

**BY DESIGN | KITCHENS**

# Clear clutter from crucial areas

Fridge, spice rack, silverware drawer good places to start

By **Paulita Kincer**  
FOR THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

The Clutter Queen does not need to peek inside everyone's kitchen to know where clutter resides. She can say with authority that the refrigerator, silverware drawer, spice rack and that cave under the sink all need to be cleaned out.

"You can do tons of stuff to simplify kitchen life," said Jennifer Humes, aka the Clutter Queen ([www.clutterqueen.com](http://www.clutterqueen.com)). "It's possible to simplify just by rearranging and putting things where you need to get them."

She advises cleaning out the refrigerator at least once a month and buying a box of baking soda to soak up odors.

"If you'd go through it once a month, things wouldn't pile up. You would know what you have, and you could use the things you have," Humes said.

That would save money. But saving time is possible, too, if things are organized in the refrigerator.

Humes pulls everything out of the refrigerator once a month. As she removes things, she groups them on the counter ac-

ording to type: jams and jellies go together, sauces and dressings, food-preparation items.

Once everything is out, she wipes down the shelves. Then the useful items are returned to the refrigerator. Food-preparation items go on a shelf at eye level of the cook. Milks, juices and healthful snacks go at the eye level of the children.

"Anything at eye level will catch your eye and get your attention," Humes said.

The silverware drawer is another area that draws clutter. Empty the drawer and wash all of the silverware and the silverware caddy, Humes said.

"There are so many people getting in and out of there, you'd be amazed how many germs are in there," she said.

The spice area is another jumble because people have so many spices — many that they don't use. The best plan is to arrange spices so that labels can be seen. That means with a round spice caddy, put only a single row of spices on the perimeter. Or consider a three-tiered riser, with the spices used most often on the bottom.

If spices are organized on a door rack, write the name of the spice on the lid with a permanent marker. Otherwise each spice stacked behind the first row must be pulled out to see the label.

Mark the date purchased on each spice, Humes said. Then check the manufacturer's Web site to see how long the spice will be good.

Some spices are not used frequently, she said; for example, nutmeg is used mostly around the Christmas holidays. But if the spice is stored in an airtight container, it may not go bad from year to year.

That area under the sink becomes the dirtiest — ironic because cleaning supplies are frequently stored there, and should be, Humes said. But consider a pull-out tray or carrying caddies to hold the cleaners.

"It's great to have a caddy to put cleaning supplies in," she said. "You can pull it out (and) take it around with you wherever you go."

But keep only the cleaning products you use, she said.

"Don't keep them just because you might need them someday," Humes said.

Designate a place for everything in your home to go and put it there when you are finished with it, she said.

*Paulita Kincer is a freelance writer looking at home-decorating trends in central Ohio. Designers and renovators can nominate a completed project for a profile. Please call 614-461-5173 for a form.*



FILE PHOTO

Storing spices in a sliding door rack with low fronts is ideal. Spices can be kept out of sight until needed, and labels can be read.

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