

Open Storage Solutions

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by Suzanne Bailey



I'm an out-of-sight, out-of-mind girl. This means I pay attention to what's visible in my house, and forget spaces that I can't see. So if you came over today, it would look clean and tidy. However, if you opened a drawer or closet door, you might be injured by the cascading mess.

Recently, I heard this piece of advice on a television organizing show--kids are more likely to put their belongings away if (1) the container is visible and (2) it doesn't have a lid. It was an "aha" moment. "That's me!" I thought. "I'm a kid!" To keep my belongings clean and organized, the key is to use open storage containers. I hate visual clutter, so I'm likely to keep baskets, boxes and bucket ship-shape. Also, for me, the solutions need to be both useful and appealing.



Here are a few ideas:

- **Colander Corral:** A colorful colander houses coffee pods for our Nespresso machine. I don't mind it on the counter because it is pretty. Also, we make coffee daily, so having it accessible makes sense.
- **Paper Station:** My file drawer is a black hole (remember, out of sight, out of mind) and to keep my active files orderly, they need to be in clear view. A basket (shown above and inspired by Aby Garvey at Simplify 101) works wonders. It holds current files, a small flowerpot with pens, reading glasses, stationery, note paper and composition notebooks.
- **Off the Wall:** I don't use closed book calendars. I used to buy them yearly, because they're beautiful and I'm supposed to have one. However, I need to see the whole month at once, and have big, open squares to record commitments. An oversized wall calendar works best for me. If I'm out and about, and a date comes up, I write it on a pad of paper in my purse, and add it to my calendar when I return home.



- **Towel Tamer:** Our bathroom lacks storage space, but we'll remodel eventually, so I didn't want to invest in cupboards or cabinets. Instead I repurposed a nightstand that was sitting unused in the garage, which provided a much-needed drawer. The baskets make a perfect linen closet, and the towels give the room a pop of color.

Working with my strengths and weaknesses (and not fighting against them) made all the difference in tackling clutter hotspots in my home.

Suzanne Bailey - *Suzanne Bailey lives in southern California with her husband, seven-year-old daughter, and menagerie of pets. When she is not organizing things in baskets, she is working on a novel about a future Queen of England. She blogs at suziebeezieland.typepad.com*