



In place of a pre-Passover panic attack, create a road map of your home and organize one specific area at a time. (Photos: Miriam Gold)

Countdown to Passover: Organizing motivation

• By MIRIAM GOLD

Passover is coming – the train has left the station and the first stop is organizing. Organizing and cleaning are two entirely different activities. Their courses of action are quite distinct from each other and they will each bear very different results.

Organizing means sorting through items in your home or office and deciding what to keep, donate or discard. Placing value on your possessions and deciding what you really need can be a very personal and sometimes even emotional experience. After you take this important step to declutter, it is important to implement organizing systems to keep everything in order.

Cleaning means removing the dust and dirt from surfaces, cabinets, walls and floors. It involves using various cleaning products and includes dusting, mopping, sweeping, scrubbing and vacuuming. Cleaning requires more brawn than brain.

Organizing before you clean for Passover will make the cleaning process much easier. Once you have decluttered the items you no longer need, a strange thing happens: when you clean, all you have to do

is... clean.

Instead of having a pre-Passover panic attack, I suggest you devise a plan to make your preparations as smooth as possible. Create a road map of your home and organize one specific area at a time. Start with the rooms that are furthest away from the *hametz* – like bedrooms, bathrooms and coat/utility closets. If you can devote time to declutter things like clothing and shoes that no longer fit, this will help you gain a valuable head start on upcoming holiday/spring shopping for yourself and your family. Wipe down each area you are organizing as you continue to move toward the heart of your home – the kitchen.

10 tips for a stress-free Passover:

1. *Get through Purim* – Do not let Purim and mountains of candy overtake your home.
2. *Start now* – Declutter and organize bedrooms and closets. This will help make the cleaning process much smoother.
3. *Make lists* – Itemize the things that need to get done. Create sections for cleaning, shopping, and menu planning. You can update this list as you proceed and then use it to streamline preparations for next year.



4. *Set realistic goals* – Evaluate how much time you need to allot for Passover preparations and plan accordingly.

5. *Create a time line* – Work backward when planning your schedule. For example, start with the date of *bedikat hametz* and ask yourself what you need to get done by that date. If you want to have food cooked by then, you must schedule when to shop for groceries. Before you shop for groceries, you need to plan menus, etc.

6. *Break down tasks* – Assign a time and day for each chore or activity. Break each down into small, realistic tasks so that you don't get overwhelmed.

7. *Involve your family* – Divide up the chores and delegate. For example, your children can clean their own toys. And always reward yourselves for cleaning!

8. *Plan simple meals* – Some of the best dishes require no more than three ingredients and don't create extra kitchen mess. Designate a small area in your kitchen for Passover meal preparation as soon as you are ready to start your cooking. Then, cook and freeze!

9. *Designate a kosher-for-Passover area* – If you are going to be making Passover year after year, I highly recommend you create an out-of-the-way pantry area for your Passover items. If you don't have the extra pantry space, start moving your hametz foods into plastic bins (can purchase at Keter or Home Center) and placing your kosher-for-Passover foods in your clean pantry.

10. *Breathe* – Feeling overwhelmed is a roadblock. Try to relax and use these guidelines to calmly get you through the process.

The writer is a professional organizer. For more information: www.goldstandardorganizing.com



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