



Tips from a Penn Alumna

In this feature, an alumna with a particular area of expertise will share her advice with you.

Top Ten Organizing Tips By Barbara Reich, C'90



Barbara Reich is a professional organizer based in New York City. She has been featured in The New York Times and on the Today Show. To read more of her tips, visit www.facebook.com/ResourcefulConsultants or www.resourcefulconsultants.com.

- Group all like items together. Whether you're talking about packing tape, black sweaters, or umbrellas, you'll save time and money by not buying things you already have.
- Designate a place for each item in your home. If batteries can only be in one place, you'll never have to look for those AAA's again.
- Use uniform hangers, labels, and containers throughout your home. This will eliminate visual noise and make closets, pantries, and drawers more peaceful to peruse.
- Touch each piece of paper only once. Act on it, file it, or discard it. Why shuffle around that same piece of paper for days, weeks or months when you can make a decision and be done with it?
- When checking phone messages, email, or "snail mail," always have your calendar and checkbook available. Take care of what you can immediately.
- Fight the urge to jot down computer passwords on random pieces of paper and post-it notes. Keep a proper list, and add to it each time you create a new password.
- Memorize the number of the credit card you use most. You'll save time whether you're shopping online, responding to mail, or ordering goods via phone.
- A stackable storage container (box) is always better than a non-stackable one (bag or bin). When boxes are stacked, you can maximize usable shelf space.
- Routines work. If you put your cell phone and keys in the same pocket of your purse each time you use them, you'll never search for them again.
- The cost of an item is never relevant when deciding whether you should discard it. What matters is whether you use it, will ever use it, and how much you like it.