

www.womansday.com

Free
Recipe
Cards

Woman's Day[®]

Slow-Cooker Suppers

Walk Your
Way Thin

7 Easy Steps

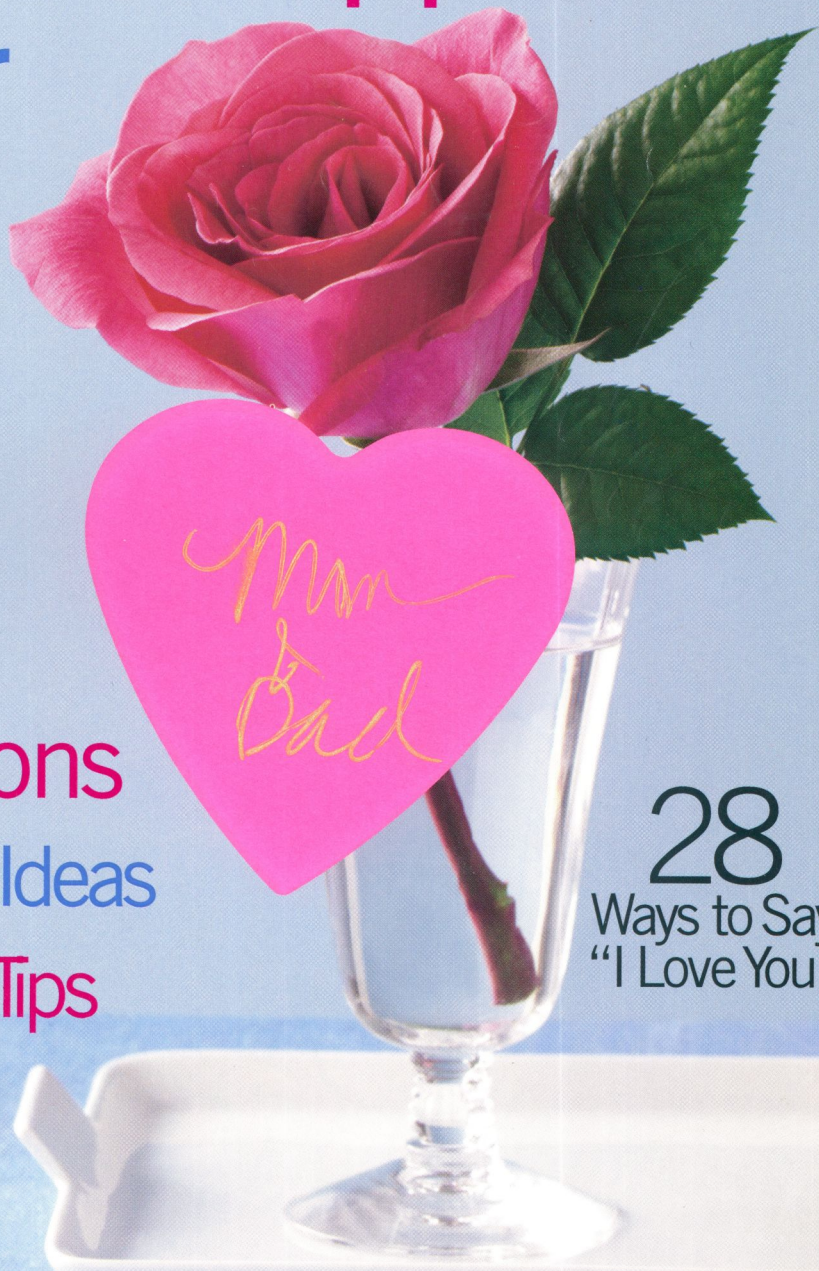
Wipe Out
Clutter

26 Quick Solutions

16 Inspiring Kitchen Ideas

Really Fast Cleaning Tips

Cake-Mix Desserts



28
Ways to Say
"I Love You"



FEBRUARY 1, 2005
U.S. \$2.49 CANADA \$3.49

26 Ways to Wipe Out Clutter

Got a minute? Get organized

by Chrystle Fiedler

Don't have a huge chunk of time to get organized? "That's OK," says Donna Smallin, author of *The One-Minute Organizer*. "Each step you take makes your world a little less cluttered and moves you closer to a more organized life." In just a few minutes a day, you can begin to clear up paper clutter, finish those household chores you've been putting off, pay your bills on time and smooth out bumps in your schedule. Use these quick tips to declutter and organize your life—one minute at a time.



Want to Find It Faster?

ZIP DOWN THOSE AISLES. Scribble your grocery list on a self-stick notepad. "Then simply grab the sheet and stick it on your grocery cart while shopping," says Mimi Doe, author of *Busy but Balanced*.

CLEAR THE DECKS. Clear your kitchen counter of the appliances you don't use daily, such as the food processor, slow-cooker or blender. "This way they won't collect dust and take up space," says Victoria Moran, author of *Younger by the Day: 365 Ways to Rejuvenate Your Body and Revitalize Your Spirit*.

LABEL IT. "My label-maker is my favorite gadget," says Season Skuro of Woodland Hills, California. "I organize things in clear, plastic boxes and then label them: medicine, suntan lotion, batteries, vitamins, etc. It makes my linen closet super-organized and everyone knows where to find things. It only takes a minute to label a box and throw stuff into it."

CREATE AN ERRANDS BOX. In it, put books and videos that need to be returned, items to be repaired, dry cleaning, etc., says June Saruwatari, author of *Behind the Clutter: Truth, Love, Meaning and Purpose*. Then just grab it on your way out the door.

MAKE BILL PAYING A NO-BRAINER. "I write 'To Be

Filed' and 'Bills to Pay' on the front of colored folders with a big marker and keep them in my home office," says Skuro. "My husband and I throw everything into the folders during the week. It's quick and allows us to pick up right where we left off, stay organized and not miss due dates."

USE A DUAL-ACTION PLAN. "Create two columns," says Larina Kase, Psy.D., M.B.A., and president of Performance and Success Coaching, LLC. "One for necessary activities and tasks in order of priority and the other for extra activities to be done if time permits. You now have an action plan for your day or week."

LOOK AHEAD. Quickly scan your calendar or PDA for any appointments scheduled for the next 30 days, says Audrey Thomas, author of *The Road Called Chaos*. "It's a quick but effective mental exercise to remind yourself of important meetings and projects so there are no surprises." It means less stress, too.

Need a Better Routine?

DECIDE WHEN TO TOSS. "At what point are you willing to part with something you no longer need or use, such as that skiing or camping equipment you haven't used

Please turn to page 72

tip

File warranties, instructions and receipts in one place so they can be found easily.

WIPE OUT CLUTTER

Continued from page 69

in years?" asks Smallin. Is it six months? A year? Two years? Creating a decision-making rule now will eliminate the need to make lots of individual decisions later.

MAKE IT A HABIT. Never leave a room without improving its appear-

ance, says Smallin. "Pick something up and put it away." If you have stairs, never go up or down empty-handed. Every Monday morning pick a project or area to organize in the coming week. Over time, consistent, little actions add up big.

CLEAN WHILE YOU WATCH TV.

"Pull out a drawer, dump the contents on the floor and sort everything into four piles: throw away, give away, put away where it belongs and put back," says Smallin. Or go through everything stacked on your desk or dresser and organize into the same four piles.

ONE IN, ONE OUT. To get her huge sweater collection under control, Laura Stack, the Productivity PRO and author of *Leave the Office Earlier!*, made a deal with herself. "I bought a beautiful cedar chest and decided to keep only the sweaters that would fit in it. Now before buying a new sweater, I give serious thought to which sweater would have to go." Use a plastic box for your kids' toys, earrings or kitchen gadgets.

ENLIST 60-SECOND HELPERS. Ask two people if they can help you for one minute. Delegate tasks appropriately, says Kase, whose web site is www.pascoaching.com. "If you ask your kids to help prepare lunches, have one bag the snacks and the other make the sandwiches. Turn it into a game to see who can prepare the most in one minute."

CLIP 'N' KEEP

Eileen Roth, author of *Organizing for Dummies*, recommends these quick checklists to get organized. Post on a bulletin board as a reminder to keep it simple. For more information, sign up for her monthly e-zine at www.everythinginitsplace.net.

Use W-A-S-T-E to Decide Whether Something's Worth Keeping

W – Worthwhile. If the item isn't worth saving, toss it. If it is, move on to the next four questions.

A – Again. Will you use this item more than once?

S – Somewhere else. Can you find it somewhere else or borrow it if you need it?

T – Toss. Will anything happen if you throw it out? If you need it for tax or legal reasons, for example, keep it.

E – Entire. Do you need the whole thing, the complete catalog, for example, when you only want to order from one page? If not, keep what you need and toss the rest.

Use R-E-M-O-V-E to Clear Off Your Desk

R – Reduce all the distractions on your desktop, such as knickknacks or this morning's mail. Put them on top of a file cabinet or bookcase instead.

E – Everyday use. Only keep things you use often on top of your desk.

M – Move items to the preferred side, whether you're a righty or lefty. Put the phone, pens, pencils and pads within easy reach.

Put the telephone on the opposite side so you can write with your preferred hand.

O – Organize like items together so you can find them easily.

V – View your time. Keep an organizer and clock on your desk.

E – Empty the center. Clear off space in the middle of your desk so you can work on the project at hand.

Use R-A-P-I-D Response to Sort Mail

Create stacks for each category.

R – Read. Magazines, newsletters, etc.

A – Attend. Notices and invitations for seminars, workshops, meetings.

P – Pay. Bills.

I – Important. All unknown incoming mail that needs sorting.

D – Dump. Mail you know you won't read or need.

Ready to Reclaim Your Space?

PUT YOUR ROCKS ON ICE. "Organize jewelry in ice cube trays," says Smallin. "Store one set of earrings or one fine-chain necklace in each cube. Stack in a drawer." Your favorite bracelet will be safe and easy to find.

JUST TAG IT. Time-tag each piece of your clothing with a date one year from now, says Stack. "When you wear something, take the tag off. Anything with a tag left hanging in your closet when that date arrives, has to go."

THINK OF YOUR RETURN. "Take an extra minute to make your bed and put everything back in its place before you leave for the day," says Saruwatari. Get kids in the habit of doing this, too. When you leave your office each day, do the same thing with your desktop. "When your desk is clear, you are clear mentally and emotionally."

CLEAR OUT CAR CLUTTER. "Keep a designated plastic storage container in your car to clean up the clutter when you return from the afternoon car pool," says Molly Gold of www.gomominc.com. "Before everyone gets out of the car, pass the container through the rows." You'll have a clean car in no time flat. Use plastic bins to categorize other things, such as books, CDs, etc.

USE BANKERS' BOXES TO GET A GRIP. "Put clutter—clothes, papers, toys—into them, stack them against a wall and label each one," says Saruwatari, whose web site is www.organizingmaniac.com. "Seeing your clutter in boxes instead of on the floor will make you feel better instantly. When you have a few more minutes, you can tackle them one at a time."

Want the Kids More Organized?

GIVE EVERYONE A JUNK DRAWER. "It's unrealistic to expect family members, especially kids, to be neat and tidy all the time," says Thomas. "It's nice to have a spot where you can be sloppy, but it's contained in one place. When the drawer won't shut, it's time to empty it out and make room for more."

READY SPORTS GEAR FOR THE NEXT TIME. "After the kids come home from sports practice, get them to help empty the gear bag of dirty and used items and restock it for the

next practice," says Gold. "And identify a storage place for the bag so you can grab it and go."

AVOID THE LUNCH-MONEY SCRAMBLE. "Every Sunday night, put five small envelopes on the table and fill each one with your child's lunch money," says Debbie Glasser, Ph.D., author of *Positive Parenting* and founder of NewsForParents.org. Keep them in a central location and you'll have at least one less thing to do in the morning.

Need Even More Help?

TRADE DUST FOR DOLLARS. "If something is accumulating dust, it's a telltale sign it's something you don't use," says Smallin. Donate it to charity and claim a deduction or sell it on eBay. If you need help getting started and don't mind paying a commission on the sale, use www.auctiondrop.com. Just take items to a UPS Store (3,500 drop-off locations nationwide) and Auction-Drop.com takes care of everything from photos to writing descriptions, processing payment, even shipping. It's hassle-free and easy.

ASK A FRIEND. Have someone else hold items while you make decisions about what to keep and toss, says Smallin. "Holding onto an object will only increase your attachment to it."

FIND A CLUTTER SUPPORT GROUP. If clutter is interfering with your relationships or job, a support group may be right for you. Check out Messies Anonymous at www.messies.com, Clutterers Anonymous at www.clutterersanonymous.net or Clutterless Recovery Groups Inc. at www.clutterless.org. Need professional help managing clutter? Find an organizer through the National Association of Professional Organizers at www.napo.net or www.myorganizedlife.com. WD



When it comes to holiday cooking, it's easy to see why I use Swanson Broth.

Judith Marshall, New York Professional Chef



Swanson® Broth.
America's
#1 selling brand.

© 2004 CSC Brands LP