

New York family

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SUMMER SWEEP

Save Children's Artwork

Yes, this is tough: tossing any of it seems downright diabolical. But the truth is that the best pieces have a better chance of long-term survival if they're properly cared for—a daunting task to apply to each and every drawing. Maria Gracia, owner of Get Organized Now, suggests keeping just five pieces of artwork per year for each child, which can be organized by grade in a kid's portable file box. Painful, perhaps, but Gracia covers that with this genius tip: photograph everything first and make a scrapbook! After all, she reminds us, "if you keep every single piece of artwork your child brings home for the next 15 years, your house is going to be overflowing with it!" If you just can't bear to see art in the trash, remember it makes a great gift.

Tidy the Foyer

Nancy Heller, the lively founder of Goodbye Clutter, insists upon this:

"Leave clutter at the door!" But what to do when the entry-

way becomes a tangled mess? "Purpose your space," she advises. Start by setting up a station by the door to receive things your family typically brings in (and proceeds to scatter throughout the house). Whether using an elegant credenza or a system of hooks and baskets, create specific places for items. If a drawer is only for gloves, "then it's mindless." For the weekend home, Heller suggests a bucket or basket for muddy or sandy shoes, toys, and towels—and try a bucket of water for dipping feet in order to prevent the agony of a sandy couch later.

BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE (AND SANE), THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE AN ORGANIZED HOME

BY MELISSA BREYER

Now that the dust has settled from spring cleaning, it's the perfect time to get organized. Maybe the kids are home from school, requiring even better methods for controlling their clutter. Or, they're away at camp, giving you time to finally tackle the year's accumulated jumble. Here, a host of experts offer advice on how to get your city abode—or weekend home—back in shape by making it less cluttered, more orderly, and a lot more serene. We don't recommend taking on all of these at once, of course. But any one of these projects has the potential to enhance the quality of your day-to-day life—and even be kind of fun.

Reclaim the Garage

Check the weather, load the cooler with refreshments, and get the radio ready. A day at the beach? Nope...time to clean the garage. Ann Sullivan, of Ann Sullivan, Inc., proposes making this task a family fun event. It goes something like this: Call your public works department and local dump to find out what they'll accept. Then, gather supplies including garbage bags, a broom and dustpan, a hose, boxes, and recycling bins. Next, remove everything from the garage and decide what to toss, donate, sell, repair, or keep. Sweep out the garage, hose it down, and "spray each other with water if you are getting overheated." Organize everything you're keeping into specific categories (sports, car care, lawn and garden). Use items on hand for storage. Sullivan suggests "old filing cabinets, dressers, kitchen cabinets, bookcases, baby food jars, coffee cans, baskets, hooks, trash cans, and dish tubs." By the end of the day you will not only have your garage back, but you'll have hopefully had some fun!