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Spring is Here! Tips for Green Spring Organizing

NAPO-NY Professional Organizers recommend eco-friendly solutions for your home.

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Spring is in the air! Reduce, reuse, recycle is the mantra for green organizing. When you reduce possessions down to essentials, dust, dirt and housekeeping work are also reduced. Longer days allow more time to organize. Own what you love and find a home for everything. Donate items you no longer need to give them a new life while saving the planet. Set up systems to recycle paper, plastic and metal. Eliminate toxic products for improved sleep, health and concentration. Open your windows to let fresh air in.

Sharon Lowenheim, President of NAPO-NY, says, "By clearing our spaces of those items that no longer contribute to our lives, we make room for new things to enter, both physically and spiritually. Organizing clients continually report that removing the clutter got them 'unstuck' and freed them in ways they had not expected."

Here are some tips for eco-friendly spring organizing that will make the cleaning easier.

Pare down first. Sort and weed excess items before cleaning. Fewer possessions mean less time spent on maintenance. Sort treasures from the trash. Weed books, toys, media, clothing and papers. Keep only what you use and love. No brainer tosses: excess stuffed animals, broken toys, worn non-stick cookware, useless freebies and chemical air fresheners.

Organize your library. We all love books but the shelves tend to stagnate. Pare down and make room for the new. Easy tosses are old textbooks and disintegrating paperbacks, outdated health and travel materials. Information changes and the internet helps us stay current. Novels you've read may be donated. Keep books you'll reference for work or which you cherish for current interests. Pare down and save the treasures. You'll have much less to dust.

Clear out the stuff. Clearing clutter creates a fresh approach to living spaces and room for growth. Plan a tag sale. Price and arrange items in the garage, the yard or your apartment. If that's not practical, donate excess electronics, household items, clothing and toys to the nearby thrift store. Recycle to benefit others.

Reorganize closets. Shift clothes for the season. Sell or pass along unwanted items before you pack away. Use suitcases to save space. Clean clothes before storing so stains don't set or attract insects. Lavender sachets and cedar blocks keep moths away without chemicals. Fabric garment bags allow clothing to breathe. To be safe don't place heavy bins on high shelves.

Refurbish your home. Rearrange furniture for better flow and to use the space more efficiently. Make a list of the maintenance projects that need to be done, prioritize them and then schedule time to get them done before summer fun begins.

Get clear in the bedroom. The bedroom is no place for piles. Remove stacks of old magazines and newspapers. Remove clutter, papers and electronics to make it a more restful place. Protect your mattress with bedbug rated covers.

Bring nature indoors. Verdant plants are great additions to your home and bring good Feng Shui. Many varieties are available at greenmarkets in the spring. Replace dust catchers with live plants but be sure to keep them organized. A jungle growing wild on the windowsill is not tidy. Discard dead plants and prune brown or yellow leaves for vibrant greenery.

Be a conscious consumer. Don't confuse organizing with buying stuff. Organizing products often look good in the store and become clutter at home. Measure first and buy exactly what you need. If you purchase an item that doesn't work, return it rather than letting it gather dust in your home.

Reuse common items to reduce waste. Find creative ways to recycle household items and save money. Plastic tomato containers with lids cut off make great drawer dividers for small items. A set of small food jars can store small items like spices in the kitchen or small supplies in the work areas. Wine cartons with dividers make sturdy storage boxes for holiday ornaments or party wine glasses.

About NAPO-NY: NAPO-NY is the New York chapter of the National Association of Professional Organizers, the world's premier professional community dedicated to serving the interests and development of professional organizers. Founded in 1987, NAPO-NY is over 100 members strong and boasts a diverse array of organizing consultants, speakers, trainers, authors and manufacturers of organizing products who provide organizing services to individuals, families and businesses throughout the New York metropolitan area.

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