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Linda's Organizing Tip for March 2007:



Five Steps to Organizing Any Room

Organizing a room is not difficult if you approach it logically. The most important things are that *you feel good when you are in it* and that *its setup allows your time to flow smoothly and efficiently*. To get started, allow about an hour of uninterrupted time to brainstorm thoughts in the following areas. It may help to make a “worksheet” with the tasks written below, and record your ideas.

- 1. Decide on and analyze the room you will organize.** Is it a large or small space? Does traffic run through it? Will you need additional lighting or does overhead lighting exist? For example, in our family room, we did not like the recessed lighting, so we installed two ceiling fans, which not only gives additional overhead lighting, but also circulates cool air in summer, and hot air in winter. Also, frequent traffic from garage to kitchen runs through it, so a relative suggested pulling the couch forward and allowing traffic to run behind it, and that works great!
- 2. Decide on what you would like to be able to do in the room.** What are the *essential activities* that will take place there? For example, in our family room, we use the computer, relax with friends, play board games, read, watch TV & movies, and listen to music.
- 3. Group activities together into natural categories.** I like to do this by writing each activity on a small square of paper, then grouping them together under a larger category. For example, Entertainment (watching TV, movies, & listening to music), Computer (bill paying, games, research, e-mail), and Relaxing (sitting in front of the fireplace, talking, reading, etc.)

4. Design “zones” where each category will take place. In our family room, we have a 5X7 rug, with our couch and loveseat pulled into a small rectangle, using the fireplace as one side and the small entertainment center (with TV, VCR/DVD player, stereo and CDs inside) as an adjacent side. This creates an intimate, comfortable Relaxing Zone, where all the activities can be pursued. We invested in a gas fireplace insert, which has added a wonderful dimension of Coziness to our space, and is easily controlled by our children.

We have our Computer Zone located off to the side of the room, adjacent to the kitchen, so we can closely supervise our children’s activities and screen-time, and we can do household computer tasks (such as check e-mail, pay bills) while still being with the family,

Finally, at the end of the room, close to the garage entrance, which we use daily, we have a Drop-Off/Go To Zone, with plastic drawers filled with seasonal wear (in winter- hats, gloves, in summer- bathing suits, goggles), on top of which the kids drop their backpacks and instruments.

5. Analyze each “zone” for specific needs and items that belong there, and decide on the best way to set it up. For example; Relaxing Zone has blankets and a footrest, small table for drinks, floor lamp, magazine holders, etc. Computer Zone has a small file cabinet for storage of bills and household paperwork, pens, paper, envelopes, stamps, extra office supplies, etc. We keep most used items close to where we use them, and go through regularly to purge out unneeded items.

Following these five steps will create a room that is highly functional and very clutter-free.
For assistance with this or any other organizing task, contact Linda.

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