

ORGANIZE IT

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By: [Tiffany Dobbyn](#), Capitol Morning Report



An organized garage, photo from Gwynnae Byrd

A cluttered pantry, chaotic closet, kid's room in disarray – unorganized spaces at home may be getting more attention while people shelter in place during the coronavirus outbreak. “This gift of extra time is the ability to look at things with a fresh set of eyes – stand in a room and look around, open cabinets, then ask yourself, ‘why is that there?’ Rethink how you’re approaching things,” said **Gwynnae Byrd**, owner of [Home Transitions](#). **Byrd** is a professional organizer who advises people how to be purposeful about what is in their space. **Byrd** has been running her business since 2007 after nearly two decades as a lawyer working in the Capitol community, first in the Legislative Counsel's Office and then with former Senate Majority Leader **Richard Polanco**. It was after the death of her mother and the birth of her twins that she decided to turn her hobby of helping others stay organized into a business. “I just launched it and never looked back,” she said.

Byrd's first piece of advice on organizing your home – just do it. “You can give yourself a million reasons why you shouldn't start,” she said. “Just start. And start small. Pick one area: one cupboard, one shelf, one drawer, one box.” From there, she suggests having a bag for items to be thrown away, a bag or box for things to be donated, a box for paperwork that needs to be shredded and use

Post-it notes or colorful markers to visibly mark everything. “Have a visual cue, use different color bags for ‘keep’ or ‘donate,’ to keep from getting confused later,” she said. Next is the tough task of purging, which **Byrd** says includes asking: Do I need it? Will I use it? Or, does it make me happy? “I want you to intentionally choose what's in your space,” **Byrd** said. “People always say, ‘I might need that one day,’ but that is not a plan. That is wishful thinking.” When it comes to buying clothing, **Byrd** says be mindful; don't buy something “just because,” or to score a good deal. “\$10 is a waste of money just like \$100 is, if it's just collecting dust in the closet,” she said. As for the closet, **Byrd** suggests sorting clothes by color and then organizing them by season. in the kitchen, **Byrd** says organizing drawers and cabinets really depends on the way the space is used. “Make sure items that are used frequently are accessible,” she said. She suggests storing items that only get used once or twice a year, like Thanksgiving platters, in the hard-to-reach spots such as a cabinet above the fridge to free up easily-accessible spots for everyday items. She also says it's a good idea to keep similar items near each other; for instance, coffee filters and mugs should be stored near the coffee maker. **Byrd** is also a big fan of labels. “Label the end of the shelf, outside of the cupboard, wherever it needs to be, so you know exactly where things are,” she said.

Many parents are all too familiar with how toys and games can easily overtake a room. “First thing I say to moms is, give yourself some slack,” **Byrd** said. “Get containers. Again, label them with pictures or words.” And, a garage can end up being a storage place for all kinds of stuff – outdoor toys, sports gear, car maintenance, gardening, the list goes on. “Create zones,” **Byrd** said. “Then figure out the best way to containerize everything.” While some organizing projects may seem daunting, **Byrd** says, “don't stress,” because the feeling of relief after something is properly organized will be great. “You don't have to organize your entire house in a weekend,” she said. “Pick a spot that makes you roll your eyes or is bugging you, start there, and see how much progress you can make.” Contact: Byrd 916 202 1297.