



Welcome Summer!

June 2007

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Leslie Straka
Personal Organizer
www.personworks.com

leslie@personworks.com
Cell: 425-922-3760
Fax: 928-223-8938

Dear Leslie,
I have an overstock of bathroom items that is beyond control.
Where do I start? What should I keep? Help!!

- Bathroom Bedlam

When I organize bathrooms I find the items that most commonly multiply are the following:

- Shampoo and conditioner- this includes the regular bottles you purchase at the store and the ones you swipe from hotels!
- Body gels & baths bars
- Hand & body soaps
- Razors
- Nail clippers & nail files
- Ointments
- First aid & medications
- Cold remedies (cough medicine, cough drops, etc...)



The first step to eliminating clutter is to take all these items out of the cabinets, linen closet, drawers and any other place they are being stored. Find a flat surface and lay them all out. Be sure to have shoe boxes (or some kind of small boxes), on hand to hold the bathroom items as you begin to sort. Start by putting similar items together, such as all of the shampoos with other shampoos. As you're doing this you'll probably run across items you can toss -such as almost empty conditioner bottles, stinky soaps and expired medications- so be sure to have a garbage bag nearby. This could take you a couple of hours, so make sure to plan ahead so that you have at least enough time to finish sorting. The boxes or bins are essential

so that if you can't finish the project until the following weekend, you will have your items handy and tidy.

After you have sorted everything, you should have it all contained in the boxes/bins. Now you begin to pare down. Start with the extra shampoo and conditioner: *this includes the regular bottles you purchase at the store as well the ones you have liberated!* You probably have enough for years of hair washing. I suggest keeping two bottles of conditioner and two bottles of shampoo. Donate the rest to a food bank, or toss it. Keep only the body wash and bath supplies that you really like and know you are going to use. If you have a friend that loves this kind of stuff, ask him/her if she would like your extras. If it is brand new, it is also something you could use as a gift.



If they are still sharp, keep all of your razors. Because you have combined all of the nail clippers and files you can see how many you really have. I suggest keeping one per bathroom, and donate the rest (if they are in good enough shape). Toss any out-dated ointments, medications, and over the counter drugs. I am positive you will have multiples of band aids in this category. Keep them all, just DON'T BUY ANY MORE! Keep cold remedies on hand; these are a handy thing to keep around so you don't have to run to the drug store when you are feeling really lousy. Having extra bars of hand and body soap around is ok as well, as long as they aren't taking up too much space.

After you have finished re-sorting and purging you will need to do the following:

- Purchase the appropriate bins for your drawers, cabinets or linen closet - here are two excellent resources for organizers.

<http://tinyurl.com/3byhke>

<http://tinyurl.com/2qt9o8>

- Make an inventory of what you have so that you don't keep replacing things (this is especially important if you have deep cabinets and have a difficult time seeing what's inside). Be sure to keep it simple so that it isn't doesn't time become a time consuming task.

Hot Tip: Have a friend read off what you have in the cabinets and drawers so that your inventory keeping goes faster.



Preparing for a Kitchen Remodel

The 3 P's

Planning

First: decide what you want. Determine your deadline and stick to it. To track your progress as you go along see my example of a calendar at the end of this article. Determine your budget. Ask yourself how long you plan on staying in your home; are you planning to sell soon, or do you see yourself living there for awhile? What is your style?

A great book to help you with your estimates is the Home Depot book. It gives you an estimation of how long it will take for the beginner, intermediate, or expert home improver. Take into consideration deciding what colors and style you plan to use; without a designer this can take time.

Overall Design – Sit down and think about what type of kitchen theme you want – modern, traditional, eclectic, or country? Then measure. Does your kitchen need more storage? Are the walls load-bearing? Would it be difficult to add more space to the room? After you determine these factors, start planning the layout. Then determine your overall budget.

Flooring – The nicer the floor (such as ceramic tile, slate, or marble) the more labor intensive, and most likely more expensive, it will be.

Walls – Are you knocking down walls? Are they in need of repair? This will require patching, skim coating and sanding, which is very time consuming.

Paint – Keep in mind that color can take awhile to choose. The most time consuming part is prepping (see above) and taping the walls.

Cabinets – Shop around to get the best price when planning your new kitchen layout. If you are computer savvy, I suggest using the program called TurboCAD: <http://tinyurl.com/3yewuz>

Ikea also has a great kitchen layout program: <http://tinyurl.com/k2735> which is easy to use.



Plumbing – How much are you going to alter the plumbing in your kitchen? Keep in mind the more you change, the more you are going to spend on permits, not to mention the time it takes to get the permits.

Faucets – There are a variety of faucets to choose from, so keep thinking about what your ideal faucet would be, including style, color and functionality.

Electrical – Do you have the appropriate amount of electricity to run all of your appliances, or do you need to upgrade? This can get costly, so choose wisely when you purchase new appliances.

Lighting – What style are your cabinets – modern, traditional, or country? Keep this in mind when choosing your lighting. Also think about where you want to place lights and how many you want. For example, do you want to add additional lighting under the cabinets to light up the countertops?

Windows – How old are your windows, are they aluminum? Do you want change the look? Keep in mind this is more work and more cost. It will, however, add value to your home, so it may be worth the money and the extra time.

Appliances – Choose the color – do you want white, bisque, black, or stainless steel? Colors?

Oven – what is your preference gas or electric? Do you have a gas hookup? Do you want a freestanding unit, or a separate cook top and oven?

Refrigerator – Do you have a water hook up for an icemaker and water dispenser. Figure out what type of refrigerator you want.



Purging

This is a perfect time to get rid of things! Really ask yourself when the last time was the last time you used your waffle iron, or fondue set. If you do actually use them from time to time, then keep them. If not, donate.

Packing

Pack it up – Think carefully of what you really need to keep out and can pack away, so that you don't end up having to unpack or go and buy something.

Label carefully so that if you need to pull out something you can.

Timeline Example

- **May 7** Tear out entire kitchen - 8 hours
- **May 8** Dump run
- **May 9** Dump run
- **May 17** Send off design to designer to get colors for paint, Skim coat and paint
- **May 21** Sand and paint; Pick up paint from store (call ahead)
- **May 22** Skim coat & sanding 3 hours
- **May 23** Paint - 10 hours
- **May 25** Cabinet installation
- **May 27** Granite installation
- **May 30** Dump run
- **May 31** Purchase tiles
- **June 2** Layout tiles
- **June 2** Cut tiles
- **June 4** Install slate tiles (cement down)
- **June 5** Grout
- **June 7** Sealing slate tiles
- **June 7** Sealing grout
- **June 9 & 10** Appliance installation





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Checklist for Moving



Summer is here and it is a popular time for people to sell their homes and buy new ones, which of course means that they will be moving. To many this is a much dreaded task. There is so much to do it can be overwhelming. Below is a checklist of final things to do before you move.

1. **Turn off or change your phone number** – Be sure to have the outgoing message let everyone know what your new number is (not just that your number has been disconnected)
2. **Change your address** - Send out change of address post cards and be sure change your address at your post office. To make the change of address run smoothly, contact your monthly billing places, such as credit cards, cell phone, banks, financial plans, subscriptions and any other company that sends you regular mail at least one month in advance of your move date.
3. **Turn off utilities** - Phone, gas, electricity, garbage, water, cable, internet, any food service provider (like a milk delivery or organic produce delivery service). Be sure to get a written letter from each company confirming that they have turned off your service. Give them the approximate time that you are moving (as well as your new address) so that they know where to mail your final bill.
4. **Check that your Home Owner's Insurance covers moving damage** –This is essential, so that if something is broken while you are being moved, it will be covered (after the cost of your deductible). While you are at it, contact all insurance companies that you have policies with and let them know of your change of address.
5. **Defrost the freezer and clean it out (including the refrigerator)** – While this task is easy, cleaning out the entire house is not when you are in the midst of a move. Instead, hire a cleaning service to do a deep cleaning of the house you are moving out of and the house you are moving into.
6. **Disconnect any appliances you are taking with you**
7. **Have the mover's phone number handy and make sure they have yours** – Be sure that they have a map of the area you are moving to, as well as a second phone number where they can reach you.
8. **Arrange for a babysitter for your kids the day of the move** – This will make everyone's day easier!
9. **Take photographs of everything you are moving** – This is a great way to document your belongings for insurance in case any damage occurs during the move. I would also create an inventory along with the photographs.
10. **Label the boxes** – Put your name and address, along with the room that the box is going into on the box, so that there are no mix-ups. Sometimes the movers have more than one household in a single truck, so this can avoid any mishaps.
11. **Have a "moving manager" on call** - Make sure that someone is observing the move, so that all goes smoothly: think of them like a wedding planner. They are there to make sure that everything runs according to plan, that the movers are being careful with your belongings, and to answer any questions the movers may have.

If possible, don't leave all of your moving tasks to the last minute. If you use this list as a guide for your next move you will find the act of moving a lot less disconcerting.