

BUDGET HOME ORGANIZATION

The Complete 40-Project Guide to Decluttering Your Home for Under \$20

A practical, room-by-room system using dollar store supplies and everyday items

INTRODUCTION

A cluttered home creates a cluttered mind. Research from the Princeton Neuroscience Institute found that visual clutter competes for your attention, reduces working memory, and increases cortisol — the stress hormone.

The average American home contains over 300,000 items. The average person spends 12 days per year looking for misplaced belongings.

You don't need \$1,000 closet systems or professional organizers charging \$150/hour. You need **a system** — knowing what to keep, what to donate, and where everything belongs.

This guide gives you that system in 40 budget-friendly projects. Everything here costs under \$20 total. Most projects cost \$2–\$5.

Let's begin.

PART 1: THE 4-BOX METHOD

Before you organize anything, you need a decision framework. Here's the simplest one that works:

The 4-Box Method:

Get four boxes or bags. Label them:

1. **KEEP** — Items you used in the last 12 months
2. **DONATE** — Items in good condition you don't need
3. **TRASH** — Items broken, expired, or unusable
4. **SELL** — Items worth \$10+ you can list online

The 12-Month Rule: If you haven't used it in a year, you don't need it. Exceptions: seasonal items, sentimental keepsakes (limited to one box), tools, important documents.

The "Just in Case" Trap: "Just in case" is the enemy of organization. If you're keeping something for a scenario that hasn't happened in 2 years, it's not going to happen. Donate it.

PART 2: THE 7-ROOM SYSTEM

Here are the 40 projects organized by room, with materials, cost, and time required.

ROOM 1: KITCHEN (8 Projects)

Project 1 — Under-Sink Organization

- **Materials:** Tension rod (\$1), small bins (\$2), Command hooks (\$2)
- **Time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:** Install tension rod across the under-sink cabinet. Hang spray bottles. Place bins on either side for cleaning supplies.

Project 2 — Pantry Shelf Risers

- **Materials:** Wire shelf risers (\$3 for set)
- **Time:** 10 minutes
- **Steps:** Add risers to each shelf. Stack cans on risers, jars behind.

Project 3 — Drawer Dividers

- **Materials:** Dollar store drawer dividers (\$1 each)
- **Time:** 15 minutes
- **Steps:** Measure drawer. Place dividers in grid pattern. Sort utensils.

Project 4 — Spice Jar Matching System

- **Materials:** Matching glass jars (\$1 each, buy 12)
- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:** Transfer spices to matching jars. Label lids. Alphabetize.

Project 5 — Tupperware Lid Storage

- **Materials:** Dish rack (\$2) or file organizer (\$3)

- **Time:** 10 minutes
- **Steps:** Stand lids vertically in dish rack. Nest containers separately.

Project 6 — Fridge Zone System

- **Materials:** Clear bins (\$4 total)
- **Time:** 25 minutes
- **Steps:** Assign each bin a category: dairy, produce, leftovers, snacks.

Project 7 — Under-Sink Cleaning Caddy

- **Materials:** Shower caddy (\$2)
- **Time:** 15 minutes
- **Steps:** Load caddy with all-purpose cleaner, sponges, gloves. Carry from room to room.

Project 8 — Grocery Bag Holder

- **Materials:** Wall-mounted holder (\$2) or repurposed fabric sleeve
 - **Time:** 5 minutes
 - **Steps:** Mount near pantry. Stuff bags into top, pull from bottom.
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ROOM 2: BEDROOM (6 Projects)

Project 9 — Under-Bed Storage Bins

- **Materials:** Rolling under-bed bins (\$5 each, buy 2)
- **Time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:** Store off-season clothing and linens. Label each bin clearly.

Project 10 — Closet Double-Hang

- **Materials:** Second tension rod or closet rod (\$3)
- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:** Install second rod below existing one. Hang shirts and skirts below, pants above.

Project 11 — Nightstand Drawer Organization

- **Materials:** Small fabric bins (\$1 each, buy 3)
- **Time:** 15 minutes
- **Steps:** One bin for electronics, one for reading, one for personal items.

Project 12 — Jewelry Display

- **Materials:** Cork board (\$3), push pins (\$1)

- **Time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:** Mount cork board on wall. Hang necklaces and bracelets on pins.

Project 13 — Shoe Rack Tower

- **Materials:** Stackable shoe racks (\$3 each, buy 3)
- **Time:** 25 minutes
- **Steps:** Stack racks in closet corner. Sort shoes by season and frequency of use.

Project 14 — Bedside Cable Management

- **Materials:** Cable clips (\$2), velcro ties (\$1)
 - **Time:** 10 minutes
 - **Steps:** Clip cables along nightstand edge. Bundle excess with ties.
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ROOM 3: BATHROOM (5 Projects)

Project 15 — Medicine Cabinet Reset

- **Materials:** Small clear bins (\$2 total)
- **Time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:** Check expiration dates. Discard expired. Group by category in bins.

Project 16 — Shower Caddy Refill

- **Materials:** Suction shower caddy (\$3)
- **Time:** 10 minutes
- **Steps:** Place shampoo, conditioner, body wash, razor in designated spots.

Project 17 — Towel Roll Display

- **Materials:** Wire basket (\$2)
- **Time:** 10 minutes
- **Steps:** Roll towels tightly. Stack vertically in basket on shelf.

Project 18 — Under-Sink Hair Tool Storage

- **Materials:** PVC pipe pieces (\$2) or tall container
- **Time:** 15 minutes
- **Steps:** Stand hair dryer, straightener, curling iron in container.

Project 19 — Toothbrush & Cosmetic Drawer

- **Materials:** Divided drawer insert (\$2)

- **Time:** 15 minutes
 - **Steps:** Assign each compartment: toothbrushes, makeup, daily skincare.
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ROOM 4: CLOSET (4 Projects)

Project 20 — Matching Hangers

- **Materials:** 30-pack velvet hangers (\$10)
- **Time:** 45 minutes
- **Steps:** Replace mismatched hangers. Sort clothing by type and color.

Project 21 — Shoe Box Photo Labels

- **Materials:** Clear shoe boxes (\$1 each) or photo printouts
- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:** Photograph each pair. Tape photo to box front for instant ID.

Project 22 — Belt & Scarf Hanger

- **Materials:** Shower curtain ring set (\$1)
- **Time:** 10 minutes
- **Steps:** Loop belts and scarves through rings. Hang all from one hanger.

Project 23 — Off-Season Bin

- **Materials:** Storage bin with lid (\$5)
 - **Time:** 20 minutes
 - **Steps:** Store out-of-season items. Label with contents and season.
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ROOM 5: LIVING ROOM (5 Projects)

Project 24 — Remote Control Caddy

- **Materials:** Small basket (\$1)
- **Time:** 5 minutes
- **Steps:** All remotes go in one basket. Place on coffee table.

Project 25 — Magazine File Storage

- **Materials:** Magazine files (\$1 each, buy 4)

- **Time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:** One file per category: reading, pending, archive, recycle.

Project 26 — Cable & Charger Drawer

- **Materials:** Ziplock bags (\$1) or drawer dividers (\$2)
- **Time:** 15 minutes
- **Steps:** Label each cable with a tag. Store in labeled bag or compartment.

Project 27 — Bookshelf Bookend System

- **Materials:** Decorative bookends (\$3 pair)
- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:** Group books by genre. Use bookends to keep groups separate.

Project 28 — Toy Storage Bins

- **Materials:** Fabric bins (\$3 each, buy 4)
 - **Time:** 25 minutes
 - **Steps:** One bin per toy type. Label with picture for young children.
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ROOM 6: HOME OFFICE (5 Projects)

Project 29 — Desk Drawer Organization

- **Materials:** Drawer dividers (\$2)
- **Time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:** Assign each divider: pens, paper clips, sticky notes, personal.

Project 30 — Paper Filing System

- **Materials:** File box (\$4), hanging files (\$1 each, buy 12)
- **Time:** 45 minutes
- **Steps:** Create categories: bills, taxes, insurance, personal, work.

Project 31 — Charging Station

- **Materials:** Multi-port USB charger (\$5), cable clips
- **Time:** 15 minutes
- **Steps:** Mount charger to desk edge. Route cables with clips.

Project 32 — Cork Board Command Center

- **Materials:** Cork board (\$5), push pins, index cards

- **Time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:** Mount above desk. Pin weekly priorities, receipts, reminders.

Project 33 — Book & Reference Shelf

- **Materials:** Floating shelf (\$5), brackets (\$2)
 - **Time:** 30 minutes
 - **Steps:** Install above desk. Keep only books in current use.
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ROOM 7: GARAGE (7 Projects)

Project 34 — Wall-Mounted Tool Rack

- **Materials:** Pegboard (\$8), hooks (\$3)
- **Time:** 60 minutes
- **Steps:** Mount pegboard. Arrange tools by frequency of use.

Project 35 — Sports Equipment Bin

- **Materials:** Large clear bin (\$6)
- **Time:** 15 minutes
- **Steps:** One bin for balls, one for rackets, one for seasonal gear.

Project 36 — Paint Can Storage

- **Materials:** Shelf (\$5) or milk crates (\$2 each)
- **Time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:** Store paint cans upside down. Label lids with room and date.

Project 37 — Extension Cord Winder

- **Materials:** Cord winder (\$2) or DIY with velcro ties
- **Time:** 15 minutes
- **Steps:** Wind cords into figure-8. Secure with ties. Hang on hooks.

Project 38 — Garden Tool Caddy

- **Materials:** Bucket (\$2), tool belt organizer (\$3)
- **Time:** 15 minutes
- **Steps:** Store hand tools in bucket with organizer wrap around edge.

Project 39 — Holiday Decoration Bins

- **Materials:** Labeled storage bins (\$5 each, buy 3)

- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:** One bin per holiday. Label with contents and year last opened.

Project 40 — Recycling Station

- **Materials:** 3 bins (\$5 each) or trash cans (\$3 each)
 - **Time:** 20 minutes
 - **Steps:** Label each: paper, plastic, glass. Stack vertically if space is tight.
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PART 3: THE 30-DAY CHALLENGE CALENDAR

Week 1 — Kitchen & Pantry

- Day 1: Kitchen countertop declutter (15 min)
- Day 2: Pantry shelf (30 min)
- Day 3: Under-sink cabinet (30 min)
- Day 4: Fridge cleanout (20 min)
- Day 5: Drawer #1 — utensils (15 min)
- Day 6: Drawer #2 — miscellaneous (15 min)
- Day 7: Rest

Week 2 — Bedroom & Closet

- Day 8: Nightstand (15 min)
- Day 9: Under-bed storage (30 min)
- Day 10: Closet — hanging clothes (30 min)
- Day 11: Closet — shoes (30 min)
- Day 12: Dresser drawers (20 min)
- Day 13: Bedroom surface declutter (15 min)
- Day 14: Rest

Week 3 — Bathroom & Living Room

- Day 15: Medicine cabinet (20 min)
- Day 16: Shower & tub area (15 min)
- Day 17: Under-sink bathroom (20 min)
- Day 18: Living room surfaces (20 min)
- Day 19: Bookshelf (30 min)
- Day 20: Entertainment center (20 min)
- Day 21: Rest

Week 4 — Office & Garage

- Day 22: Desk surface (15 min)
 - Day 23: Paper filing (45 min)
 - Day 24: Desk drawers (30 min)
 - Day 25: Garage corner #1 (45 min)
 - Day 26: Garage corner #2 (45 min)
 - Day 27: Entryway/mudroom (20 min)
 - Day 28: Laundry room (30 min)
 - Day 29: Final sweep — walk through every room (30 min)
 - Day 30: Celebrate. Take before-and-after photos.
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PART 4: THE DOLLAR STORE SHOPPING LIST

Buy these once. They cover every project in this guide.

Storage & Bins

- 4× clear storage bins with lids (\$4)
- 3× fabric bins (\$3)
- 2× under-bed rolling bins (\$10)
- 2× large garage bins (\$12)

Small Organizers

- 4× drawer dividers (\$4)
- 12× small clear bins (\$12)
- 3× shower caddies (\$6)
- 4× magazine files (\$4)

Hanging Solutions

- 1× tension rod set (\$2)
- 30× velvet hangers (\$10)
- 1× pack Command hooks (\$3)
- 1× shower curtain ring set (\$1)

Labels & Marking

- 1× label maker or label pack (\$3)
- 1× chalk marker set (\$2)
- 1× index card pack (\$1)

Total: Under \$80 for materials — enough to organize an entire home with plenty left over for future projects.

PART 5: MAINTAINING YOUR SYSTEM

Organizing once is easy. Keeping it organized is the real test. Three rules:

1. The One-In, One-Out Rule

Every time you bring something new into the house, remove something old. This keeps total volume constant.

2. The 5-Minute Reset

Every evening, spend 5 minutes putting things back in their places. This prevents clutter from accumulating.

3. The Quarterly Review

Every 3 months, walk through each room and ask: "Is this still serving me?" Donate what isn't.

CONCLUSION

You now have everything you need:

- A decision framework (the 4-box method)
- 40 specific projects with costs and time estimates
- A 30-day calendar to execute them all
- A shopping list to buy everything in one trip
- A maintenance system to keep it organized

The only thing left is to start. Pick the room that stresses you most — usually the kitchen or bedroom closet — and do one project today.

By day 30, your home will feel completely different. And you'll have spent under \$20.

This guide is provided free of charge by Empire Rewards. Share it with anyone who needs it.
