

# Organize Your Junk Drawer

This household catchall doesn't have to be your dirty little secret

**20 min. Empty, sort, toss** Lay all of the contents of your drawer on a clean, uncluttered surface. Once it's all in front of you, group like items together (pens with pencils, tape with scissors). As categories emerge, discard duplicates or anything outdated, broken or incomplete (toss pens without caps, recycle old phone chargers). Put things that don't belong in the drawer—sewing kits and golf tees—in a plastic bag and find homes for these later. “The stuff in a junk drawer is like an old prom dress. You know you should get rid of it, but you just can't,” says Peter Walsh, declutter expert and author of *Enough Already*. “But that doesn't mean the drawer should be the place for things you are too lazy to put away.” Still, don't be overly rigid—a memento or two isn't going to throw your drawer (or life) into chaos.

**30 min. Revamp and repurpose** Add whimsy to your drawer by sprucing it up with storage items from around the house. “You want to open it up and smile,” says Libby Langdon, author of *Small Space Solutions: Stylish Design Ideas for Every Room—and Every Budget*. Votive holders, jewelry boxes or tea cups can hold keys, paper clips and loose change. Ring dishes work well to keep rubber bands tidy. For extra pop, decorate the sides of the drawer with colorful drawer liner or wallpaper (from \$6/roll; [wallpaperdiscount.com](http://wallpaperdiscount.com)). Line the bottom with a place mat (cotton Owen place mat, above right, \$5; [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com)) or a non-skid rubber mat, so the holders will stay put.

**10 min. Put it all away** Place your piles into assorted containers so they don't spill over (that's how things get messy in the first place). Think of your drawer as a puzzle: Everything should fit neatly. Keep the things you use often near the front, spare keys toward the back. —MICHELLE HAINER

**Our Experts** Sara Eizen, owner, Nest ([nestseattle.com](http://nestseattle.com)); Libby Langdon, author; Julie Morgenstern, author, *Shed Your Stuff, Change Your Life*; Sharon Tindell, chief merchandising officer, the Container Store; Peter Walsh, author

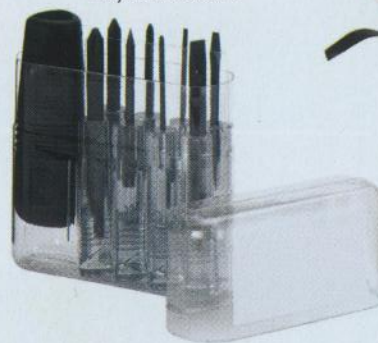
**KEEP IT NEAT**  
Re-weed your “junk” every few months or aim for weekly maintenance: When you are on the phone, open up the drawer, sift through and purge.



## STRAIGHTEN UP

**HARDWARE HELPER**  
If you stash tools in your junk drawer, consider a compact and lightweight kit.

Mini screwdriver set, \$9; at Muji, [muji.us](http://muji.us) for stores.



**FILE SHARE**  
Keep menus or coupons well ordered in a bright folder that ties up neatly to slip into your drawer.

Accordion file folder, 13½" x 9½", Semikolon, \$32; [seejanework.com](http://seejanework.com).