

# Hot Topic - Organization

By Sarah Welch and Alicia Rockmore



Are you in need of a little inspiration for getting organized? When you're sprinting through life, responding intelligently to every crisis at work, serving as the resident cab driver for your family, as well as their short order cook, maid and chief cheerleader it's hard to imagine where on earth you'll find the time or energy to clean up messy files, disorganized rooms and unkempt closets. So how do you get inspired tackle some of those organizational tasks you've been meaning to get to?

## Alicia on "Facing Forward"

"I start by facing forward. It's harder to overcome organizational inertia when you're looking back at all you have to organize, not forward to a system that will help you get things under control gradually and stay in control in the long run. Sure cataloging those old photos, organizing all of the closets, putting seasonal shoes in plastic boxes, and generally having everything from the past decade in order would be nice. But it's not essential, and all too often the thought of tackling every area is so overwhelming it prevents me from getting started."

## Sarah on "Pinch Points"

"I start by letting my feelings of guilt about my disorganized state go and instead spend a few minutes reminding myself of why I want to get organized in the first place. The ultimate goal is so that I both feel more in control and am actually more in control. The only way I know how to feel and be in control is to actively define what I want to control for myself rather than try to live up to others' standards. Once I'm clear on that, I can stop reacting, identify my organizational 'pinch points' and get started."



## Here's a few first steps to getting your organizing organized.

### 1. Grab Organize Magazine.

Hitting shelves this summer, Organize is new magazine dedicated solely to helping people tackle their organization needs, at work, at home, and everywhere in between. Read it at the beach, and bring home a whole bunch of easy, approachable solutions. Readers of this column will enjoy \$5 off the \$20 annual subscription rate by clicking on the NAPO icon on the Organize Magazine website (<http://www.organizemag.com>).

### 2. Identify your "Pinch Points."

Pinch points are places where something – maybe the stacks of mail and bills or the way you keep your family calendar – acts like a pinched valve, backing up other important things, making you feel uncomfortable, stressed and stretched. Do you wince when you look at the laundry room mess? Do you shake your head when you the stack of unorganized old photos? That feeling of discomfort is your cue that something needs to be changed. By addressing pinch point areas first, you tackle the handful of areas that will have the biggest impact. So you accomplish more in less time – that's the 80/20 rule at work for you.

### 3. Make a "Not to Do" list.

We live in a sticky note world. One task here, another reminder there, and about fifty more little things that really need to get done. Truthfully, most of the reminder notes only serve to distract us from what we should be focusing on. The secret to getting organized lies in knowing what you don't have to do, not so much what you have to do. By embracing the things "Not To Do," you not only free yourself from the burden of perfection, you're also giving yourself the correct amount of time and sanity to accomplish the things that really need to be done.

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*We are the co-founders of Buttoned Up, inc., a company dedicated to helping stretched and stressed women get themselves organized (along with everybody else they're responsible for too!). We welcome your thoughts! Please send ideas and questions to us at: [yourlife@getbuttonedup.com](mailto:yourlife@getbuttonedup.com) or visit us at [www.getbuttonedup.com](http://www.getbuttonedup.com)*