

## Get Organized in 2014

# Live Clutter-Free

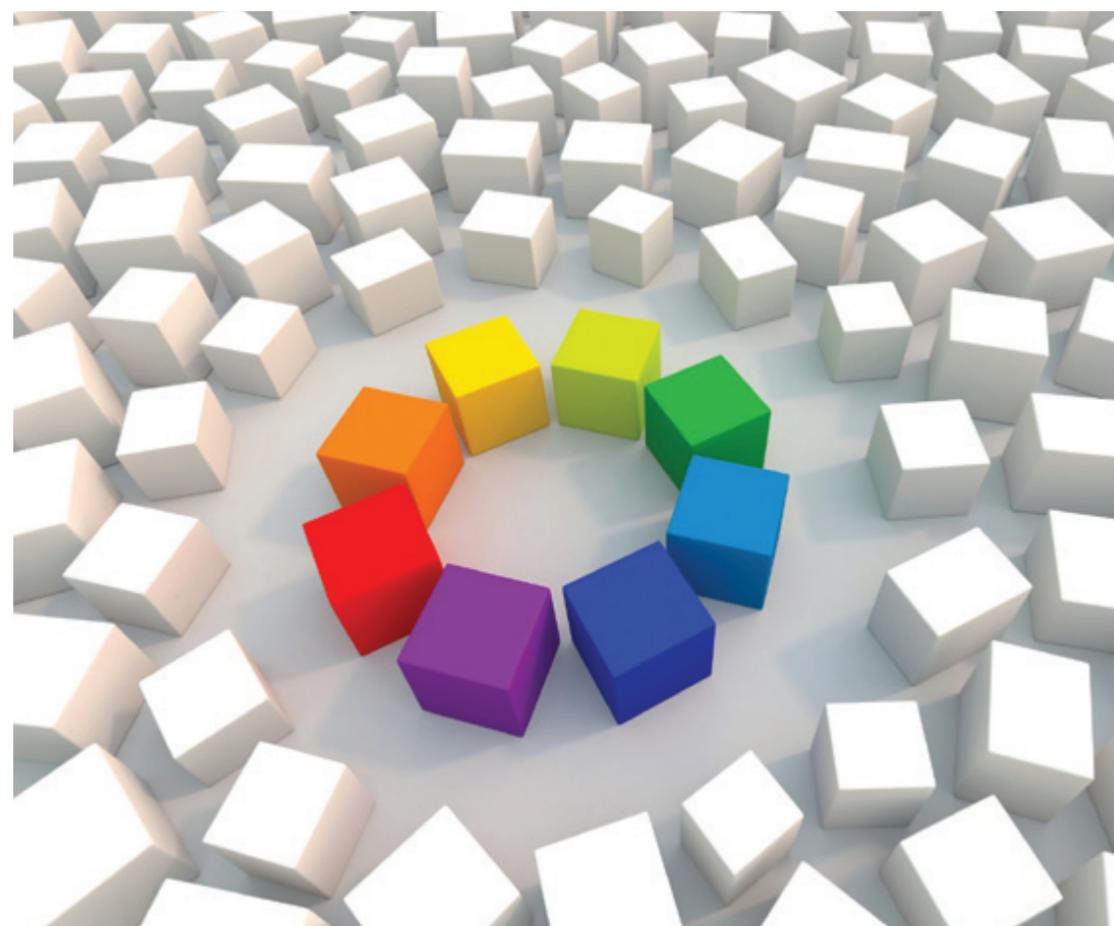
by Peter Lorenzo

**W**aking up to disarray each morning is not the positive start you deserve. It is a stale start, one that is dull and burdensome. Oftentimes, clutter begins to accumulate when a person is very busy, perhaps spending long hours at the clinic. You may be aware of clutter, but you feel you just don't have enough time in the day to tackle it.

Where does clutter come from? As we grow older, we simply accumulate more items. Beyond

that, maybe space is an issue, or perhaps you find yourself holding onto things to avoid future costs. Your closet may contain a stack of old sheets as well as empty lotion bottles you keep meaning to refill at the health-food store. And then there's that stack of music CDs you keep in the corner, even though you stream music now in sessions—and before you know it, clutter has become a fixture in your life.

Another sign you have a clutter problem is when spaces dedicated for one purpose are used to hold



a variety of unrelated items; for example, a box of analgesic samples you provide to clients has made its way onto the kitchen counter. Soon, you may start to see floors covered and closets stuffed.

### Discontent

Disorganization not only clutters up your space, it can also clutter your mind—and your life. The feelings of personal satisfaction and accomplishment you have after straightening up your bedroom or cleaning the overdue mess in your session-room closet demonstrate this. After straightening up, you have probably thought to yourself, “It feels so good to walk into my room again.” A cluttered room, in contrast, can create a feeling of disorganization and discontent.

Just as clutter creeps into your personal life, it can easily gravitate into your professional life. You may begin to run late, for example, because you are unable to locate ordinary, day-to-day items. Clutter can also create a sense of embarrassment or overwhelm. You might feel a lack of confidence when it comes to extending a last-minute invitation to a colleague to come to your home for dinner or making an office appointment with a client to solidify a multi-session plan.

No one can deny the emotions of satisfaction and pleasure felt when a space is tidy and organized. A sense of control comes over you. Inspiration and confidence to look toward new challenges arise. This is what taking charge of your clutter can do for you.

Eliminating clutter is no different from making a commitment to improve your diet: It takes a conscious effort, one that may be needed 24/7 as you begin your journey. But soon enough, as rewards begin to show themselves, you will be inspired to continue your new daily patterns and habits. De-cluttering becomes less of a challenge and more a way of life.

### Take a vacation from clutter

When things are out of place in our lives, we act and respond differently than when everything is in order. Our level of tolerance changes, and triggers of frustration can increase to a heightened sensitivity. To help understand this, think of the word *vacation*. This word can have different meanings to different people, but there is almost always one common association attached to it, no matter whom you ask: freedom from stress.

When you enter into vacation mode, you find yourself relaxed and stress-free, which in turn makes

you feel more confident and positive. No matter what the issue may be, your mind, body and soul are in a state of solidarity and control. You feel free from worry when you have committed yourself to enjoying a vacation.

You can take a permanent vacation from clutter—and its attendant discontent—by creating a positive and healthy space for yourself. You can take a permanent vacation from negativity and stress by allowing your home and professional spaces to be free from mess and confusion. Keep your spaces places that energize you, inspire confidence and self-control. Make them your launch pads for happiness and success.

### One scenario solved

Here is one scenario many people face on a daily basis, followed by a practical tip to help you combat the problem: The alarm goes off at 6:30 a.m., and although you would like nothing more than to hit the snooze button one more time, you decide to get a jump-start to the day. You carry out your morning ritual, which includes waking the kids up for school, preparing breakfast and lunch, and managing to get yourself dressed in the process.

The sink is filled with dishes, clothes protrude from dresser drawers and beds are unmade. It would appear as if the small wind gusts created by the rush of children

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scurrying to make the school bus have left your space a complete catastrophe.

You finish your cup of coffee, and then head downstairs to your session room for the morning's first appointment. You emerge a few hours later and begin to clean up the evidence from your morning routine, just as your children walk up the driveway. In what seems like less than 30 seconds, any clean and organized spaces are once again covered and cluttered. “Does it ever end?” you wonder. You might also think, “Why bother?”

Try implementing this tactic: When the kids come home, have each of them head to their bedrooms, which will now become their staging areas. They will take off their shoes, jackets and backpacks in their personal spaces, rather than in the kitchen or dining room. Then they can hang their coats, access their homework plans

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and continue their routines without cluttering up areas you worked so hard to clean.

In addition to keeping common areas neat and organized, your children will learn the value and dedication needed to keep space organized.

In a family environment, support and cooperation from all household members is needed. Organizing should be taught to all members of the family—and most importantly, the life-changing benefits of learning such a valuable craft should be highlighted.

### Get help

Although straightening up your closet, having a yard sale, donating items to charity and throwing things away all provide a solid start, they are just reactions to the problem. Defeating clutter is accomplished using a proactive and well-planned approach. Enter your professional personal organizer.

Implementing a lifestyle change can be difficult. As a result, you will come to understand the true value of a professional organizer. In order to get rid of clutter once and for all, a professional needs to spend time with you, listening to you and taking a vested interest in your lifestyle and routines. Each of us has a unique set of circumstances, and due diligence of an organizer will help to not only de-clutter your current space, but see that you possess tools to stay organized for years to come.

A professional organizer can help you create a space that is functional, based on your household's personality. For example, if a member of your household is classified as a dropper, defined as one who drops items into any available space rather than where they belong, a professional organizer can provide you with tips and systems on how to help you deal with this.

The cost of a professional organizer will depend on your personal circumstances. It stands to reason if you hire someone to organize your summer shed, costs will be much lower than if you implement an organizational system within your office or home. Cost is also relative to the value you receive for the service. Instead of looking at cost first, find an organizer you can be frank with, so the two of you can create a great connection. Make sure she has tackled projects similar to yours, with success. Once you have found a few organizers who meet those needs, then discuss price.

### Make a choice

Living a clutter-free life is in everyone's best interest. Clutter, even in its simplest forms, leads to discontent. When you make organizing a priority in life, you take steps to make life easier for you, your family and your co-workers. The side effects are favorable, and you will soon begin to feel better about yourself. You will see even the smallest de-cluttering accomplishments as successes, which they truly are.

Life is about choices. Keep your spaces clutter-free, and you will find yourself living a stress-free, vacation-like life.

Peter Lorenzo is owner and founder of CLUTTERCRASHERS, The Organizing Company ([www.cluttercrashers.com](http://www.cluttercrashers.com)), located in the New York, New York, metropolitan area. Lorenzo says he enjoys leading his team of clutter busters to help people be more productive while they inhabit organized spaces. 

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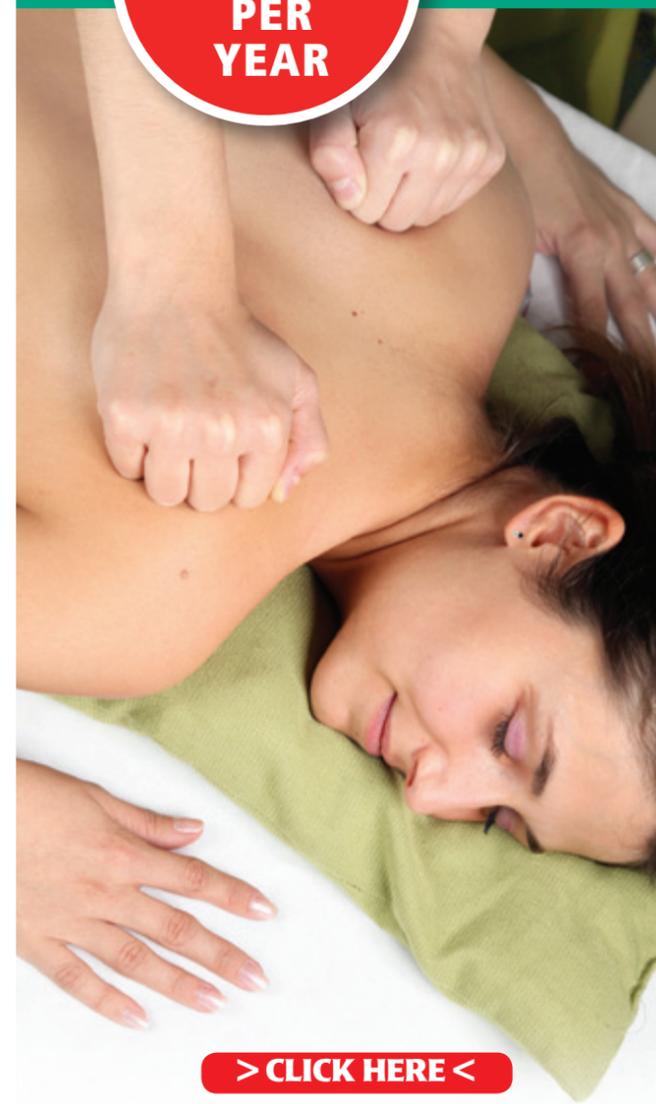
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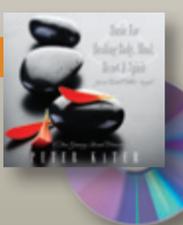
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