

How to Conquer Tiny-Task Creep - 31 Tiny Tasks for Living a More Productive Life



Professional Organizers, like me, are hired by people who feel overwhelmed and find it difficult to get things done. Some clients have trouble prioritizing. Others have trouble batching or delegating. Many find it impossible to get started or cross the tiniest tasks off their to-do lists.

For that reason, I created the list below: 31 Tiny Tasks. This will hopefully inspire anyone wondering what to do or where to start. These tasks can be done in any order. Just pick one task per day, each day of the month –and do it! If the task doesn't suit you, find something else to do. Customize this list. Don't let tiny-task creep be the reason you aren't living a productive life and enjoying peace of mind. Make sure you check out this related article,

1. Remove clutter hanging on your refrigerator. Start on the upper left and work left to right, top to bottom. Discard old invitations, coupons, and announcements. Gather and edit your takeout menus and photos. Store them in a binder, plastic bag or Smead hanging file folder.
2. Clean out your medicine cabinet. Toss any expired medication and cosmetics. Replenish expired first aid supplies.
3. Wash reusable grocery bags. The bags are incubators for bacteria. Toss them in the washing machine or turn them inside out and clean with a disinfecting wipe. Let them air dry before folding and storing.
4. Gather all the documents you'll need to file taxes. Common paperwork includes: W2s, 1099s, dividend statements, bank statements, student loan information, payroll stubs and rental property income statements.
5. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces in your home. Bacteria breed on refrigerator doors, remote controls, doorknobs, keyboards and phones. To disinfect, pre-clean the area, spray the disinfectant of your choice on the surface until covered with mist, let stand for 10 minutes to air dry. If disinfecting a food surface, rinse thoroughly.
6. Clean inside your refrigerator. Temporarily remove all the food and place items in a cooler. Wipe walls and shelves with hot water and a mild liquid dishwashing detergent then rinse. Remember to clean drawers and drip pans. Don't forget the ice maker and water dispenser on the door too. Check the owner's manual for advice on cleaning if in doubt.



7. Organize cords and cables. Use a binder clip or label maker to separate, mark and store each cord neatly. For easy storage, hang them on the inside of a closet door with a removable hook.
8. Prepare meals and snacks ahead of time. Wash, peel, slice, dice and chop all the vegetables for this week's meals + snacks. You'll be much more likely to consume everything you've purchased if it's conveniently located and ready to eat.
9. Purge your home of unwanted craft supplies. Donate or throw away any craft paper, paint, pens, markers, adhesives, tools, and yarn you don't want. Store what you keep in one place. Group similar items. Altoid tins are a great place to keep small items like safety pins, dice, etc. Alternatively, clear plastic bins make it easy to find what you're looking for –no label required.
10. Update your passwords. For security, avoid your pet's name, your children's names and other common words and phrases. To easily remember passwords, create a formula. Some of my creative clients have combined the name of a neighbor's pet followed by the last three digits of their childhood phone number plus the first two letters of their license plate. Do what works for you!
11. Declutter the cabinet under your kitchen sink. Store cleaning supplies in bins for easy access. If you tend to get ants and/or roaches, thoroughly clean the area and place fresh traps. Save a clean jar and lid to dispose of fat, grease and oil drippings — they should never go down the sink.
12. Launder "dust magnets" in your home. Clean bath mats, throw rugs, blankets, slip covers, decorative pillows, pet bedding, and stuffed animals.
13. Prune your cache of kitchen containers. Recycle your rarely used food storage containers. Check cabinets for containers that are missing their lids. For a fresh start, order a set of square containers with lids because square containers use less space and stack easily.
14. Rotate the area rugs in your home. It helps prevent fading and general wear and tear. If your carpet needs a professional cleaning, schedule it. Remember to crate or board your pets on carpet cleaning day so they don't slip out an open door.
15. Discard, recycle or donate old magazines, catalogs and newspapers. Store the keepers in magazine holders. Toss old issues every three months.
16. Throw away product manuals. In a pinch, check out ManualsOnline.com to access product manuals from anywhere.
17. Create a system for organizing all the paper in your office and home. Designate specific areas for receipts, mail, and your kids' homework.
18. Organize your books. Donate, sell or swap books you aren't going to read. Create a storage system for your keepers. Organize by author, color, genre, size or subject. Pull spines toward the front edge of the shelf for easy cleaning.
19. Declutter your DVR. Delete programs you don't have time to watch, don't want to watch or don't need to watch.
20. Clean all the window ledges throughout your home. Target high humidity areas where mold might be growing — the bathroom, kitchen and laundry room. Lift and shift window treatments to remove dust, cobwebs and debris.
21. Find out what your savings bonds are worth. Go to TreasuryDirect.gov and calculate each specific rate. Remember, bonds that are more the 30 years old have matured and aren't earning interest anymore. [Schedule a time](#) to meet with your financial planner.
22. Swap handbags. Clean out your winter handbag and trade it in for your favorite seasonal purse. While switching, declutter anything that doesn't belong in there.



23. Organize your shoes. Pick up any shoes around the house. Choose a shoe storage solution for your master closet. Clear plastic boxes are the easiest way to quickly find your favorite pair. You might consider purchasing a shoe rack or storage bench.

24. Set up a mail station. Check the mail when you have a few minutes to sort through it. Set a small trashcan and shredder near your entryway where you can immediately throw away envelopes and junk mail. Store a small pile of stamped envelopes and pay bills as they come in. Take any other documents into your office to be filed, scanned or shredded.

25. Create an age-appropriate chore list for each of your children.

26. Rotate the food in your pantry. Check expiration dates and pull older items toward the front. Some items — distilled white vinegar, honey, unopened maple syrup, salt, sugar, pure vanilla extract — last indefinitely when stored in a cool, dark place. Put a bay leaf in your rice canister to repel bugs.

27. Sort through your “everything” drawer. Donate, recycle or throw away anything old, damaged, unused or unwanted.

28. Organize your recipes. Curate recipes and keep them in one place. For loose paper, group similar recipes and store in a binder with plastic sheet protectors.

29. Shred old documents. Papers containing your private information need to be shredded to protect you from identity theft. Documents such as:

- credit reports
- bank statements
- insurance information
- medical receipts
- tax statements

If you don't already have a shredder, choose one that has a cross-cut design, shreds credit cards and CDs and empties through a drawer.

30. Clean your car, including the trunk. Remove everything, throw away any trash you've collected and decide what needs to be put back into the car. Choose which, if any, organizing gadgets or containers you need and put them to good use.

31. Reward yourself; take some “me time” Spend at least a few minutes doing what you love. Spend time with your family, read, take a bath, go for a walk and listen to a SMEAD podcast. Recharge + reboot!

For more inspiration, read this companion article I wrote [Declutter Your Home in a Jiffy](#) Geralin Thomas, Professional Organizer.

Geralin's Website: www.MetropolitanOrganizing.com

