


NEW HOMES & CONDOS
DESIGN TRENDS

Get organized ... get happy!

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Special to QMI Agency

When you head back indoors this fall, it's a good time to take stock of your indoor systems, says designer Jane Lockhart, television personality and principal at Jane Lockhart Interior Design.

And she's not referring to heating, electrical or plumbing.

"It's the end of summer, people come back into the house again, and they start thinking about their organizational system," says Lockhart, who prefers to think of getting organized in

terms of establishing new rituals.

"It's about retraining yourself to use systems that give you comfort in the long run. Yes, it feels awkward when you're first doing it. Once you get there and it becomes part of your second nature, it's not so hard," she says.

Those who live in small spaces — like a downtown condo, dorm room or apartment — are more apt to appreciate well-thought-out storage solutions due to necessity. But even a family in a four-bedroom suburban home will benefit from good organizational design, she adds.

"The reality is when you do

organize, you feel good. It's a controllable thing that can make you feel happy," says Lockhart.

One of the toughest areas — and first you notice — is the front entrance. Lockhart is a fan of giving family members and guests an identifiable place to put stuff that doesn't involve opening a door. Benches with room for storage baskets beneath and wall-mounted shelving with hooks work well. Her general motto is "drawers and baskets are better than doors."

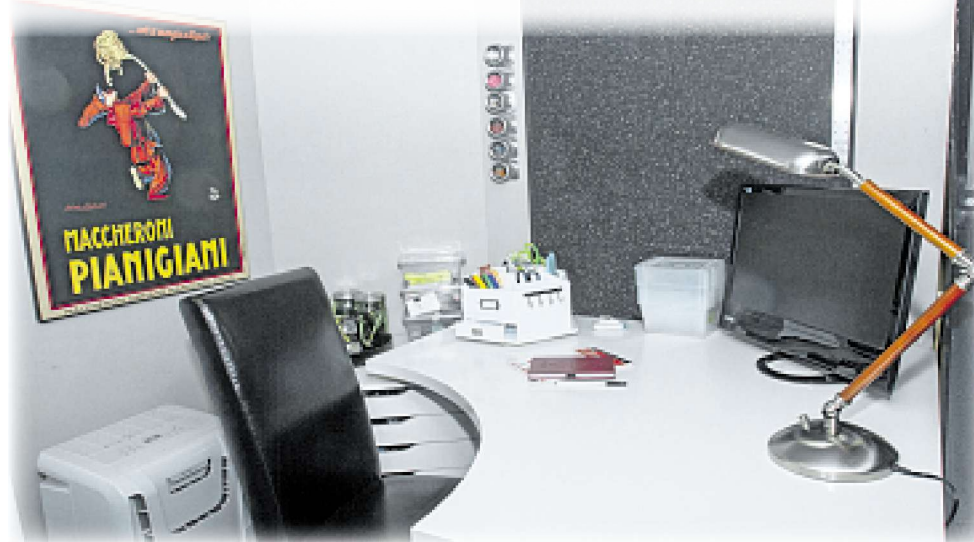
"Organization at the front hall is like good grooming," she says, likening it to the ritual of brushing teeth. "People think you're



Before and after. A small downstairs space is transformed from cluttered to collected using a few quick tricks.



Resetting your space and getting organized before going back to school was the theme of a recent Canadian Tire storage and organization event held at a small three-floor townhouse in east Toronto.



born to do this. No, you're not. You learn the habit."

Next up is the kitchen. We spend a great deal of money and effort designing gorgeous cabinetry, but how often do we consider the inside? Simply adding a removable shelf can double the capacity of a standard cupboard, whether you're storing teas up top or cleansers beneath the sink.

If you find yourself short on drawer space, add a movable kitchen island that can be pushed out of the way if needed. Drawer inserts help to keep things in place, whether you're storing cutlery, utensils, zip lock bags or food wrap. Another way to maximize drawer space is to invest in a hanging system for larger utensils and knives that can be mounted above the counter.

One area where you're almost guaranteed to find wasted space in need of a system is your closet. Not everyone can afford a custom design, so Lockhart recommends do-it-yourself solutions like those from Rubbermaid

that can be configured in multiple ways. Failing that, you can simply add shelving, hanging cubbies, shoe racks, and baskets to design your own.

Though they often rely on boxes, the best storage solutions require out-of-the-box thinking. Magnetic spice jars, for example, are easily mounted in a bathroom or bedroom to store hair clips or jewellery, or in an office to store paper clips, tacks and other small items. Not sure what to do with all of that Lego in the family room? Under-the-bed storage also fits under a couch, says Lockhart.

"You don't have to be

ordinary about how you store stuff," she says. "Basically you're looking for anything that allows you to stack, sort, organize and label."

The reality is when you do organize, you feel good. It's a controllable thing that can make you feel happy, says design expert Jane Lockhart.

