my Desktop and one I carry with my laptop. They back up the entire computer and are set to run automatically.
- [USB Drives](#): I also like to have small portable USB's for saving documents on the go or when I am traveling. It is amazing the times I was glad to have one when I was working with one of my son's computers or a friends and we wanted to save something and I didn't have access to the internet.

Phew, that was a lot of work and I am so impressed! Doesn't it feel cathartic and invigorating? I love knowing everything is in its own spot, I can find it quickly and easily! Good Job!

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