

Hello, Friends!

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Organizing Your Pantry

How about tackling a simple task this summer that will make a difference every time you open your pantry doors?

That's right — it's time to organize your pantry!

First, remove all the items and wipe down the shelves, to start this clean-up project from the bottom up. Now, place the items by categories, which may include:

- Soups
- Pasta
- Rice
- Baking Items
- Cereal
- Snacks
- Cookbooks
- Rarely-used equipment
- Miscellaneous, including storage items

Place the categories back according to how much you actually use those things. For instance, I am not a huge baker, so all my baking items are at the bottom or back of my pantry.

If you have extra funds and can afford it, try to get shelves that roll out or rotate. One option is called "rev a shelf" and their website is <https://www.build.com/rev-a-shelf> on the internet.

Some people choose to put their pasta or rice into clear containers or glass jars. Remember to label every jar and container and include their expiration date. If needed, you can even label the shelves. That can help guide any family members who help you unpack the groceries, so they know where items belong.

A few months ago, I helped a client organize her home pantry. I quickly noticed there were many unused cookbooks and plenty of those carry-out plastic bags, which took up lots of room. Are you guilty of the same things?

Be sure you really look at your cookbooks. Ask yourself, which ones do you really use? Which can you do without? You can donate unneeded or excess cookbooks to a women's shelter or library.

And, regarding the plastic bags, it's nice to have a few on hand — but ask yourself, how many do you really need? Perhaps you should keep them in the laundry room or closet. Also, you can recycle unneeded plastic bags at many grocery stores or even most Walmart locations accept them.

Also take a complete look and see if there is unused space in the pantry. Sometimes people have a small pantry opening, but the shelves are deep on either side. That might make the space somewhat unusable, unless you make some changes. For a modest amount, maybe you can make the door opening larger.

A well-organized pantry will help you get things done faster and with less frustration. Here's to organizing your pantry — to help you quickly find all the items you need!

Your local professional organizer,

Betty Huotari

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