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## organizing 101



- Daily, Andrea takes care of "Act" items first, then "Read" and "File" ones. Any completed item (school papers, correspondence) going out of the house is put into the "Out" basket, which is emptied in the morning.

- "Keep only papers you need," says Janis. Keep household bills for one year if you choose, but one month is all that's really necessary. Anything for tax or legal purposes should be kept at least for seven years. Self-employed people may need to keep some bills (such as utility and phone) for seven years for tax purposes. "Also, keep car maintenance bills and other car papers for as long as you own the vehicle," says Janis.
- Cancel subscriptions you don't read.

### CASE 2: BEAUTY SUPPLIES ARE OUT OF CONTROL

Sarah has so many beauty products that they're stored in three places: the medicine cabinet, a cabinet near the bathroom, and the linen closet. Because they're scattered, she's never sure what she has, so she buys more and ends up with duplicates.

"Whatever the reason for Sarah's over-indulgence – poor self-image, unhappy in her job or personal life, or because she just plain loves beauty products – when the accumulation of stuff starts causing stress, there's a problem," says Jane.

"Is Sarah using only the beauty products in the bathroom and in her cosmetics bag? If so, we need to look at the reasons why she's hoarding so many products that she simply doesn't use," says Janis.

### letting go

- For a week, monitor which products are currently used; gather leftovers together.

"That might eliminate some of the following steps," says Janis. "Seeing the entire collection of leftover, unused items might help Sarah realize it's time to let go."

- If products are being used from all three areas, gather everything (including items from cosmetic bags) and sort into categories, such as cleansers and toners, day creams, eye-makeup remover, powders, colour cosmetics, hair products and so on.

- Toss all expired items (contrary to popular belief, an opened item containing SPF is still good as long as it hasn't passed its expiry date). Give away any unopened duplicates of items as gifts or to a women's shelter.

### the new system

- Designate one easily accessible area in the bathroom for products that are currently being used. A maximum of one other area should be set aside for new, unused items.

- Set new guidelines. For every product that comes in, an old one must go out.

- With the money Sarah saves by curbing her spending, she can allow herself to have a monthly massage or facial. "That's a reward that doesn't create clutter," says Jane. ■

ACCORDING TO CANADA POST, THE AVERAGE CANADIAN HOUSEHOLD RECEIVES AROUND 70 POUNDS OF ADDRESSED MAIL EACH YEAR. BILLS REPRESENT ALMOST ONE-QUARTER OF THAT, YET ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF CANADIANS HAVE NO SPECIFIC PLACE TO STORE THEM. CANADA POST'S EPOST SERVICE HELPS YOU CUT PAPER AT THE SOURCE: INSTEAD OF REGULAR MAIL, EPOST DELIVERS ELECTRONIC VERSIONS OF HOUSEHOLD BILLS AND CAN COORDINATE ELECTRONIC PAYMENT AND STORAGE OF BILLS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS FOR UP TO SEVEN YEARS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT EPOST.CA.

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