

# Ignite! maintenance is the key to organization

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## **THE AVERAGE HOME CAN CUT HOUSEWORK (MAINTENANCE) BY 40% SIMPLY BY *REDUCING THE CLUTTER!*** So remove the clutter and then move forward on your maintenance program.

Getting organized is a project. Staying organized is a process. One of the most common question asked of an Organizing Consultant is, “Do people really stay organized after you work with them?” The answer is some do and some do not. The key to an organized environment and lifestyle is regular maintenance. Items can have a place they belong, but if we do not put them there we are not organized. Papers can have files or bins designated to them, but if we don’t distribute the papers to the correct file or bin, we feel the frustration of disorganization. We may carry a calendar or PDA, but if we don’t enter our contacts or time commitments, our day is not organized.

### **DAILY MAINTENANCE INVOLVES MANY SMALL TASKS. YOUR DAILY MAINTENANCE FOR INSTANCE MAY INCLUDE:**

1. Putting your pajamas on the hook or under your pillow.
2. Making your bed.
3. Putting your morning toiletries back in the drawer or under the bathroom sink.
4. Hanging up your towel.
5. Changing out that roll of toilet paper that’s run out.
6. Putting your breakfast dishes in the dishwasher and turning it on if it’s full.
7. Tossing in a load of laundry.
8. Putting your car keys on the designated hook or in the designated bowl.
9. Cleaning out the day’s accumulations from the car each evening before entering the house.
10. Placing mail in its designated location (not the kitchen counter) for later review and bill paying.
11. Cleaning up the dinner dishes and wiping down the counters after the meal.

Many of you may feel that these tasks would take so much time, but if you review the above list you will realize that most daily maintenance tasks can take less than 2 minutes each. I challenge you to time your dreaded tasks. Even emptying the dishwasher is only a 5-7 minute project! These small tasks and others like them performed each day make a big difference in the appearance and organization of your home not to mention the reduction in your stress level. Keep in mind that the larger tasks are also much easier when daily maintenance is taking place. Practicing the tasks leads to good habits. Often individuals that are not good at maintenance fall short by giving up before the tasks become habits. Habits take a minimum of 28 days to form, so stay with it until your maintenance tasks become natural to you.

# Ignite! maintenance (cont.)

Of course, a home requires larger maintenance tasks performed on a less frequent basis. Showers need to be scrubbed, floors need vacuumed or mopped, windows need washed, and bedding needs changed, lawns need mowed...and the list goes on and on. These larger projects are more time consuming and intimidating. So I'll share with you ideas for accomplishing these larger tasks.



## IDEA ONE:

Delegate items that you feel can or should be performed by another individual. This may be a family member or a small business owner anxious for your business. Lawn mowing, meal preparation, and house cleaning are a few possible tasks to delegate.

Delegating to your children is also a way to teach life skills and chore charts are a great way to do this. The key to chore charts is to keep them simple and always follow up. Children do what you inspect, not what you expect. Determine what chores are appropriate for the age of your child and challenge them to learn new maintenance and organizing skills. You are teaching them new habits for life. Some families attach reward systems to their chore charts and some feel this is simply a way the child is expected to contribute to the family. Determine what is best for your family when establishing the charts.

Hiring out your larger maintenance projects is another option. This option typically costs money. Here you want to weigh out the time costs versus the actual cost of services. What will hiring out this service allow you to do? It may allow you more time to work or additional time with your family. Your decision may have to fall back to your priorities and/or your budget. Don't discredit the possibility of any service before researching the true costs. Does your family spend more on quick answers to dinner (junk food or restaurants) versus a chef service? When you add up all the costs you may be surprised to learn that often a service is equal to or little more than what you are spending now.



## IDEA TWO:

A maintenance schedule lays out the larger tasks that need to be accomplished and puts them in a simplified format that allows you to feel in control and less overwhelmed by the number of tasks fighting for your attention. Take a tour of your home including the yard and garage areas and make notes on each large task that you see. As you jot them down determine if each is a daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal or annual item and note that beside the task listed. Now use a generic 12 month calendar and write the tasks on the designated month(s) that the tasks need to be done. Daily and weekly tasks only need to be written down on one week of the calendar and referred back to each day. Another option is a system put out by Sandra Felton called the "Super Flipper System" ([www.messies.com](http://www.messies.com)). It is similar to what is described here and uses a system of large index cards in an album to put your tasks (and your meal planning) on a maintenance system. Although setting up a maintenance system at first seems like a time consuming project, it is actually an investment in your sense of balance and control.

So, are you organizing or are you maintaining? If your mission is to get organized just be sure as you finish each organizing project that a plan is in line to maintain it.



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Cyndy assists individuals to reduce stress, boost their image and me more productive through speaking, training and hands-on coaching of organizing techniques.

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