

HOW ROUTINES CAN SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

CLUTTER FACTS:

- 1 in 10 households in the US rents a storage unit.
- The average size of our homes has grown from 1000 sq ft in the 1950's to 2300 sq feet today...even though the size of our families have decreased.
- The average person wastes approximately 55 mins per day searching for things: clothes, purse, keys, documents, etc.

REASONS FOR CLUTTER AND DISORGANIZATION:

- We're too attached to our things.
- We simply **have too much** and have become **slaves to our belongings**.
- We don't know how to let go...we **buy more new but never get rid of the old**.
- We **feel like we have to keep up with the Jones'**....cool toys, gadgets, cool vacations, etc.
- We **allow others to dictate what makes us happy**: expensive makeup, clothes, cars, homes, schools, etc.
- **Social influences** make us to feel we need to be a perfect mom, wife, homemaker, professional, volunteer, etc.
- We've become **overwhelmed with stuff and obligations...can't say no** to shopping, spending, volunteering, etc.
- **Never learned how to get organized**, or how to develop systems to maintain an organized home.
- We get **exposed to between 500-2000 advertisements a day that can lead to distraction and temptation** to buy more.
- Technology! A blessing and a curse: it's like a "Digital Leash" Instant access inundates us with texts, emails, tweets, "likes" and constant advertisements making us feel compelled to respond right away.

COMMON REASONS I SEE WITH MY CLIENTS AND WHY THEY ARE DISORGANIZED AT HOME:

1. LACK OF DEFINED PRIORITIES OR LIFE GOALS: *Without purpose you'll continue to run around aimlessly allowing others to dictate to you what's important.* Defined priorities keep you FOCUSED and help you establish BOUNDARIES. Here are my priorities in life:

- FAITH
- FAMILY
- FITNESS
- FINANCES
- FREEDOM

2. ALLOWED OUR LIVES TO GET TOO COMPLICATED:

- Overcommitment ourselves
- Over-obligate ourselves and our children

- Overconsume

3. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DISTRACTIONS:

- External: ***It's a noisy world*** with technology, media, politics, school, work, family, friends, and so many options for food, fun and shopping...they can all be distractions.
- Internal: Feeling the need to have more, feelings of obligation, procrastination...***mental clutter can be a distraction*** as well.

THINGS THAT HELP PEOPLE GET ORGANIZED AND FEEL LESS STRESS:

1. FOCUS ON PRIORITIES: having clear priorities will allow you to:

- Establish boundaries...***when to say "yes" or when to say "no"***
- Utilize your time efficiently
- Set and ***accomplish your goals***

2. INTERNALIZING "LESS IS MORE" MINDSET: With less stuff and obligations you'll have:

- More time
- More money
- More space

3. ESTABLISHING ROUTINES TO MAINTAIN ORGANIZED LIFE AND SPACES: ***establishing routines is one of the greatest tools*** to helping you get and stay organized. They help you:

- Focus on ***priorities***
- ***Combat procrastination***
- Build ***confidence***
- Feel less ***stress***
- Handle ***emergencies***
- ***Creates calm*** in your life
- Teach you and your children important ***life lessons***: boundaries, responsibility, accountability and independence

KEY COMPONENTS OF CREATING ROUTINES...BEFORE YOU START:

- **Establish EXPECTATIONS:** could be that you want your kids to clean room, make the bed, get ready for bed, clean up time, play time, etc. Establish and tell them what you expect.
- Get their buy in and ask them for their input...this will give them ownership in the process too!
- **SHOW** exactly how to get the task done and **WHY**.
- **PRACTICE** with your kids. The LAW of REPETITION (repeating an action often) and RECENCY (repeating an action at closer intervals...daily vs monthly for example) are keys to learning a routine faster.
- Establish a system of **REWARDS and CONSEQUENCES:** treats, extra play time, movie time, video game time, family game night, extra stickers, money....or no treats, no extra play time, time outs, no Happy Meal, no allowance, etc.

COMMON ROUTINES TO HELP MOMMIES "MANAGE IT ALL" (look for links below to

videos and other blog posts)

1. MORNING and NIGHTLY ROUTINE: Your day really starts the night before!

- Pack [lunches](#).
- Set out clothes and iron if necessary (I use a hanging shoe organizer to set out 2 weeks worth of clothes).
- Set yours and your kids' alarm clocks.
- Have kids shower at night...it's calming and one less thing to worry about!
- [Prep your coffee](#) and set out your vitamins and medications.
- Set the breakfast table.
- Check school backpacks and folders.
- Review your [calendar](#) and school schedules.
- Create a checklist and post it on the door or common area for all to see.
- Prep dinner: review your menu, take out freezer items to defrost.

2. PAPER AND MAIL ROUTINES:

- Check mail daily and sort it right away...don't let it pile.
- File...don't pile.
- Use and [Action File](#) to organize your daily papers.
- Use a [scanner](#) to keep digital files instead of paper files.
- Save documents in [Evernote or Dropbox](#).
- Sort through your kids' folders daily and be scrupulous. Don't keep what's not important. Use a [keepsakes bin](#) to store your child's favorite papers.

3. AFTER SCHOOL ROUTINES-AFTER ERRANDS ROUTINES:

- Clean out your car! Pick up all trash and items that need to be put away.
- Put away groceries or new purchases.
- Create a [Drop Zone](#) at the main entry of your home.
- Clear backpacks: edit folders, review homework (then throw away if not needed for a test), check schedules and lunch menus, edit artwork.
- Establish homework routines.

4. MEAL PLANNING AND GROCERY SHOPPING:

- Establish 1 day a week to plan your weekly meals.
- Or consider a [31 day meal plan](#): the number represents the day of the month so you never have to guess what's for dinner.
- Create a grocery list. I use [Grocery Gadget](#) to manage several different lists at once.
- Pick a specific day and time to go grocery shopping. I prefer a weekday in the morning to avoid long lines, etc.
- Create a spot to record your grocery list: magnetic dry erase board or notepad on the fridge, or a message board on the wall in the kitchen for example.
- Make a week's worth of meals and snacks in advance. (I make a week's worth of pancakes and boiled eggs for my daughter for easy breakfasts and snacks).

5. LAUNDRY ROUTINE:

- Designate your laundry days and times: 2-3 times/week or maybe 1-2 loads every day. Be consistent.
- Include FOLDING and PUTTING AWAY your clothes as part of your routine!

- Set a timer on your phone or separate timer to remind you when a load will finish so you don't waste time or forget.
- Use a [multi-bin laundry hamper](#) to help you with sorting as you go.

6. TOY CLUTTER ROUTINE:

- Limit the amount of toys your children play with at one time
- When you buy a new toy try and get rid of one: [the One-In...One-Out Rule](#)
- Designate homes for different types of toys: sort and categorize
- Use open bins for toys and laundry
- Use hooks for jackets. [Command hooks](#) work great!
- Establish times to clean up toys: before going out or to school, before nap time and before bed.

TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN BEING ORGANIZED JUST REMEMBER THESE THINGS:

- Be realistic...disorganization doesn't happen overnight and neither does getting organized
- It's a process...take it step by step and a little bit at a time
- If you don't know where to start either start with something small or with what's stressing you out the most
- Stay [committed](#) to your goals
- You may have to tweak your systems as you and your family grow...that's part of the process
- Maintain your systems by keeping up with your routines and tweaking them as you need