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CARVE OUT
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SPACE p 94

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on the cover

A dedicated office area has gone from luxury to essential in modern homes. In just a few square feet, this one makes room for a family.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



PHOTO: COURTESY, HORCHOW.COM

SHELF DISCIPLINE

Is there an organization gene? If so, I sometimes wonder if I missed it in my family. My mother and older sister always seem to know where something is the minute they need it. I, on the other hand, can lose something I put down only moments before. The only way I can stay on top of stuff is to create rigid categories and assign containers for stashing everything, then discipline myself to put things away immediately. We all have to set up systems that work for our families and our personalities.

Every organization expert will tell you it takes time to figure out storage solutions that accomplish our goals and suit our lifestyles. If you want to shape up your closet (page 82) or create an efficient entry (page 128) or generate more room for kitchen essentials (page 42), start slowly and get things under control bit by bit. That's how habits are formed, after all.

So whether it's a task that comes naturally to you or you struggle with the need to get organized, our objective is to show you ways to make your storage smarter and simpler. Give yourself the time to get it right. Practice makes perfect. **Happy stowing!**

Debra

DEBRA WITTRUP
EDITOR, STORAGE SOLUTIONS



WORK FROM HOME

Try these strategies to optimize operations for an efficient command center.



STORAGE IN HOMES The home office is a versatile and multi-use workhorse of a room, where you do everything from pay bills to perform day jobs to blog. With so much going on and the amount of time you're likely to spend in this space, you'll want to set up an organized room that will stay that way. Proper storage and organizational systems ensure that working spaces let you effectively complete every project and assignment in a timely fashion. Surfaces are clear for using computers and writing to-do lists, paperwork is properly filed so it can be quickly accessed, and artistic media are sorted into labeled bins for easy identification and speedy retrieval.

WORK ZONES This office divvies up space to create stations that suit the homeowner's workaday needs. Different areas handle computer work, household planning, reference books, paperwork storage, and even gift wrapping.

5 STEPS TO CLEAR CLUTTER

PREPARE Get together six large bins or boxes, and label them: shred, file, trash, donate, keep, and other room.

SORT You are not organizing at this point, just separating. All papers should be sorted into the shred, file, or trash bins. Go through everything else in your office space. If it doesn't belong, place it in the other room bin. Once you're done, everything that isn't furniture or electronics should be in one of your bins or boxes.

CLEAN Give the space a thorough cleaning. Wipe down your desk, shelves, and any electronics (carefully), and then sweep, vacuum, or mop the floor.

FILE Organize all that paperwork into a filing system. Scan anything that you might require but don't need on paper.

ORGANIZE Use bins, office organizers, and trays as much as possible to keep things orderly.

EXTEND ITS REACH

To anchor a fine-tuned communication center, mount a corkboard that you can use for tacking up important information (right). Round out its purpose with wall-hung bins and racks for holding bills, outgoing mail, pens, pencils, and other office supplies.

UPGRADE THE ORDINARY

Apply decoupage images, adhesive motifs, or whimsical wallpapers to give a bulletin board a fashionable lift (below). Adding a lovely frame raises this personalized-with-panache board to artwork status.

KEEP IT SIMPLE Include a fun-shaped cork board, like this flower (below right), in your office ensemble and you'll be drawn to keeping it in use, which in turn helps to keep your work surface free and clear.



TRY THIS...

Suspend a heavy piece of twine from the ceiling to support notes and images attached with alligator clips or clothespins.