



The Junk Drawer: A Montecito Tradition?

Even luxury homes have a junk drawer or two deserving an annual clearing and cleaning

I'm going to take a bold step here and posit that literally every Montecito residence – including my own – has at least one junk drawer. Are those receptacles of random stuff a metaphor for how you live your life? I'll leave the answer to the psychologists, but, just in case that answer is "Yes," let's remember, experts suggest you regularly tidy up and organize not only your life in general, but also the dreaded junk drawer. Don't wait for Spring cleaning. Any time you feel the urge – or receive a nudge from your conscience or significant other-- is the perfect time to get rid of, or at least de-clutter the clutter.

As I said, just about everyone I know here in Montecito has one, two or more junk drawers. You know, the ones that get filled up with mainly needless rubbish? What's more stressful than digging through a pile of impractical odds and ends to find the one little thing you need? Wouldn't it be better to get rid of all those useless things once and for all this year? After all, a new year means a new you, starting with new clean drawers.

Read: [Using Mindfulness to Tackle Clutter](#)

Some people fill their junk drawer with things begging procrastination, like a letter that needs a non-urgent reply. Or those practical items that might come in handy at some point in the future, such as nails, pins, a single battery, even zip ties. Other folks ignore their junk drawer just because cleaning it feels overwhelming. All junk drawer collectors have one thing in common: the mindset that they'll clean it later.

For valuable tips on de-cluttering your life, follow organization expert [Marie Kondo on Instagram](#). She shares excellent advice on de-cluttering your life. Kondo also has a new unscripted show called [Tidying Up With Marie Kondo](#) that will soon be streaming on Netflix. The home- and self-improvement guru says, "I will be guiding individuals who are at a crossroads to spark joy in their homes and lives."

For now, you can read her tips on Instagram or pick up a copy of her best-selling book [The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing](#). The book is a step-by-step guide to organizing, storing, and simplifying, all geared toward turning your home (and junk drawer) into a permanently clean and clutter-free space. Isn't that something we all want? I know I do.

Read: [Getting rid of clutter in your home is good for your health](#)

Before you tackle your entire home, start by using these 6 tips designed to help you transform your old junk drawers into something useful:

1) Take out everything

In order to organize your junk drawer, you must begin by taking all the stuff out at once. Place it on a single flat surface like a large table or even the floor so you can see what you have. (For those who have more than 1 drawer filled with junk, tackle them one at a time.)

2) Scrub it clean

Your empty drawer is now ready for a deep cleaning. Start by vacuuming out every crumb. Next, wipe the drawer down. Keep in mind, most finished wood drawers have not been coated, sealed or finished. So, never use harsh chemicals, and take great care to not saturate the drawer. That can cause it to warp. (The cleaning experts suggest you add dish soap and warm water to a microfiber rag.) Finally, clean the outside, too.

3) Divide your drawer mess into piles

As you sort through your stuff, ask yourself: Do I *really* need this? Put the stuff you took out of your junk drawer into 3 categorical piles: 1 to keep, 1 to throw out, and a final one to donate. For instance, lump all the pens together and stack the miscellaneous receipts and pieces of paper together. Once everything you're keeping has been divided, it's easy to determine where to place each pile.

4) Add drawer liners

Pick up some drawer liners. You don't need to get plain ones. Pick up some liners that speak to you. Liners will simplify clean-up by protecting your drawer from stains and food particles.

5) Buy some drawer organizers

You can't streamline a space, especially a drawer, without organizers. You can find these just about anywhere: at the drug store, home good shop, or even some supermarkets. Before you pick some up, determine how many you will need, and measure your drawer to make sure what you pick up will fit. You may even have some perfect organizers at home in the form of old shoeboxes, tiny pots, old jewelry boxes, etc.

6) Be selective about what you keep

Don't allow that drawer to be filled up again with mess. Easier said than done. But the first step is to commit to maintaining your new, clean system. Don't just toss things willy-nilly any longer. As they say, practice makes perfect. In no time, your new habits will come naturally.



Read: [Negative Energy: 4 Ways to Kiss It Good-bye in Your Home](#)

As I stated above, since your junk drawer might be a reminder of how you've been living your life, cleaning and straightening them might have inherent value beyond avoiding embarrassment. It can be the first step toward a healthy, uncluttered existence. But don't get down on yourself for creating such a mess in the first place. As humans, we fall prey to old habits. We must consciously look at areas of our lives that need cleaning up, and then methodically and proactively get to work. And then remember to keep doing it.

If cleansing your life includes a new home, in [Montecito, Hope Ranch or any of Santa Barbara's upscale communities](#), give me a call at 805.886.9378 or email me at Cristal@montecito-estate.com. I'll happily find your new dream home in this world-class corner of the world. It just might give you incentive for a new, uncluttered life; especially when it comes to the dreaded junk drawer.