



CLEAR YOUR WAY!

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Dorm Room Organizing Tips

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I've compiled this list of many of the Dorm Room Organizing tips I've heard over the years. Pick the ones that might work for you!

Organizing Concepts

- Think vertically – using your wall space will pay off exponentially.
- Maximize your Prime Space – think of your space as valuable real estate. Keep your most frequently used things in the most accessible locations. Pack things used occasionally in harder to reach spots. If you hardly ever use it...get it out!
- Less is more – the less you have the less you have to take care of!
- Label where things go and stick the labeling system (if it's labeled t-shirts DON'T shove your shorts in that space!!!)
- Consider buying a tall and thin bookshelf that can be placed on top of the desk. In a dorm room it is important to think vertically, because that's where all the space is.
- Make zones – a study zone, a socializing zone, a sleeping zone.
- Keep like items together and designate a specific place for everything in your room. Return each item to the same spot after it is used so you do not waste time looking for it in the future.
- Think of alternative uses for products – a roller bath cart can be used to move study supplies to different areas. An over the toilet space savers can be used to provide storage above a chair or bookcase. Two part recycling trash cans can be used to sort laundry.
- Make every inch count. Think function and dual purpose.
- The nutshell solution to surviving in the small space of your dorm room is to bring only what you need, find a place for everything and keep everything in its place!

Getting Started

- When organizing for your move from home to the dormitory make a checklist of what you need. Communicate with your roommate to keep from duplicating larger items. Label your belonging with your name and make a list of serial numbers on electronic devices.

- **TALK TO YOUR NEW ROOMMATE** as soon as possible. Run through your checklist and talk about what items you have and compare to what he/she has. Decide who is bringing what and then make a list of items you still need. Divide the list and accept responsibility for bringing some of the items that are still needed. You do not need two of everything in your room, especially with such limited space.
- Only bring clothing for the current season plus a few items for next season. Storage space will be limited so plan on picking up next season's clothing over fall break, when your parents visit or have it shipped UPS.

Layout and Design

- Raise each bed off the floor enough to add extra storage space underneath. You may be able to fit a mini-refrigerator, stereo, books, suitcases or more under your bed. This has been known to make life bearable in a room with limited closet space.
- Designate a quiet, well-lit area for studying. Don't study in front of the television, or in an area where you're bound to be distracted. Hang a Do Not Disturb sign on your door. If you can't find a quiet spot at in the dorm, go to the library. If studying in a very comfortable chair or a bed makes you feel drowsy, don't.
- Most dorms have extra-long twin sized beds. For the best fit get the extra-long twin sheets. (Full sized sheets will work, but take extra time and effort to stay neat.) You will also need your personal pillows and covers. Find a bed ensemble that you like and decorate your room around it. You will spend a lot of time in your dorm room; make it comfortable and visually inviting.
- Many dorms allow students to free up precious floor space by building lofts for their beds. The housing office often supplies the directions or the sets may be purchased from upper classmen as they move out of the dorm – but before buying something used, please be sure they are structurally sound!
- Double or triple your seating options by using 1 or 2 large pillows. When you are not using them, pile them on your bed or in a corner. They're also handy when you want to lean up against your headboard or the wall while studying or reading.
- Use a storage trunk to store some of your bulkier items like sweaters, blankets, and sweatshirts. The trunk also functions as a coffee table or a bench for tricep dips (if you're inclined to exercise).
- Think vertically when looking for storage space. Consider installing shelves on the wall or hanging a tiered wire basket from a hook in the ceiling to create additional space.
- Place a microwave on top of your refrigerator.
- Use bed elevators to create more space underneath your bed. Put plastic storage boxes under the bed to use this area efficiently and prevent the dust bunnies from attacking your stuff.
- Look for design pieces that can double as functional pieces (frames/mirrors with hooks.)
- Wicker Boxes can be nested and stacked for attractive storage.

Storage Idea's

- Install double hanging rack, closet organizers, and shoe shelves.
- Store luggage filled with out of season clothes and/or last semesters books under your bed
- Use shelving for sports equipment, sound systems, and/or photographs.
- Use stacking and labeled totes for laundry supplies, shower needs, manicure products.
- Double hanging racks are great for blouses, pants, shorts, and skirts

- Make the most of the empty space at the end of your bed.
- Over Door Racks are perfect for towels or damp laundry.
- Plastic totes that fit under the bed are handy for storing items that don't fit in your closet or chest of drawers.
- An over the door clothes hangar will expand your hanging capabilities.
- Use a cutlery tray or drawer organizer to separate your small office supplies (i.e. paper clips). To maximize drawer space, use tall rectangle food storage containers in a deep drawer.
- Keep all bathing related items in a plastic shower caddy. Make sure the caddy has a handle and holes on the side to allow water to drain.
- Use a coat rack to hang hats, robes, jackets, jeans, scarves, umbrellas, pocket books, etc.
- Get a rolling cart with several shelves or drawers to hold smaller items such as office supplies, socks, CD's, toiletries.
- Use a tie or belt rack to save closet and drawer space for clothing items.
- Hang a vertical hanging shoe storage bag from your closet rod to hold multiple pairs of shoes.
- Keep all cosmetics in a transportable case – either a makeup bag or a small plastic box with a handle.
- Stack milk crates or plastic drawer units in your closet to store sweaters, jeans, and other folded clothing pieces or put them next to your refrigerator/microwave to store kitchen and cleaning items.
- Utilize tiered hangers to hang multiple items on the same hanger. This item will save space in your closet.
- Get a collapsible mesh or fabric hamper with handles. These are great because they are lightweight, are relatively small in size, can be carried a distance without much effort, and collapse when not being used.
- Put a small bookcase behind your bed so it doubles as a headboard. Attach a clip-on lamp, store some books, and place a few photographs on the top shelf.
- Use over the door shoe bags to store pocket books, gloves, mittens, hats, T-shirts and almost any small item.
- Wooden shoe organizer can be placed on the floor, a desk or on top of a bookcase – cubbies can be used to store more than shoes – study supplies, CD's, small electronics, clothing, etc. Look for boxes that fit into the cubby. Clearly label bins with contents.
- Desktop organizers can be utilized to sort office supplies, hair care items, or toiletries.

Organizing Tips and Techniques

- Use 3M Command Adhesive to mount anything and everything on the walls. This holds beautifully and can be removed without causing damage or leaving a residue. The Command line includes hooks, picture hangers and double sided tape and can be used to mount everything from valances, to towel bars, to pictures, to wall grids, to memo boards.
- You will need all of the toiletries you normally use at home. Add shower shoes and a bathroom caddy and you will be set for the communal type bathroom. If you have a private bathroom, you may need to bring your own shower curtain. Since your towels will be hanging in your room, coordinate them with your bedding. Be aware that extra fluffy towels can be difficult to dry and use lots of quarters on laundry day. Collect common items such as a thermometer, pain relievers, Band-Aids, and cold remedies to make your personal medicine cabinet.
- Think of ways to streamline – instead of glass cleaner, surface cleaner and paper towels – buy a single product like Glass Plus Wipes.

- A tool kit complete with duct tape, screwdriver and hammer helps solve many problems.
- Turn favorite old CDs into instant wall art with CD Poster Frames.
- Put together a small toolbox for frequently used items such as a hammer, nails, batteries, screwdrivers, duct tape, and extra hooks and nails. Label each item with your name because people will borrow them.
- Mark the tags of your clothes with a permanent marker. Things have been known to disappear from the laundry room. Get a silver permanent marker to write on dark items.
- Resist the urge to subscribe to magazines. You will have enough to read and do at college. Chances are you will be able to borrow a copy of a magazine you are interested in from someone in your dorm.
- Hang a key rack just inside your room door – keys should automatically be placed there every time you come home. This will save you hours in looking for them over the course of the year.

Making it Easier

- Use back of doors for memo boards, hanging racks, and hooks. Use the inside of cabinet doors for schedules, phone lists, and important notes. Use 3M Quick Clips to post the papers.
- Avoid Clutter - At the beginning of the school year, you'll have no clutter. Be careful not to build clutter as the year progresses. Create separate folders for school announcements, tests that have been graded, papers you must give to your parents and so on. As papers become outdated, such as an event that has passed, recycle them immediately.
- Use a calendar – and only one, for all of your school and personal activities. When you use more than one, you run the risk of scheduling conflicts and missed appointments. This is very important. Heed the old proverb, *A man who wears two watches, never knows the correct time.*
- Color Code - You may consider color-coding similar activities on your calendar. For example, highlight all upcoming tests in yellow, study time in green and recreational activities in pink.
- Write it down - When you learn of an upcoming test, event, or anything you must prepare for or attend, immediately jot it in your planner or put in the electronic device of choice. Don't wait until later, you may forget about it.
- Break up your study time - Determine how many study hours you need, and schedule study time. For example, if you need six hours of time to study for a test, you may break that time up into six sessions, of one hour each. Choose the six days, and make a Study Time notation in your calendar.
- Schedule consistent study times - Set aside time every day for study, and make it consistent. For example, set your study time for each afternoon from 4:00pm to 6:00pm. Whatever you do, avoid last minute studying and cramming.
- Break it up - Break up big tasks, into smaller, bite-sized jobs. For instance, if you have to study three chapters in your history book, study one chapter at a time each day. If you have to work on a project, break it down into three or four stages.
- Eat your vegetables first - Imagine eating your broccoli before your dessert. What would be left for you to look forward to? Just the same, do your homework for your most difficult subjects first. Then, everything else will be a breeze, and therefore, more enjoyable.
- Keep your desktop clear of clutter so you can focus on your current project or assignment. Store old papers and assignments in a file cabinet or file box. Current projects should be highly visible, serving as constant reminders to complete them.
- Make a “most important things to do” list every evening for the next day. Prioritize everything by numbering items on your list and check each item off after you complete it. Putting your list

together the night before will help you go to bed with a clear mind and will give you plenty of time to plan for the next day.



Ellen Faye is founder and Principal of Ellen Faye Organization, a Professional Organizing, Coaching, and Consulting firm located in Southern New Jersey since 2001. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and has trained under Denslow Brown in the highly acclaimed Certified Coach Organizer Program. Her passion is helping clients identify their goals and find the balance and skills to reach them through organization.

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