

# 10 Helpful Organizing Ideas to Do Every January

## 1. Make your own calendar with family photos

Make your own calendars with photos from things you did in that particular month in the past year. So every January you are looking at activities from last January. It becomes a great memory book – like creating a photo album. Put pictures on the top page as well as in blank squares on the calendar pages, if possible. Holiday graphics can also add to the decor. Try drug stores, office stores, or places that make custom photo calendars like Shutterfly and Mixbook. My daughter makes us one with photos of our grandkids. (last week in Dec./1<sup>st</sup> week in Jan.)

## 2. Calendar birthdays/anniversaries

Put birthdays/anniversaries in red ink on a paper wall calendar (and in your computer calendar) to visually remind you that the event is coming up. This is even more important if you do not buy cards in bulk but specifically for each person. Shop for cards once a month – but remember to check for birthdays in the first few days of the next month so those go out in time.

## 3. Calendar social events

If you have children, this idea works great even for preschoolers who can't read.

It's also great for partners and family members to stop asking

“When is ... the doctor appt.? the birthday party? the camping trip? etc.

*Tip: Use whiteout to change dates or information.*

- Choose a color) for: you, your partner and each child. (highlighter for print)  
It's even better if each child gets their favorite color. (red is pink highlighter)
- Use black) for events the entire family will attend. (no highlighter)

i.e., Football games and dance recitals for the family are black (whole family attends).

Football practices for Johnny are green.

Ballet lessons for Sally are pink.

## 4. Schedule annual doctor appointments.

Schedule as early as possible to get appointments when you want them. A good time to consider is birthdays for annual exams from regular doctor check-ups like: primary care, eye, dentist, gyne, urologist doctors as well as specialty exams like bone density, mammogram, pacemaker checks, etc.

## 5. Make labels for card lists

Make address labels for card lists on Excel (or Google Sheets) with all family and friend addresses to whom you send cards. Use Mail Merge Wizard under Mailings in Word to create the labels.

- a. One list is in date order for birthdays and anniversaries. (individual names)
- b. The other list is in alphabetical order by last name for holiday cards. (family = Mr. and Mrs.)

Print the labels every January and you have all your labels ready to go for the year. Just peel off the label and put it on the card envelope when you're ready to send it out.

*Note: You can print the holiday labels in November and just create the list now in case you need to change address info because someone moves.*

## 6. Plan your holiday trips, vacations and local entertainment

Decide where and when you want to go for the year. Maybe it's a trip to Mt. Rushmore, Washington DC, Florida or Disneyland. Maybe it's local like a zoo or museum membership. Maybe it's theater tickets or baseball season tickets. Don't forget to add these to your budget.

## 7. Change safety batteries

Change the batteries in all smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Don't wait until the detectors beep at 3am. *(It's not fun getting on a ladder at 3am to stop the constant beeping!)*

## 8. Create your budget and track expenses

Use a spreadsheet and budget your expenses for the year. Start with your average monthly bills and fill in exact numbers when you receive the bill.

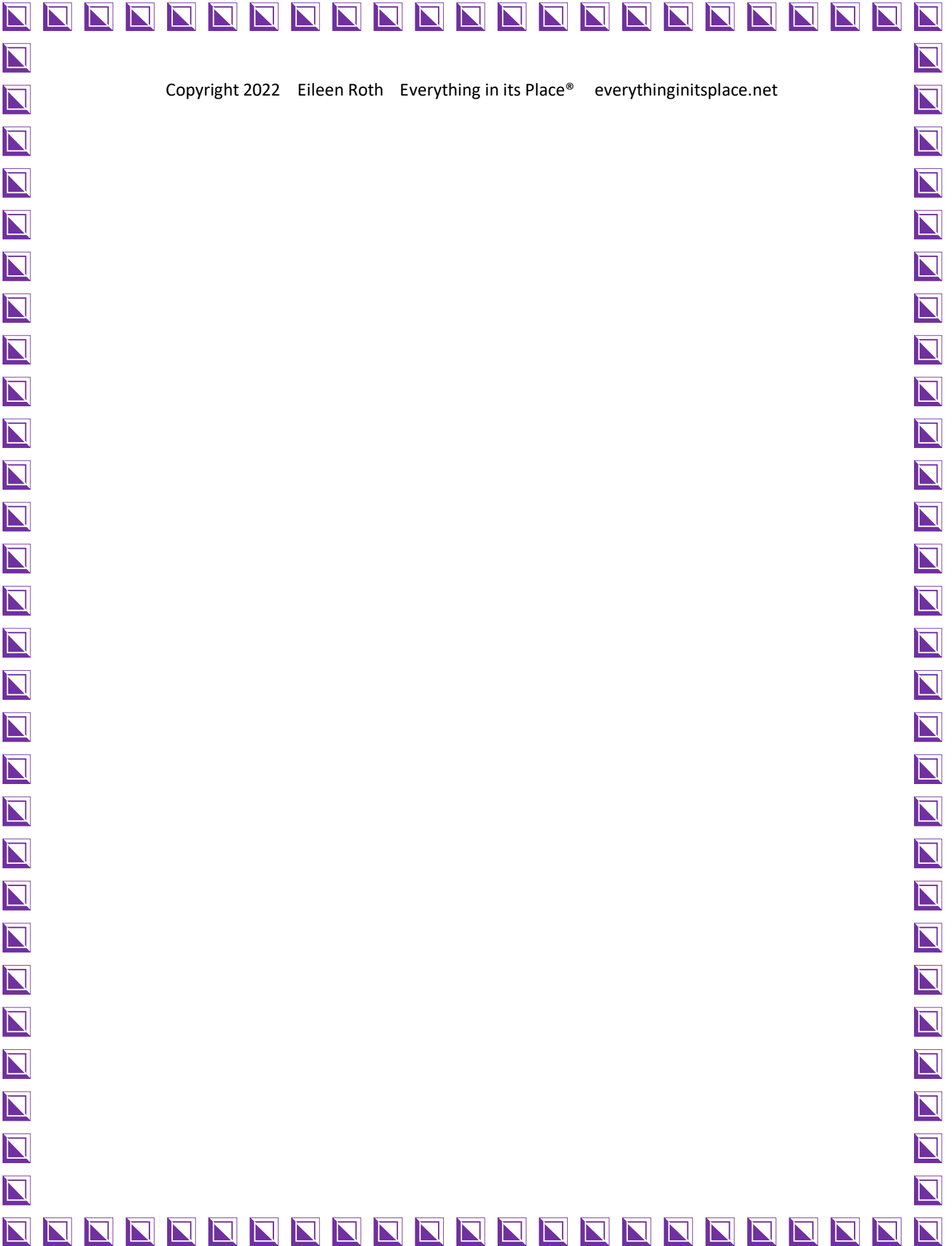
## 9. Start your Tax Return

It's not due until April 15<sup>th</sup> in the US, but start putting information together for your tax return, whether you do it yourself or turn documents over to a tax person. You might want to schedule 1-2 hours a week to prepare the information.

Collect all the necessary forms and backup in one file folder marked Tax Return and Year. Color code your check register and your credit card bills to find tax information quickly when you're ready to put it on a spreadsheet or give to your tax person.

## 10. Declutter: home, papers, computer, photos

There are usually a few days in winter that's so cold outside you don't want to go out. That's the time to declutter whether it's your house, papers, computer files, or photos. Discard anything you no longer need or use. After you declutter, organize what you are using and keeping.



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