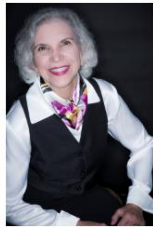
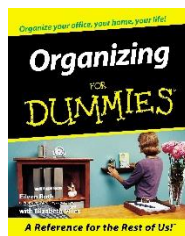


How to Stop Piles to Save Time and Enjoy Your Home



Eileen Roth



Your Organizing Tour Guide for Success™



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How to Stop Piles

To Pile it or Not to Pile

When piles start, they are easy to keep growing.

No water needed.



When you put one thing down, you are starting a pile. You get lazy and don't want to put something away, especially if it means going down a hall to another room or having to go upstairs or downstairs to put something where it belongs.

Two flights of stairs or more makes it even easier to say "I'll just put it here for now," and the piles start. It can stay there for days, weeks, or even months.

Homer (studied admiral law) and Langley Collyer (concert pianist who had studied engineering and chemistry) were hoarders. They actually died in a NY home in 1947 because they had piles everywhere. It was so bad the police had to break into the 2nd floor window because they couldn't get in the front door. And it took several weeks after finding one brother dead before they uncovered the second brother. They ended up removing 140 tons of collected items from the home. (books, furniture, newspapers, musical instruments, car parts, etc.)

What's wrong with piles?

Well, how do you feel when you look at piles in your home?

a. **The piles remind you that you did NOT put things away.**

There's half a dozen different items in the pile that have to go to half a dozen different places. You're stalling because it seems like too much work to run all over the house to so many places. So the pile gets bigger.

And the pile silently complains to you, "When are you going to put everything away?" as one more item gets added to it.

b. The piles make you feel bad about yourself.

And when you feel bad about yourself, it lowers your self-esteem.

Your partner complains, *“When are you going to clean up the table?”*
(or counter or stairs)

Your kids complain, *“Where is my stuffed animal?”* because that stuffed animal is in a pile ... somewhere. (homework, permission slip, book, comic book, toy, game)

c. The piles embarrass you.

The piles reflect on your ability as a housekeeper – to your friends, to your neighbors, to your kids’ friends, to the parents of your kids’ friends.

Are you embarrassed to invite a neighbor over for coffee?

Do you tell your kids they can’t invite friends over for fear their parents will see your mess?



How do Piles Start?

To create a pile, you take an item and add it to another item. Instant pile.

You might have been distracted, like getting a cell phone call. So you put something down and didn't put it away.

The next time you have something to put away you tell yourself,

“That’s okay. I’ll just put the sweater on top of the new scarf I bought. When I put away the scarf, I’ll also put away the sweater.”

Next time you look, there’s a pile.

- The new scarf is lost on the bottom, basically invisible, because the sweater is over it.
- The sweater is half hidden because on top of the sweater is a t-shirt.
- The t-shirt is then covered by another sweater
- And that sweater is covered by a jacket.

And the pile gets higher and higher until it falls over. When you pick it up and put it back where it was (on a table or on the couch), it’s not neat at all. In fact, everything is now squished.

You wonder if you should wash the whole pile, but you don’t have time, so you just leave it there.

Meanwhile your mind is still working:

Wash it; don’t wash it.

Put it away now; put it away later.

The second option usually wins out = don’t wash it and put it away later. When is later? Today? Tomorrow? Next week? Next month? Next year?

How long will the pile sit there?

Eventually there are piles everywhere in your home.

- Paper piles
- Magazine piles
- Toy piles
- Game piles
- Lego-pieces piles
- Clothes piles
- Towel piles
- Hardware piles
- Stationery piles
- Book piles
- Puzzle piles
- Coupon piles
- Office supply piles
- And even dirty-dish piles



Assorted piles

Most piles don't contain just one type of item. In one pile you can find any combination of these items in one pile.

- papers
- receipts
- jewelry
- clothes
- toys
- pens/markers
- money
- jackets
- shoes
- dirty dishes
- food - especially small packs of candy or gum

How do you stop having piles?

You probably know these, but do you actually do them?

1. Take it out; put it back.

When you are done using something, put it away – even if:

- it is to the other side of the house
- it goes in the garage
- it goes outside in the garden shed
- you have to walk up the stairs

Do you know how dangerous it is to keep a bucket/box on the stairs?

Someone could fall and get seriously hurt falling over the bucket/box. Plus the bucket/box could get knocked over and then you have to pick it all up again.

You get both free exercise and peace of mind knowing everything is in its place.

When?

As soon as you are done using it. (or when the laundry is dry.)

- Do not put it into another pile.
- Do not just put it down on a counter.
- Do not just put it down on a table.
- Do not just put it down on a bed.
- Do not just throw it on a couch.
- Do not stuff it in a closet.
- Do not toss it in a drawer.

**Put it neatly away.
Put it back where it belongs.
In the room where it is usually used.**

Where is it used?

I purposely didn't say "*put it back where it was*" because that might not have been the right place for the item. It might have just been on the counter or on a table and not where it belongs.

And it might not even have been in the room where it is usually used. Yes, that means sometimes you have duplicates – i.e. scissors in the kitchen, scissors in the office, scissors in the bathroom – all of which are easy to access when needed in that room. It will save you the time of walking to another room to get one when you need it. The same goes for pens and markers being in the room where you use them.

Markers

I need a marker in the kitchen, a black marker to write the contents and date of items being wrapped in aluminum foil for the freezer. I don't need a whole box, just one black permanent marker.

Scissors

Bathroom scissors are two different ones:

- One for cutting your nails (small)
- One for cutting off tickets or strings on clothes

And there are two different kitchen scissors:

- One for cutting food (stainless so won't rust when washed)
- One for cutting papers or aluminum foil.

Gift Wrap Center

If you have a special place to wrap gifts, then you might want a scissors there too. Those special blades that just zip thru wrapping paper are great, but they don't work if you want to make fancy curls on a ribbon.

However, if you wrap where there already is a scissors, like the office or kitchen, you do not need another one with the gift wrap paper.

2. Don't start a pile.

Don't start a pile.

Then there are no piles.

Put dirty laundry in a laundry basket, not the floor or counter.
Have a laundry basket in each room.
Hang up your jackets in a closet or rack.

Cleanup right after a meal.



Put dishes in the dishwasher or wash them and put them away. If you leave them to air dry, put them away soon afterwards.

Get up in the morning to a clean kitchen.

Put items away as soon as you get home.

You don't let the groceries that need to go in the refrigerator or freezer sit on the counter, so finish putting away all the rest of the groceries at the same time.

When you walk in the door, anything you bring into the house should be put where it belongs, not just dropped off on a counter or a family room couch.

Put everything in its place where it belongs.

3. Establish a daily cleanup routine before bedtime. *(if needed)*

Set aside 20-30 minutes for the family to clean-up any items that were not put away during the day.

How to Remove Piles Easily

Instead of adding to a pile -- **subtract** from a pile.

1. As you start to put something down, or add to a pile, pick something else up from the pile instead. You now have 2 items.
2. Put those 2 items where each item belongs.
Now there are 2 less items in the pile. (subtracting)
3. Repeat the above steps until the pile is gone.
Note: It's okay to take more than 2 items to put away at one time!
4. The next time you want to add to a pile, grab another item instead, and put them both away. Keep doing this until all items are gone from every pile.

Follow this simple rule:

Put everything in its place.

Never put anything down that doesn't belong there.
When you do that, **there are no piles.**

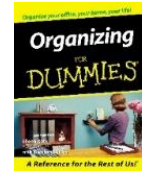


Everything in its Place®



Eileen Roth

Your Organizing Tour Guide for Success



As the author of *Organizing For Dummies*®, Eileen Roth demonstrates how to be more productive, reduce your stress, and save time and money. Eileen named her company Everything in its Place® because she truly believes that you can find a place for everything.

Eileen is a national speaker, trainer and productivity expert in the areas of:

Office Organization
Time Management

Home Organization
Student Organization

She helps people learn how to put everything in its P.L.A.C.E.™ This reduces stress and people find things WHEN they need them. Eileen Roth’s organizing principles are simple to remember, easy to implement, and maintenance is minutes a day to stay that way.

Eileen Roth’s background stems from over 15 years in office and association administration. Clients include corporations, associations, and research facilities such as: Argonne National Labs, Northwest Airlines, the Paper Industry Manufacturer’s Association, Wisconsin Bankers Association, ABA-New England and TAP Pharmaceuticals.

Major National Media

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