

S O U T H S O U N D

At home with
VICCI MARTINEZ

Life after *The Voice* — and why she chose
to record her new album in Tacoma

+23 AWARD-WINNING
KITCHEN AND
BATH DESIGNS



MAKE HOT CHOCOLATE
AND MARSHMALLOWS

SNOW DAY!
FAMILY FUN

HEALTHY WORKOUTS
AND FRESH BITES

25 WAYS TO ORGANIZE

BY LINDA JENKINS

How to Keep Household Clutter at Bay

Your kids and their toys

- 1 Make cleaning up part of your kids' evening routine. Waking up to an organized living space helps make the morning rush smoother.
- 2 Have kids choose a toy to donate before they can bring in another.
- 3 Use a label maker, or picture labels for younger kids, to remind them where things go.
- 4 Choose a display wall for kids' artwork, using picture rails or a clothing line with clips. Let kids decide what stays and goes. Try an app like Artkive (artkiveapp.com) to save and store their artwork.
- 5 Create a school work center with in and out boxes to organize permission slips and homework. Repurpose sturdy containers and jars for fun supply storage.
- 6 Set aside a day to try on seasonal clothes and gear — before you buy, know if outerwear, sports equipment and shoes have another year in them.

With our busy families and active lifestyles, clutter can be a challenge in many Northwest homes. If you want to get organized but time is short, here are simple tips to keep household clutter at bay.



Your kitchen

- 7 Get rid of anything expired, broken or stale.
- 8 Write the date you opened a food item on its lid. Circle expiration dates.
- 9 Don't have duplicates of kitchen tools unless two people use them at once. Invest in good kitchen tools instead of multiples.
- 10 Organize pantry staples in clear, airtight containers. Food will stay fresher, and you may be inspired to use what you have if you can see it.
- 11 Plan weekly meals with input from your family so you're not buying food that will go uneaten.
- 12 Sort and donate unused food. Let kids be part of this — it will remind you what the family is really eating, and help kids gain a good lesson in giving to those in need.



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Your multipurpose living space



13 Borrow the East Coast concept of a mud room. Create a drop-off space with hooks and shelves near the door.

14 Choose sturdy vintage pieces to create one-of-a-kind storage solutions. Visit the Modern Cottage Company (2225 N. 30th St., Tacoma) for ideas and inspiration.

15 Use a charging station for the family's electronics. Consider mobile chargers like Halo (halo2cloud.com).

16 Pare down pillows and throws to the few that add something to the room or get used often.

17 Find a decorative box or basket to corral remote controls. Learn how to program one remote, or your mobile phone, so it can control multiple devices.

18 Avoid floating accents — if you can't find the perfect spot for it, donate or store it.

For what's left

19 Schedule a donation pick-up from a charity like The Arc of Washington (donatewa.org).

20 Sell your gently used items online at consignment sites like ThredUp (thredup.com) or Twice (liketwice.com).

21 Join a local Facebook buy, sell or trade group in your area.

22 Plan a group garage sale to pool resources and increase interest.

23 Donate used books to a Little Free Library (littlefreelibrary.org) in your neighborhood.

24 Use a shredding service like Iron Mountain (ironmountain.com) or watch for community shredding days sponsored by cities and civic groups.

For more help

25 Contact a South Sound professional organizer like Ship Shape Home Organizing (shipshapehomeorganizing.com). An organizer works with you to declutter your space and get you on your way to staying organized.

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