



818 18th Street, NW • Suite 1000 • Washington, DC 20006  
202.728.7199 • fax: 202.728.7238 • [www.womenheart.org](http://www.womenheart.org)

## Ready, Set, GO! How getting organized can be heart-healthy

What's on your wish list for the new year? If you're like the vast majority of women, it will include eat better, exercise more, and, most likely, get organized. In fact, so many people list organization as one of their New Year's resolutions, the National Association of Professional Organizers named January as GO Month — as in "Get Organized". If de-cluttering your life is on your list this year, this is the time to get started, so that you can use the rest of the year to focus on all those other resolutions — all of which can add up to seriously good heart health.

- **A good spring cleaning is good for your heart.** Remember how your grandmother used to give her house a good airing just as the dogwood trees began to bloom? You can "spring clean" any time of year, even when the weather outside is frightful — in fact, it could be a good way to get some indoor exercise. Spring cleaning usually means tackling those jobs you don't do on a daily basis, like clearing cobwebs out of the corners of the ceilings, steamcleaning the rugs, and rounding up the multitudes of dust bunnies behind the couch.
- **A clean closet = a gym membership.** No, really. If your list of resolutions included getting more exercise, then consider cleaning out your closets, having a garage sale, and using the proceeds to join the local gym, take swing dance classes, or learn to sail. Use the power of your clutter to reach your goals!
- **Get rid of the candy stash.** Does your pantry still have Halloween candy tucked away in it? Once you finish with the closets, take a hard look at the refrigerator, freezer, and kitchen cabinets. Get rid of the old cans of cake frosting, the unidentifiable frozen stuff wrapped in yards of aluminum foil, and those little jars of mint jelly that came in that fruit basket from Aunt Hilda two years ago. Honestly, if you haven't eaten it yet, you are probably not going to eat it. Donate whatever you can to the local food bank and then use the empty shelves as a good opportunity to get started on that resolution to eat right.
- **Clear clutter at home and work.** If you clean your house meticulously and then walk into a desk piled high with old memos and empty boxes of raisins, then you are creating a stressful work environment before your work day even begins. Schedule an evening or a Saturday to sift through papers, shredding or filing them as you go, and sort through trash that's cluttering up your cubicle; while it may go against your instincts to go to work on your own time, consider it an important investment in your future productivity.

- **Use the “one in, one out” rule.** Maybe you got some gifts over the holidays — now it’s time to make room for them. For every new sweater, book, pair of earrings, or yoga mat, find something else that you can give to charity. And, if you got something that you really don’t love or need, then return it, exchange it, or give it to charity, too. Next year, if you want to keep the clutter to a minimum, ask your family and friends for gifts that won’t take up space in your home, like planting a tree or making a donation to WomenHeart in your name!
- **Get help.** Cleaning and organizing is physical work, which is good for your heart but can also wear you out. Ask friends and family to help, hire the neighbor’s kids to carry boxes to the attic or haul trash to the curb, and spread your tasks out over a few weekends. Smart planning will help you stay on track and in good health.

**Resources:**

**Cleaning Up the Clutter**

[http://www.consumeraffairs.com/boomerific/2010/012\\_cleaning\\_up\\_clutter.html](http://www.consumeraffairs.com/boomerific/2010/012_cleaning_up_clutter.html)

**Your Heart Needs More Than Housework**

<http://www.rodale.com/burn-calories-cleaning-house>

**Healthy Fall Housecleaning**

<http://tips.simplygoodstuff.com/healthy-fall-housecleaning/>