





# Tips from the Pros on How to Control the Clutter and Get Organized

story by **LAURIE WALLACE-LYNCH**

With spring comes the annual ritual of cleaning and purging. Getting organized is trendy right now; thanks to the launch of a new series on Netflix called *Tidying Up With Marie Kondo*.

She credits the concept to a desire, “to spark joy in the world through tidying.”

If you have a closet that is overflowing and yet ‘have nothing to wear’; a garage so full that you can’t park the car in it; a kitchen drawer where plastic containers seem to breed (without lids), or if you plan to move or downsize, who you gonna call?

Three leading professional organizers share some of their top tips on how to purge, plunder and perish our unnecessary possessions and take control of the clutter. »





*Before*

**Brenda Alderdice, Owner of Downsizing Diva – downsizingdiva.com**

Alderdice offers moving and downsizing services for seniors in the Caledon-Dufferin area. She is also a Senior Move Manager and a member of The National Association of Senior Move Managers.

This Downsizing Diva even gives talks in the community on the art of decluttering and downsizing. “A home that is in disarray causes stress when you can’t find anything,” she said. Here are some of Brenda’s tips to get organized:

#### **Store Like with Like**

“White plastic baskets from the dollar store are amazing. Store like-with-like: all of your shampoo in one basket; all of your light bulbs in another, etc. Even your kitchen junk drawer should have baskets so everything has a home and you can easily find things when you need them.”

#### **Use Seasonal Change as an Opportunity to Purge**

“Spring is the perfect time to go through your winter wardrobe and seasonal decorations and purge what you don’t need.”

#### **Keep Only What You Love**

“Stay or go? Start by keeping what you love, rather than deciding what should go. If you haven’t worn it in a year, perhaps that’s a sign you don’t need it. Keep only the books you plan to read again and give the rest away.”

#### **Purge Paper and Photos**

“Sort papers into seven years to keep for legal income tax purposes and store by year in liquor store boxes. The current year’s bills, receipts or warranties can go into a \$12.99 divided portfolio from Staples. Photos should be on your computer or a USB stick.

**Caroline Mitchell, Trained Professional Organizer and Founder of Organizing Halton – organizinghalton.com**

Caroline serves clients in various age groups and life stages, from millennials to seniors.

“Kitchens, closets and basements tend to be the most



*Tip:*

*Look for multi-purpose items to use around the house such as this ottoman.... Take the top off to store blankets, toys, games, etc. When company comes, pull it out for additional seating.*

*Find it at Di's Design  
11-1 Queensgate Blvd, Bolton  
905-857-4775  
didesign.ca*



disorganized areas in the home—I like to start in the kitchen since it is the heart of the home,” said Mitchell. Here are her top organizing tips:

**Create Memory Boxes to Store Your Kid’s Artwork, Ribbons and Photos**

“Each family member gets a box. The kinds of things that belong in these boxes are belongings that you believe will still be sentimental in five, 10 or 20 years.”

**Planning on Having a Second Child? Store Away Kid’s Clothing by Size**

“Any clothes that your child has outgrown but you wish to keep should be stored away in plastic bins and labelled by size. Otherwise, give the clothes to another family or donate them to charity.”

**Choose One Area or Room and Don’t Stop Until you are Completely Done**

“Start small and do one room or one closet at a time. If you share the area, especially the kitchen, with others, be sure they know where everything now lives so things stay neat and organized.”

# CROWN Bath & Kitchen

## The Tiaga Collection

Inspired by the beautiful lakes sprinkled across the territory of Quebec, the TAÏGA bathtub offers a moment of sheer happiness for one or two people. At one end, complete relaxation in a prone position, at the other end, a backrest offers a comfortable sitting position for reading. **GOOD DESIGN AWARDS** winner.



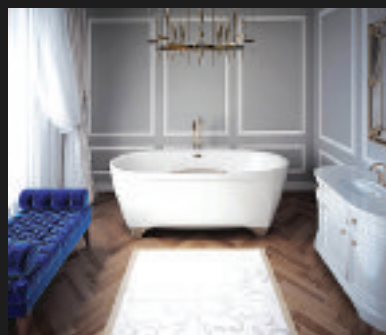
## The Smile Selection Contemporary

Smile... The gentle curve of the light bridge, sink and towel bar soften the furniture and promise an elegant bathroom.



## The Scala Collection

This freestanding bathtub has an aesthetic refinement that translates into a contemporary version of the Rococo style bathtub on lion’s feet. The name Scala was inspired by the “Teatro



**alla Scala**”, the 200+ year old famous opera house in Milan. The spirit of this collection reveals a sophisticated style through the harmony of its curves, an extension of the outer shell on metal feet and wider front and rear decks.

## The Area’s Largest Selection of:

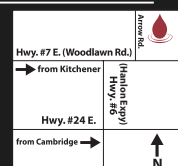
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Photos supplied by Organizing Halton



**Ida Tetlock, Professional Organizer/Accountability Partner and Property Manager of SMART Organizing and Property Manager – Smartorganizing.ca**

Ida Tetlock takes the “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) approach to professional organizing in the Orangeville and Halton-Dufferin area. She is also an active member of the Professional Organizers Association in Canada (POC) and Chair of the North GTA Chapter Executive.

“I typically work with families and busy professionals going through transition,” said Tetlock. “The first thing we do is a needs assessment which helps determine the pain points. This is typically a disorganized basement, garage or closets. These spaces represent deferred decisions—we keep tucking things away. And as we all know, a basement is where things go to die.”

Here are some of Tetlock’s top tips to controlling the clutter:

**Identify Why You Want to Make the Change and Make an Appointment with Yourself to Get It Done**

“Do you want to purge some clothes so your closet doors will close or make room for new clothes? Break it down to

specific tasks. Then eliminate anything you won’t use or don’t wear anymore. Donate the clothes, or sell quality clothing online or at consignment shops, but set a time limit, and if they don’t sell, don’t bring them back into the house.”

**Decide What Your Dream Room or Closet Should Look Like**

“How you want to store your items? If you want to hang things, perhaps you can use additional rods and create two tiers instead of one. Or you can fold things by adding storage spaces.”

**Designate an Area for Tools and Return Them to Their Rightful Place**

“Sometimes when we need a screwdriver and we can’t find one, it’s easier to go out and buy a new one. If tools have a designated space, it makes it easier to find them.”

**Engage Your Kids to Make Clutter Control Routine**

“Kids who are involved in the organizing process have greater success keeping their rooms tidy. If you think about their classrooms--their desk or cubby--everything is neat because there is consistency and routine. Everything has a place. This can be maintained at home as well.”