



# Rifka Schonfeld **STRATEGIES**

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

## Get Organized!

Dear Readers,  
This week's newsletter will discuss getting organized!

Rifka Schonfeld  
**STRATEGIES**

## QUESTION:

It's very hard for me to admit this, but I am terrible at organization: my different tasks at work, my children's lunches, my bills, my kitchen, and even my clothing. My life just feels so out of control. Are there distinct steps that I can take to get more organized? It just seems so overwhelming right now.



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**Organizing yourself is a very tough task** – especially if it something that you struggle with across the spectrum. Organization requires discipline, time – and something else that you might not be aware of – executive function skills. Executive skills allow us to organize our behavior over time and override immediate demands in favor of longer-term goals. Through these skills, we learn to sustain attention, plan and organize activities, and follow through on a task.

Sometimes, people might think that they are simply disorganized, but in reality, they could be impaired by Executive Function Disorder. Those with Executive Function Disorder lack many skills such as planning, time management, and working memory. This in turn can lead to persistent lateness, impulsive behavior, and the inability to finish any task completely.

It's very possible that you are disorganized because you simply have never tried to be organized. However, there is also the possibility that you are disorganized because you are missing executive function skills. In that case, what can you do to help yourself get this done well and in a timely manner?

**The Center for Learning Disabilities suggests multiple ways to improve your life and overall organization for people with or without Executive Function Disorder:**

- Use tools like time organizers, computers, and watches with alarms in order to give yourself reminders to help you get things done on time. Because your brain might not be programmed to give you these repeated reminders, setting up external cues can keep you on track.
- Create checklists and to do lists. On these lists, estimate how long each activity will take you to accomplish. Then, break the longer tasks into small changes and assign time frames for completing each section. Breaking apart larger tasks will allow you to stay focused the mission at hand.
- Remove clutter from your workspace (or kitchen). If this feels too scary to handle on your own, ask a friend, or family member, to set aside a few hours to help you clear your space. If they do not have time, consider hiring an organizer to come in and do the work with you. Then, once the workspace is clean, set aside ten minutes daily to making sure it stays clutter free.
- Use visual calendars to keep track of long term projects, appointments, and bill invoices. Keep this calendar posted in a central location and ensure that you look at it at the same time nightly. This way, you will have time to prepare for any different events taking place the next day.

**For people with Executive Function Disorder**, getting organized can be daunting and almost impossible. Regardless, with a plan and a goal, you can take small steps towards organization and order in your life. And, remember, nobody's perfect – even with checklists and calendars – life might get a bit disorganized every now and then.

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