



Organize to find that extra space you need without breaking the bank

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Before investing in expensive remodeling, declutter and organize your space.
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If you're thinking of spending buckets of money to create extra space in your home by remodeling, think again. It may be that with some strategic decluttering and organizing, you can find the space you need without breaking the bank. Make an appointment with yourself to spend some time with pen and paper in the space that you'd like to remodel:

1. **Define the problem.** Ask yourself, "What bothers me most about this space?" and be honest with yourself as you write down your answer. Is it too crowded? Are you using it for many unrelated purposes? Does it have a structural problem? Your answers will help determine how you proceed with changes to the space.
2. **Make a wish.** Now ask yourself, "What do I wish I could use this space for?" Think about your ideal use for the space, and write down this answer as well.
3. **Prepare to act.** Next, list the actions you need to take to transform the space for the ideal use you wrote. Include repairs, paint, rearranging furniture, installing lighting, and any new purchases you might need for organizing or storage. Set this list aside for the next step.
4. **Declutter.** Take time - it may take a few hours - to conduct a general sort of everything in the space: Toss, Donate, Keep. Remove everything from the space in the Toss and Donate piles. What's left should be only the "keepers," items that will help you create space for the purpose you wrote. Select the [Get Organized](#) article for your target space to find help as you declutter and organize. Give the space a good cleaning, then move to the next step.
5. **Review your action list.** Now that your space has been decluttered and cleaned, return to your action list. What do you need to add, subtract, or change to create a space for your ideal use? Chances are, what started as a very large problem that led you to a remodeling solution is now a much smaller problem that will reduce the time and cost for the changes you want.
6. **Transform your space.** For ideas, [Real Simple](#) provides some great inspiration for a handful of rooms, starting with the intended use for the room, in a slideshow that includes links to additional resources. And, watch the attached video for tips on how to make the best of small living spaces.

Share your decluttering-before-remodeling stories here.

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