



Part 3: Find a place to relax by organizing your bedroom

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Keep your dresser top clutter-free by storing small items in containers. (AP Photo/Stephen Chermis)

In Part 2: Clean Up, you gave your bedroom a thorough cleaning. Now that it's looking and smelling fresh, it's time to put away the items you've decided to keep.

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1. Spread out the items from your Keep bin on the bed. This will help you see everything that you need to put away.
2. If you do not already have nightstands or other bedside tables, and you have the space, place these next to the head of the bed. Tables that have at least one drawer and one shelf can hold the items you most often need to relax and prepare for sleep: books, magazines, writing supplies, the TV remote control, a glass of water, and perhaps some medicine. If you work on a small project while relaxing in bed, consider using a plastic bin or basket to store project supplies and keeping it in a drawer or on a shelf when not in use. Place as much as possible in the drawers and on the shelves, reserving the top for only your most essential nighttime items.
3. The top of a dresser is a clutter magnet, so select only a few items that you use daily to keep there. Make your dresser top easy to clean by organizing your daily items in attractive baskets or wooden (or leather or plastic) bins. Store additional items in top dresser drawers using dividers or containers with sections to control small, loose objects.
4. Think about your habits, and keep essential items where you are likely to use them. For example, if you apply makeup and style your hair in the bathroom, keep items for each of these tasks in the bathroom. This will reduce clutter in the bedroom and minimize your need to carry items back and forth.
5. If your bedroom storage space is limited, use the space under your bed. Under-the-bed storage containers are available in many sizes and configurations and can hold anything from out-of-season clothing to shoes to project supplies. Select the container size and shape that suits your purpose, and use a snug-fitting lid to keep items dust-free.
6. Place laundry baskets and other housekeeping items in a closet or bathroom. In the closet, place one bin for colored clothing and one for whites to minimize the need to sort on laundry days. In the bathroom, keep cleaning items in a bucket or bin for easy access.
7. If you use your bedroom to watch TV and videos, listen to music, and read, you'll need shelves or a specialized stand to hold items for each of these activities. Sort by type and size of media, and keep items related to each activity together.
8. Keepsakes and other decorative items add the personal touch to your bedroom, but too many of these create a cluttered look and feel. Select a few of your most prized items, and place them strategically on special display shelves, your dresser top, and the walls. If you have many more keepsakes than room to display them, consider keeping extras in a box or bin and changing what you display each season or from time to time during the year.
9. Is your bedroom child- and/or pet-friendly? Adapt the recommendations above for curious hands and paws by keeping more on shelves and in drawers than on exposed surfaces.
10. When you have placed the last item from your Keep collection, take a few minutes to admire your newly organized bedroom, and snap a photo or two to record your accomplishment. You can compare these "after" photos to the "befores" you took when you started, and if the room starts to look cluttered again, you'll have a reminder of how you would like it to look.

In Part 4, you'll learn how to maintain your bedroom to minimize the need for a major clean-up in the future.

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