

Organiser/de-clutterer

WHO Carol Posener,
Get Organised

COST \$50 per hour,
minimum four hours

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Seven years ago, Carol Posener was working as a temp, sorting out offices, setting up systems and generally enjoying organising other people's muddles when it struck her "mess-busting" could be a full-time job. She took up the challenge.

Her first client was a man whose wife had left him. "He hadn't done anything for years, so I went through personal paperwork, organised gardeners, carpenters and carpet cleaners. It took three weeks."

About two years ago, Carol's business took off. "People haven't got enough time, and there are too many things in their lives," she says. "Obviously, personal paperwork, administration systems, home-office work, paying the bills and things people don't really want to do are left until the last minute."

Sydney-based Carol works alone, but has some contractors, and is about to take on some staff in Melbourne and Brisbane. The scope of her organising is quite broad. While de-cluttering rooms, cupboards and garages and setting up home offices is the core of her

work, on any given day, Carol is "doing a bit of everything".

"I research products. I'll find a washing machine and get the best price for it. I pick up dry-cleaning. Once, I was the liaison person for a guy who wanted to get his poetry published." She also advises on storage, shows her clients how to style their rooms and goes through wardrobes.

"You really don't have to throw something out if you haven't worn it for a year, especially if it's a very sentimental or expensive piece. Just streamline things you know you will never wear again."

She says a lot of people build more rooms or extra cupboards without getting rid of anything. "I try to create one place for things instead of five." In the kitchen, wedding presents are common cluttering culprits. People may not have used Aunt Doris' opaque corn plates with matching cob forks in 20 years, but they don't want to throw them out. Carol suggests putting them in an archive box (label it) and storing them.

When she organises a home office, Carol sets up filing systems, archives information and gets rid of junk. "I establish systems for people. A lot of people don't have routines, that's why they get in a mess." In four hours, she can make a big dent in someone's paper mountain. "Some

people think that they are disorganised, but they're not. They've got their little systems, but they haven't done their filing or set up a specific system."

She shows her clients how they can maintain the new order. "It's really hard to try and keep on top of things if you're only going to look at it once a month. Do it regularly, say once a week, depending on your work schedule.

"I can't quote on a job, because I never know what I'm going to find. People don't know what they've got, and that's the beauty of this service. Eventually, people will know exactly what they have got and where to find it."

TIPS

- Sort your mail into piles as soon as it arrives (to be paid, billed, filed or

actioned). Throw out envelopes and excess paper (in recycle bin).

- Clear your desk at the end of each day. Do this in the lounge room and the kids' bedrooms, too.
- Put things away where you found them. Train your children to do this.
- Use beautiful storage containers and baskets to hide items.
- Categorise and keep things in one place.
- Plan ahead each night with a list.
- Keep a diary.
- Have a set time each week to pay bills, file correspondence, etc.
- Start anywhere and work only on one area, room, shelf or cupboard until the job is complete.
- Go through and carefully sort your wardrobe each year. Give away or sell all of your unwanted items. ■

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