

# **Survival Mom's Mini Guide:**



# **Declutter & Organize** Your Living Space



# **Survival Mom's Mini Guide: Declutter and Organize Your Living Space**

*By The Survival Mom, Lisa Bedford*

NOTE: This book contains links to certain articles and other information available on the Internet. The authors have included these links as sources of information to help readers learn more about home organization.

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## Introduction

“Into each life some rain must fall,” my mother used to tell me. I’ve found that to be true, but even more so, “Into each life some clutter must fall.”

For many years my life was ruled by clutter. With 2 young children, I somehow managed to raise them, homeschool them, and run a busy home-based business, but it wasn’t easy. Looking back, it wasn’t the tasks themselves that were difficult but the fact that I was living in a continual state of chaos that gave me headaches nearly every day.

In 2009, my husband and I toyed with the idea of moving to another city. We brought in a realtor, who quickly suggested that I declutter my home to make it more appealing to potential buyers. That began my journey of decluttering, which ultimately resulted in freeing me from the bondage of stuff. Stuff that didn’t really have a place, stuff that I clung to out of sentimentality, and stuff that had become a part of the landscape, and it never occurred to me to get rid of it!

Now, almost 5 years later, my home is a far more peaceful place. It’s easier to keep clean, easier to organize, and I know where to find whatever I need, when I need it!

There's a lot of freedom in owning less and then, organizing what you own. The process isn't a quick one, but the journey is worth it.

Lisa Bedford

The Survival Mom

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## Getting Started Toward a Life Free of Clutter

Ever have trouble finding something you needed because you couldn't remember where you put it or because it's buried under so much other stuff? Or, even worse, you bought something you thought you needed, only to discover later you had purchased a duplicate?! When things like that happen, you know it's time to declutter and get organized.

Your home may not be entirely chaotic, but if you're like most people, there is that one closet, that one drawer that you don't want to deal with because of the clutter inside.

One of the main benefits of tackling that one closet, that one drawer, that one room, or the whole house is that having those spaces organized will actually give you more time as you make use of your time and space more efficiently. This frees you to enjoy life more and to focus on bigger plans and goals more effectively.

If one of your goals is to be better prepared for emergencies or worst case scenarios, a living space that is orderly and with routines in place will be exactly what you need when a crisis arises.

Whatever has nudged you to get your living spaces decluttered and organized, the big question is, where should you start?

At this point, a lot of us immediately run to The Container Store or Walmart, anywhere with attractive storage containers and get all excited about coordinating pretty colors and patterns! But actually, your very first step should be decluttering, and this isn't an easy step because, primarily, it's a process of making decisions. Dozens, or even hundreds of decisions.

You likely have many items that aren't useful anymore. They may be worn out, they're in sizes too big or too small or they haven't been a part of your everyday life in a long time. Whatever the reason, they no longer suit your needs. Identifying and separating those items from what you do want and do use is the first step toward clutter-free sanity.

Choose a room or even a single drawer or cupboard and plan a path through your home. To stay on track and motivated, make a list of every room in your home and put them in order based on which you will tackle first.

You might choose to start with the entrance because it's small and clearing it out will help you feel like you've made progress or because it's the first thing guests see when they walk into your home. You could decide to start on the kids' rooms because you are afraid something is living under the bed, or because they've moved out and it's time to repurpose the room. If you're feeling very overwhelmed, start with the least messy and cluttered spot in the house. Getting that into ship-shape will help you feel like tackling the next biggest mess.

There is no wrong place to start.

Now you're ready to get organizing!

### First, set some ground rules:

1. As you work through your list, focus on **one small area** of that room at a time. That might be one drawer or a counter-top. Plan on working in this one room for several days, or longer. You're better off cleaning out half of a closet and finishing it a day or two later than just randomly attacking an entire room! The key is to build one small success on top of another.
2. Finish each area before moving on to the next. Leaving lots of **half-finished tasks and loose ends** to tie up later will only frustrate you in the long run, and will make your home seem even

more disorganized and cluttered. You want to have areas that are completely finished so you can enjoy the progress you've made.

3. Part of the process will almost certainly be moving things into another area where they actually belong. For example, if you're working in a child's room, you'll likely find things that belong in the kitchen, bathroom, or family room. Set those aside in a separate area or even in a bin or box until your allotted organizing time has ended. Then put every misplaced item in its correct places.
4. Give yourself a **specific time frame**, such as one area per day or per weekend. Setting a deadline gives you an incentive to prioritize and clear the time you need. Make it official and block off the time on your calendar. Stick with your allotted time. Decluttering and organizing isn't the most enjoyable task, so once your time is up, pat yourself on the back, tell yourself you'll finish up tomorrow, and then move on.
5. Take a few minutes each day to make sure the areas you already organized stay that way. It's far easier to put away half a dozen items than let it **build up over time** and you're faced with another cluttered mess!

**As you go through each space, most experts recommend that you:** 1. **Cut through the unnecessary items** that might have accumulated and the things that don't work.

Even if you only get rid of one item out of a crowded bookcase, that's one less book, and it will probably make it easier to get rid of other items that aren't useful anymore.

2. **Promptly, get rid of what you don't need.** Rather than let it all accumulate in the garage or basement until you find the time to get rid of it for good, sort items into garbage bags or donation boxes and get them gone as soon as you are finished with each area.
3. If you plan on [selling](#) some items, **make sure the return is worth the effort** and be sure you'll actually be able to do it reasonably soon. Then [decide how/where](#) you want to sell them, and set a deadline for yourself. Enlist help and start immediately. If you are having a yard sale, price the items as you go. Just put stickers on them or group them in boxes by price. If you are selling them online (Craigslist, eBay, Amazon, etc.), take pictures right away. Better yet, find packaging supplies for them and list them online immediately. Unlike a yard sale, online sales don't require you to put everything up for sale at once. If you take the time to do this after you finish organizing each area, it won't be overwhelming.
4. Determine how to best organize what's left by **grouping items by type and frequency of use.** Items that are used the most frequently should be the most accessible. Reserve less convenient storage areas, such as top shelves or hard to reach corners, for items that you need and will use, just not very often.
5. Determine how to **make all areas as accessible as possible.** For instance, do you need a step stool handy to be able to reach the top shelf more easily? Would a [lazy susan](#) in the cabinet help minimize "losing" items and cut out the need for rummaging in that hard to reach corner? Keep reading for more tips and links to articles with more ideas and some great books to help you get your game plan ready!

## Recommended Articles

[100 Ways to Get Organized](#)

[Best Organizational and Decluttering Websites List at Apartment Therapy 100](#)

[Ways to Get Rid of It](#)

## Recommended Books

*31 Days To a Clutter Free Life: One Month to Clear Your Mind, Home, and Schedule* by Ruth Soukup

*Simplify Your Space: Create Order and Reduce Space* by Marcia Ramsland

*One Year to an Organized Life* by Regina Leeds

## Get Your Home's Key Areas Tidied Up

Once you have a game plan for decluttering and organizing your home, it's time to put it into action! You may wish to focus on the areas of your home you use the most, to give yourself an immediate sense of accomplishment. **I've outlined five areas of the home that are high-traffic areas and clutter magnets** for most families: kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms, living rooms, and kids' rooms.

We'll take a look at tips and strategies for each area, and offer a few suggestions on products and other resources to help you get the job done.



## Kitchen

Not only is the kitchen the place where most of us prepare and enjoy our meals, it's also often the staging area as we start our day, and where we sort our mail, pay our bills, and go through coupons and schoolwork.

**Kitchen counters** are easily one of the most problematic clutter magnets in the house. For a dramatic organization boost, clear them off *and keep them clean*. Find permanent homes for items in drawers or cabinets if they are kitchen essentials. If not, banish them to their appropriate rooms in the house.

**SURVIVAL MOM TIP:** I use trays of different sizes to keep items together and in the areas in which I need them. For example, next to my stovetop, I have a small white ceramic tray that holds salt, pepper, and bottles of olive oil and coconut oil. Visually, this is far more appealing than these 4 items placed randomly on my countertop. On my kitchen table, there is another tray that holds coasters, napkins, and salt and pepper shakers. Each tray gives these small items a home, and it's been easy to train my husband and kids to always put things back on their assigned tray!

After the counters are clean, **create a handy Command Station to keep paperwork and schedules under control**. Stock it with a [family calendar](#) that's easy for everyone to read, and add a different color pen for each family member to make it easy to see at a glance who is doing what, when. Post a notepad for an ongoing grocery list to help cut down on trips to the store. Add a mail sorting rack to keep mail off the counters and bills in one place. [Some](#) racks even have hooks so you never need to wonder where you left your keys.

If your kitchen has a built-in desk area, go wild and actually use it as a desk! Establish that area as your home's Command Station with all the related items together there.

Another area to declutter and organize will likely be your cupboards that hold food and your pantry. Throw away expired items. Donate items that aren't expired but you know you will never eat to a local food pantry. That includes ones that no longer fit your diet, things the kids loved but now refuse to eat it, and anything that looked good at the store but now looks unappealing. Food pantries cannot accept or use food with expired dates.

When organizing the food in your cupboards and pantry, consider grouping items by use. For example, have a designated shelf or area for coffee, tea, and drink mixes; a designated shelf for baking necessities; or an easy to reach cabinet with healthy snack options so kids can help themselves after school. **Then label them** so everyone else can find them and put them back in the right place.

The **spice cabinet** can be another problem area in the kitchen. You may not go so far as to alphabetize your spices, but at least make sure everything is easier to find by using a [turntable](#) or [stair step spice](#) racks that make it easy to read labels without needing to rummage. The spices you use most frequently should be the most accessible.

Kitchen drawers probably come in a close second to counters as far as attracting the most clutter. I use these [expandable bamboo drawer organizers](#) to keep my kitchen tools and flatware organized.

Who doesn't have a **junk drawer** (or two) in their kitchen? After the counters are clean and the pantry is taken care of, turn your attention to the drawers. **Banish that junk drawer!**

Instead, determine what, exactly, needs to be in that drawer. Small hand tools? Pens and pencils? A few notepads? All these can be organized using small boxes within the drawer. While you're going through this messy pile, sort like things together, and look for:

- Pens and markers that have dried out. Throw them away.

- Pencils with broken tips. Sharpen them and replace in the drawer. Be sure to have a small pencil sharpener with them.
- Anything that is almost empty or used up, including bottles of glue and rolls of tape.
- Tiny items that can be stored in a Zip-loc bag, empty Tic-Tac box, or similar containers, like paperclips, safety pins, and push pins. Get these sorted into separate containers, and then back into your drawer.
- Sentimental items that aren't junk at all and should be stored somewhere else.
- Multiples of items when you only need to have 1 or 2 in the drawer, such as scissors or Post-it notes. Those extras can go to other places in the house where they might be needed or placed in the Donate box for charity.
- Things you used and then put in the drawer rather than putting them back where they belong. When placing smaller organizing boxes in this drawer, think of it as a jigsaw puzzle and find boxes of different sizes and shapes to provide a place for each category, according to how they were sorted.

Desk supplies can be neatly incorporated into the Command Station. Tools should go into the tool box, etc. There are many organizers available to make organizing your other drawers a snap. **Be sure to take measurements so you know the organizers will fit in the drawers.**

### Recommended Articles

[60 Innovative Kitchen Organization and Storage DIY Projects](#)

[8 Smart Organizing Ideas for the Kitchen from TidyMom.net](#)

[14 Easy Ways to Organize Small Stuff in the Kitchen](#)

### Recommended Books

*The Organized Kitchen* by Brette Sember

*1001 Ideas for Kitchen Organization* by Joseph Provey

*Kitchen Organization Tips and Secrets* by Deniece Schofield

## The Bedroom and Your Wardrobe

A long-standing, tried and true rule for bedroom organization and cleanliness is to make your bed every day. Establishing that single habit gives your room a sort of I've-got-things-under-control feeling. Even if your dresser drawers and closet are chaotic, when they're closed, your room will still look and feel peaceful.

**Maximizing under-bed storage can be a great strategy for gaining more useful space in the bedroom.** Obviously, this needs to come a long way from when you threw everything under the bed as a kid when your mom told you to clean your room. Under-bed storage bins and baskets are a must to make this option work. These bins come in either [plastic](#) or [canvas](#), and are a great place for extra blankets, winter clothes, [shoes](#), or [anything else](#) you want to be accessible but out of the way. Depending on the style of your bed, you may even be able to purchase [risers](#) to give you a few more inches of space for boxes and baskets.

If you enjoy reading in bed, you may want to keep your books, magazines, and personal reading lights handy with a [caddy](#) that hangs by the bed. A bedside table is the perfect place for a tray that holds reading glasses, tissues, and even an alarm clock.

**Organizing dressers can be daunting.** Try devoting drawers to a single type of clothing item, such as shirts or pants. You may need to experiment with how you fold your things. With some items, rolling them allows you to find your items more quickly. Others are nearly impossible to fold, particularly small or silky items, and need [drawer dividers](#). Still others are simply too bulky or unwieldy to roll and might be better in the closet.

**SURVIVAL MOM TIP:** I've taught my kids to organize their drawers from top to bottom according to how they get dressed. Their top drawer holds underwear, undershirts, socks, and bras. The middle drawer holds shirts and tank tops and the bottom drawer holds shorts and pants. This system is very easy for them to remember.

## Jewelry

[Organizing jewelry](#) and other small items like shirt stays and scarves can be challenging. As with everything else, **the first step needs to be getting rid of anything you don't use.** If you look at a piece of jewelry and immediately feel scratchy because that piece scratches every time you wear it, just let it go. If you have 15 pairs of studs but rarely wear them, you know what to do.

Put anything damaged to one side in a separate container. You may be able to repair some of it, but set a time limit for yourself to fix it or get rid of it. Put anything that needs cleaned to the side as well. You can purchase an inexpensive [sonic cleaner](#) but read the instructions carefully. It's great for cleaning silver and lot of other jewelry, but it can destroy fragile jewelry like opals and emeralds. Force yourself to clean it within 24 hours because, really, there is no excuse for not doing it. Once you have narrowed down your jewelry stash, it's time to start organizing and putting things away. First of all, make sure you actually like the [jewelry boxes](#) or containers you are putting things back into because you will probably be looking at them every day. I used a jewelry box for a decade before admitting that I had *never* liked it (it was a gift) and got rid of it. I *love* my other jewelry boxes and just looking at them makes me happy.

**Evaluate where you keep your daily use jewelry.** Maybe leaving it on the bathroom counter is OK, but maybe that doesn't work any more. If you don't already have a [ring tree](#), consider picking one up (or making one) to keep your rings relatively safe but still handy. (It makes a great arts and crafts activity, especially with clay.) If you are like me and have slowly acquired an entire watch wardrobe, it might be time for a [watch box](#). Just be sure you are buying something you will truly use and need, not just adding clutter you're going to need to get rid of next year.

## Closets

If you are like many other people, **your closet is crammed so full of clothing it feels like a workout to pull out or put back a single item.** Realistically, how many of those items do you wear? If you don't wear them, why are you keeping them? It's OK to have a few special items that you rarely wear, but if you have more than two or three, rethink why you're keeping so many.

If you need dress up clothing so rarely that your only "dress up" dress hasn't been worn in 8 years, then you should probably just treat yourself to something new (and in style, that flatters your current shape and hair style) the next time you need to dress up.

Don't forget to go through your shoes. Those goes-with-everything dress shoes you love may not go with your newish bunions, and your favorite hiking boots may be dry-rotting.

The standard advice is to get rid of anything you haven't worn in a year. Personally, **I make an exception to that rule for anything I truly love that is still in good condition that I'm just tired of *right now* because I've worn it so much.** I put those few items to the side for a year or two and, much like hiding a small child's toys, it's like it's new again when I pull it out.

If you have more than ten items for the whole year - all four seasons - that you think fall into that category, you are almost certainly keeping too many. You'll also need to be very sure they won't look dated. My peasant skirts, wool dress coat, and rugby shirts all fit into the timeless category.

As a prepper, you may also have a virtual second wardrobe of items you can use if everything falls apart. You still need to go through that second wardrobe. Make sure it all still fits. If you find you have 25 shirts and two pairs of pants and seven wool socks (not pairs, socks), then you have identified a some problem areas to address.

**You also need to check for moth or other damage.** If clothing really is stored for the long-term, then you need to [store it for the long term](#), complete with [mothballs](#), a cedar chest, or whatever that specific item needs.

**SURVIVAL MOM TIP:** Have you heard of the **80/20 Rule**? It's astonishing how often this rule is proven true in a variety of scenarios. Applied to clothing, it states that 20% of the clothes you own, you wear 80% of the time. That means that you could likely get rid of **80%** of what is in your closet and drawers and not even miss it, since you might wear them 20% of the time, or less. Of course you'll want to hold on to winter wear and bathing suits, since you need them even if only seasonally. But keep an eye on what you wear most often and see if it's not just about 20% of what you own and you likely wear those things 80% of the time!

## Recommended Articles

[20 Ways to Organize Your Bedroom](#)

[Quick Tips for Organizing the Bedroom](#)

## Recommended Books

*The Tidy Closet: Tips From A French Woman: Easy Steps And Motivation To Declutter Your Closet And Organise Your Wardrobe* by Marie-Anne Lecoeur

*How To Organize Your Life At Home - Closets (How To Organize Your Life At Home Series Book 1)* by Maya Sheppard

## Bathroom

In the bathroom, the medicine cabinet is often stuffed full of . . .stuff. There's a jumbled mess that falls out whenever you open the door. To get started decluttering and organizing this small space, dump everything into a box and sort out whatever is broken, expired, useless, or doesn't belong.

Next, consider ways to maximize space. If you can adjust your shelves, move them to make room for the tallest items on the bottom shelves. **Use the middle shelves for the most-used items.** Give occasional use items a home on the top shelf. Organize small loose items like tweezers and nail clippers in a small zipper pouch or a small cup where you can easily find them when they are needed.

Bathroom drawers should be sorted and organized in a similar manner to kitchen drawers. I use these [small bamboo boxes](#) to hold jewelry, contact lens cases and solutions, lip balms, and the essential oils I use most often. Don't forget to purge items you don't need from the drawers! That includes appliances like your hair dryer and curling iron. If you no longer use them or they no longer work right, give them away or throw them out.

[Clear plastic shoe boxes](#) make the perfect storage solution under the sink. They can be used to organize extra soap and toiletries, or one can be assigned to each family member to keep the counters clutter free. A [caddy](#) under the sink can be used to organize cleaning supplies so that chores are easier.

**SURVIVAL MOM TIP:** Splurge, go crazy, and have a separate caddy of cleaning supplies beneath the sinks of each bathroom! When I have to go hunting for glass cleaner, a sponge, or whatever I need to start a cleaning job, I'm invariably sidetracked by laundry, phone messages, or a thousand other things. When all my cleaning supplies are right where I need them, when I need them, the task actually gets done! (I also have a toilet bowl brush and plunger in each bathroom.)

Keeping extra toilet paper handy and out of sight can also help the bathroom feel less cluttered. [Decorative canisters](#) designed specifically for the job can fit in the tight space next to the toilet that is otherwise wasted, or you can opt for an extra-large, decorative desk file or magazine organizer- as long as it is 8" wide it should easily accommodate toilet paper rolls and still fit neatly beside the toilet.

**Decorative baskets placed on the back of the tank or on the floor are another option.** I consider having extra rolls of toilet paper within reaching distance of the toilet a must!

In the shower and bathtub, try using a [shower caddy](#) that hangs from the shower head to keep shampoos and body wash in one place. If you have a shower (no tub), try a [floor caddy](#). (The rounded sides of a bathtub mean they don't work well in a shower/tub.) If you have kids and need a solution for bath tub toys, a basket that [fits across the tub](#) or [mesh bag](#) can keep things within easy reach but organized and able to drip-dry.

## Recommended Articles

[Store More in Your Bathroom](#)

[43 Practical Bathroom Storage Ideas](#)

[20 Creative Toilet Paper Storage Ideas](#)

## Recommended Books

*Bedroom and Bath Storage: How to Plan & Organize, Closet Systems, Space-Saving Ideas* by Sunset Books

*Home Decluttering and Organization - Volume 2: Bathrooms* Angela Russ

## Living Room

The living room or den gets a bad rap for organization because it can be the stage for so many different activities. **Try organizing your room by activity.** Don't be constrained by the label on the floor plan of your home - base it on what YOU do or can use it for. If your family will always use the eat-in kitchen and not the formal dining room, go ahead and turn it into a TV room or office! Heck, turn it into a wrapping room if you'll use it more that way!

If you read a lot, create a reading nook with books out of sight behind cabinet doors, or try organizing them by subject. Group movies and gaming systems together neatly in an entertainment center. Develop strategies for other areas of the living room, such as a desk where children can do homework, or a way to stylishly organize yoga mats, weights, and resistance bands, if your living room is also your home gym.

DVDs and CDs can take up an enormous amount of space, but if you toss the cases, you can opt for something much more organized: a [portable binder](#) that holds the discs in individual pockets so you can easily find whichever movie you're looking for. If you don't want to throw away the cases, you can still get organized with a [DVD tote](#) that can be stored behind the couch or in a cabinet of the entertainment center. If you really have a lot of DVDs, you can buy a specially sized [bookcase](#). (It will also fit paperback books nicely.)

If it feels like the gaming systems are taking over this room, **get the wires under control first with something like [Captive Cables](#).** As you do this, take the labels from bread and use them to [label which device](#) each cord goes to. You need to do that for the power cords and the video cords going to the TV.

A [small game system organizer](#) can help if you only have one game system and a few games to organize, but if there is a diehard gamer in your family, you may be better off giving them [their own station](#). Either option will create designated places for gaming systems, games, and controllers. Or, you may want to place a small basket on a coffee table or end table to catch remote controls for everything from the TV, DVD player, and game controllers all in one place.

## Recommended Articles

[Organizing Your Living Room](#)

## Recommended Books

*Kids & Their Clutter: Practical Minimalism for Challenging Messes (Practical Minimalism Book Series 3)* by Faith Janes

*Clutter-Free With Kids For New Parents: De-Clutter and organize your home with 7 easy to follow steps - Feel better instantly* by Dr. Michael Smith

## Kids and Kids' Rooms

More than any other room in the house, children's rooms present the most challenges for getting organized and staying organized.

As a first step, you may want to consider downsizing the toy collection. Look for broken toys, or toys your children have outgrown. Keep in mind the 80/20 Rule. It applies to toys, too!

Next, consider leaving out only a portion of your child's toys at any one time. **Toys can be rotated** in and out of more permanent storage (like a box in the basement, attic, or closet) to help manage clutter and so that the kids don't get bored with them as easily.

Once the toys have been sorted, look for inexpensive storage solutions to get a jumpstart on organizing. Try hanging a [shoe holder](#) on the back of the door or on a wall to provide instant storage for small toys. If your child has a large stuffed animal collection, try a [hammock](#) to keep them all corralled. Inexpensive [storage cubes](#) and [soft baskets](#) are also great.

In a kid's rooms, **making furniture pull double duty as storage is always a plus.** Stay away from large chests or trunks that might tempt kids to play inside them, and instead focus on smaller [ottomans](#) or [benches with cubbies](#).

Once the initial ground rules are set and the new organization is in place, it might help to have a posted reminder to clean up like on these [Playroom Rules vinyl wall clings](#).

## Recommended Articles

[Creative Toy Storage](#)

## Recommended Books

*Kid's Space Idea Book* by Wendy Jordan

*Teach Your Kids To Be Organized* by Teacher Kyle

*The Sensory Child Gets Organized: Proven Systems for Rigid, Anxious, or Distracted Kids* by Carolyn Dalglish

## Extra Resources

### Tips for Small Spaces

Having a small home or apartment can present even more organizing challenges, but there are plenty of creative ways to make small spaces as organized and functional as possible. The [Japanese](#) are renowned for their ability to fit a lot into very small homes.

If you really want some hard-core, long-term ideas for organizing your small space that might involve some construction and DIY projects, look at how ships and boats are set up. There is a reason long, narrow (tiny) kitchens are called "[galley](#)" kitchens. Boat living is a master class in organization and space-maximization!

## Recommended Articles

[The Big List of Small Space Organizing Ideas and Inspirations](#)

[8 Hacks for Small Apartments](#)

[15 Genius Tips for Living in Small Spaces](#)

## Recommended Books

*Small Space Organizing: A Room by Room Guide to Maximizing Your Space* By Kathryn Bechen

*Small Apartment Hacks: 101 Ingenious DIY Solutions for Living, Organizing, and Entertaining* by Jenna Mahoney

*Libby Langdon's Small Space Solutions: Secrets For Making Any Room Look Elegant And Feel Spacious On Any Budget* by Libby Langdon

## Creative Storage Ideas

Very few people (if any) have the luxury of being able to keep everything they want. We all need to weed out the excess. But how many of us really manage to keep our possessions limited to what we can easily store? Not many! And how many of us have unlimited funds to buy all new storage containers and more space to put them into? Even fewer!

That's where creative storage ideas come in. By getting creative and upcycling or using unexpected items, you can save money and space.

When you buy a new blanket or other linens, they often come in a thick plastic bag that you can reuse. Do you? If not, you're missing out! You can store off-season linens in those, but you can also store small toys, clothing, or all kinds of other things in them.

**Stop thinking about where things *should* go and start thinking about where you *use them*.** Our first aid kit and all the bandages are in the mud room, over the washing machine. It has three doors - one to outside, one to the garage, one to the kitchen. Want to guess what three areas we're most likely to get injured in? Bingo!

The bathroom is definitely not one of them, yet it's where most people keep those items. It's also a room that's known for getting hot and humid, both of which are terrible for medicine. We've moved the medicine to the built in spice rack in the kitchen. It's out of the humidity and it's easy as can be to find dosage cups and wash them. Extra medicine is in the basement, where it's cool and low humidity.

Instead of a standard TV stand, we use an extra set of nightstands to hold the DVD and DVR boxes. The drawers hold extra remotes, DVDs we're in the middle of watching (mostly series'), and some of the kids' stuff. It works out SO much better than the standard solution!

As a prepper, I am determined to keep fireplace tools and a log bin beside each fireplace. In the here and now, we never actually burn fires in the fireplaces, especially the gas one. One of our log bins now holds spare blankets. The other holds some of the fire logs that are part of our preps, but it looks prettier than a cardboard box.

## Recommended Articles

[Get Organized: 25 Clever Ideas for Repurposed Storage](#)

[50 Brilliant Storage Solutions](#)

[52 Brilliant Ideas for Organizing Your Home](#)

## Recommended Books

*The Family Handyman's Best Organizing Solutions: Cut Clutter, Store More, and Gain Acres of Closet Space* by the editors Of The Family Handyman

*Knack Organizing Your Home: Decluttering Solutions And Storage Ideas (Knack: Make It Easy)* by Emily Wilska

*Ultimate Guide to Cabinets, Shelves & Home Storage Solutions (Home Improvement)* by the editors of Creative Homeowner

## Conclusion

As you go through this process, you may find that you need to buy furniture. If money is tight, relax.



**Buying an extra dresser, buffet, or chest of drawers doesn't need to be expensive.** A \$10 garage sale bookcase did miracles for one area in our garage. Another \$20 and a couple cans of spray paint transformed a yard sale dresser into my new dresser. As I said above, simply moving some old nightstands gave us a new "TV stand." Be creative!

You may also find yourself rearranging your furniture or rethinking how you use entire rooms. The year I decided to start seriously reorganizing our house I moved almost every piece of furniture on the main floor of our house and set up a little-used guest room as an office. That included moving eight (8) very full bookcases, but it was worth it to have a separate space I use frequently instead of having a nearly empty guest room waiting for the occasional guest!

It may take months for your home to be fully decluttered and organized and, really, the job is never completely done. **The benefits, though, of living in a home that is peaceful, rather than chaotic, where it's easy to find whatever you need, when you need it, far outweigh the time you'll spend reaching that point.**

## About The Survival Mom

Lisa Bedford is the mother of two spectacular homeschooled children and wife to a busy husband. She loves Mexican food, a comfortable house, family travel, blogging and reading good spy thrillers.

She understands that to be a mom is to worry, and one of those worries is an uncertain future. Technically, the future has always been uncertain. A massive earthquake could take out half of the United States at any moment. What makes right now different is the uncertainty on so many levels: the economy, national security, natural disasters, and a world increasingly filled with threats against our country.

**Lisa helps moms turn that worry into action - action to protect their families and ensure they survive, no matter what curveballs life throws at them.**

Being a Survival Mom isn't about living off grid in splendid isolation from everyone else - unless, of course, that's what really works for your family. Being a Survival Mom is about being prepared for the disasters that might really hit your family, whether that means snowstorms or firestorms, and definitely includes the possibility of job loss and short term power outages.

If you've been stashing away a few groceries every week or researching how to make a solar powered generator, you're on the right path! The Survival Mom will help you find reassurance and practical help on her blog and in her books. Concerns for the present and future can be channeled into actions that will help provide for and protect your family while still enjoying the heck out of life!

## Also by The Survival Mom

*Survival Mom: How to Prepare Your Family for Everyday Disasters and Worst-Case Scenarios* by **Lisa Bedford**

Everything You Need to Know to Keep Your Family Safe and Secure—No Matter What

Undaunted by the prospect of TEOTWAWKI (The End of the World as We Know It), Lisa Bedford tackles every what-if and worst-case scenario head-on, offering practical advice on how to prepare your family for whatever might come your way. From a few days without electricity to an unexpected job loss or total chaos after the destruction of a tornado, Survival Mom provides everything you need to become self-reliant and establish plans for your family, including:

- preparing the home for a natural disaster
- alternative sources of energy in a power's-out situation
- everything you need to know about food storage

- personal protection (do I really need to learn how to shoot a gun?)

Deep inside every mom is a Survival Mom whose passion for her family drives her to make the best of the present and prepare for the future. So tap into your Mama Grizzly instincts and channel your worries into action. Whether you're a full-fledged "prepper" or just getting started, with real-life stories and customizable forms and checklists along with Lisa's "you can do it" attitude, *Survival Mom* replaces paranoia and panic with the peace of knowing YOU have the power to keep your loved ones safe and secure.

### ***Happy, Healthy, and Prepared: Top Tips From the Hosts of The Survival Mom Radio Network* Edited by Lisa Bedford**

The Survival Mom Radio Network includes over a dozen amazing podcasters who are experts in all different areas of preparedness. This short book includes the very best top tips from the hosts of The Survival Mom Radio Network. But who are they and what do they talk (and podcast and blog) about?

Whether you are interested in healthy living, home & family, homesteading, growing & preserving food, prepping, or survival -- they're all here! The Survival Mom Radio Network Hosts are moms just like you and me. They aren't Navy SEALs or paramilitary specialists. Most of them have learned skills like canning, gardening, and dehydrating food in the last few years.

Each one has their own specific area of interest, although some are similar. For instance, two hosts might both focus on cooking, but one is more interested in farm to table and the other with gluten and allergen free. Every one of them are concerned about their family finances. They are trying hard to make what they have stretch as far as possible. They have found that certain things are healthier, cheaper, and just plain easy to do – once you get started.

Survival Mom hosts are anxious to make sure their families are prepared, even for life's small, personal emergencies – like Mom getting sick when the larder is bare. SurviMoms aim to make sure there is always enough of the basics so that even in an everyday emergency or worst case scenario, her family will still eat well, have plenty of water to drink, and keep clean.

But most of all, the Survival Mom hosts wrote these tips to help you, the listener, think about ways to make your family feel safer and more secure with what you have and can do.