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5-MINUTE SOLUTION
Cushions and throws offer a quick seasonal update

LAYERED LOOK A tray on top of a durable new ottoman holds magazines and remote controls. Under a table swiped from the spare room, a \$20 junk shop suitcase contains dress-up clothes—most toys live in the main-floor utility closet, converted to toy storage. Small white table, \$100, coffee table/bench, \$600, both Indoors & Out Floral pillow, Contantine Interiors. Red leather floor cushion, \$125, Rumah.

RIGHT Me and my favourite clutter makers, husband Derek and son Cameron.



spring clean

CF's Senior Editor Brandie Weikle calls in the pros to help conquer her family's clutter

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL GRAYDON
PROP STYLING BY SASHA SEYMOUR



OUTTA SIGHT Clutter Wrangler Jaclyn Rae quickly corrals some of Cameron's toys in an inexpensive import shop basket once used as under-bed storage for out-of-season clothes.

WE'D BEEN LIVING IN OUR HOUSE for more than a year, and while it certainly felt like home, we were frustrated by our lack of "systems." Technically our move gave us space - an extra bedroom, an outdoor storage shed, a garage, slightly bigger main rooms - but the tiny closets of our nearly 100-year-old "new" house meant every organizing vessel we'd used in our first place didn't fit. And we felt desperately short on time to source the new rods, bins and shelving we needed - not to mention the energy and will to face the sorting and purging! The front hall closet seethed with shoes, coats, mitts and scarves, paper skidded across the kitchen counter (but seemed curiously hard to find when anyone needed to jot down a phone message), and the toys were threatening a *coup d'état*.

It was time for action. I grabbed the cute brochure for Jaclyn the Clutter Wrangler, snagged at a one-of-a-kind clothing store, and dialed her number.

When the appointed day came, Jaclyn arrived on her bicycle and rolled up her sleeves. I showed her around and said that we thought at least part of the answer to our problems lay in the attic, which we hadn't set foot in since the home inspection. Once we had the rickety pull-down ladder replaced and the energy-leaking space properly insulated, we could install shelves and start using the room for out-of-season clothes, outgrown toys, bins of Christmas decorations, and all the detritus of family life currently bulging out of our home. >

Swimming
Mon-
6:00

**2-HOUR
SOLUTION**

Use fabric, ribbon and batting to make a custom memo board, a stylish way to display kids' art, photos and other mementoes.



HOLD THE PHONE A \$10 church bazaar chair is moved to the kitchen to define a cozy message nook. An old-school phone actually encourages me to forget multi-tasking and sit down now and again. Chair, \$10; \$54. Indoor & Out, Essex to go, \$30; wicker basket, \$30; both from Vintage phone, \$87. Kama Design and Gallery.

TRAY CHIC (Left) The red cover is pressed into service with a basket for bills, and a pencil holder and tray for message-taking (no more scribbling on the back of junk mail envelopes!). Our two-newspaper-a-day habit is managed by a large, totable basket.

ARTIST BY THE WINDOW (Right) We'd had enough of the clunky plastic doctor's office - thanks, Grandma - so it went on sabbatical to make room for an easel and stool. Vinyl mushroom stool, \$295, and bumper set by Dwell, \$450, both Nestings Kids. Kintsey carpet, \$200, and Mala paper roll, \$8, and Mala wooden abacus, \$13, all Ikea. Colouring book, \$6, Spotted Zebra.

PULL OUT AND PLAY (Below) Making use of space under the bed, a trundle tray rolls out to reveal a fun art and play centre.



1-HOUR SOLUTION
Customize your trundle box by adding a dowel for craft paper and ribbon.

Until now the project had seemed mammoth, but Jaclyn grabbed the calendar and helped us make a priority list and timeline. Next, she and I hit the home office/guest room. I didn't know where to start, but Jaclyn advised that we should just pick one corner, plow through it and move clockwise around the room.

In the months that followed, we executed Jaclyn's plan, checking in along the way. Once the attic was ready, she helped us sort out and move stuff up there. Our decluttering is still a work-in-progress - like you, we've discovered that home projects happen slowly when you have a three-year-old assistant. But what you'll see here are the results of the great start we've had with help from Jaclyn - and the crack design team at Canadian Family that made things look pretty. Just don't pop by and look in my bedroom closet - yet.

Confession: The white slipcovers we purchased pre-Cameron don't always look this clean (I'm thankful for bleach). Next time I'll choose the wipe-off beige microfibre! **CF**



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QUICK CHANGE A storage trunk switched places with this table to create a pretty vignette and a place for keys.

DECLUTTERING DO's

Here are some of Jaclyn Rae's tips for clearing your space and your head. (Find her at clutterwrangler.com.)

1. Handle things only once The most common mistake in organizing is putting off decisions. So if you find yourself saying, "That shirt is not very flattering on me," put it in a bag to be donated straight away.

2. Use little tools with big impact A recycling bin under the mailbox, cup hooks by the door for keys, a file on your desk for unpaid bills - these little tricks help you form habits that eliminate stress-inducing searches for stuff.

3. Don't have multiple locations for the same items For example, each home should have one "paper-control centre," where mail, school notices, phone messages, calendar, etc., are kept.

4. Tackle big organizing projects in small chunks Make regular dates with yourself to tackle it one hour at a time. When the time is up, you're done no matter what. Organizing to exhaustion or frustration is not worth it. If it's one-time projects that are at issue, make deadlines like "buy shelving for the laundry room by April 30," "switch seasonal wardrobe by May 31."

5. Never leave a room empty-handed Return one thing to its place as you move from one part of the house to another. A little every day is better than a big cleanathon.

6. Go through your child's stuff every six months Make a routine with your child of donating clothes and toys to charity and archiving art and school work. Think about how much you really need to save as keepsakes - one try outfit and a couple of special toys is enough. For items stored for future children, use clear plastic bins labelled "18-24 mo. girls clothes," "0-1 yr toys," and place on utility shelving in your basement, attic or garage.

7. Get storage off the floor A bookshelf that's screwed into the wall at your child's eye level will leave more room for her to play.



SLUSH BUCKET (Above) Most of our shoes live in an organizer in the hall closet, but there's just enough room on this tray for each of us to place a pair of soggy shoes or boots. Cast aluminum tray, \$59, Indoors & Out.

15-MINUTE SOLUTION
Pour pea gravel into a waterproof tray for wet boots.

What I learned: Don't wait for a miracle weekend. Pick a drawer or closet shelf and see what you can do in 20 minutes

To read our complete interview with Clutter Wrangler Jaclyn Rae and a journal of Brandie's big sort, go to canadianfamily.ca.

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