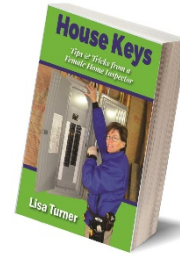


Excerpt from *House Keys: Tips and Tricks from a Female Home Inspector*. Chapter 9:
Organizing and Cleaning Tricks



Junk Drawer Heaven

Do you have a junk drawer? If you don't, then you are either a two-year-old or you are blessed with the no-pack-rat gene.

“Honey, where do I find a screw to fit this bracket?” calls my husband from the kitchen.

“In the junk drawer!” I yell from upstairs.

If you are a pack rat, then it's more likely you have a “junk closet” or even a “junk room” (called a garage or pantry). Do you sometimes feel that you have become disorganized or have difficulty finding things? If you're just starting out in a new place, then you don't have to worry much about this problem, unless you are moving from an old place. If you are moving from an old place, then you're likely to replicate the same junk problem in your new place. Whether you have junk or are about to start creating junk, here are some tips to become more organized.

First, I have to tell you that I am a junk drawer advocate. If you are over 18, you need junk drawers. If you are excessively organized and don't have junk drawers, then you don't need to read any farther. You are, in scientific circles, what they call an “outlier”, i.e., not normal.

Junk drawers happen. They have a mind of their own. They are a convenient area to hide things before guests come over, for cleaning things off counters, and for putting miscellaneous things in that you don't know what to do with. Eventually . . . the drawer won't close.

So, secret number one is to have more than one junk drawer. Ideally, you should have a junk drawer in every room. This obeys the rule of “keep it where you use it.”

As you use the junk drawer, watch for an accumulation of

like things, such as screws, rubber bands, bag clips, and hardware. If you have another drawer with the same stuff, consider putting “like with like” unless you need the duplicate items in another area.

Secret number two is to place some baggies and masking tape with a pen in each drawer. When you find yourself throwing something into the drawer, like a charging cord, put it in the baggy and write down what it goes to. I wish I could time travel back to 1985 and do this for all the chargers I have. This technique also works well for toy parts and miscellaneous electronics and hardware.

Secret number three is to sort the drawers twice a year. With small boxes and baggies handy, remove the things you are not using and put them together from all the drawers. If you’re the pack rat (“Honey, I know I am going to need this broken blender base someday”), then all of these items will go to a marked box in the garage or attic. If you’re not the pack rat, then see what can be recycled, thrown out, or donated to the thrift store.

Lastly, purchase several clear plastic drawer sets from your local household goods store and place these in strategic locations for tools, screws, hardware and glues, and other categories such as batteries and electronics. The possibilities are endless. If you are lucky enough to have a few closets, you can designate an entire shelf to these special organizers.

Looking for something? Now you’ll know just where to find it.



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ISBN-13: 978-1546350316

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