

ORGANIZING YOUR DESIGN STUDIO

As we all know a well-organized sewing room allows you to start and finish projects efficiently, because necessary tools and fabrics are at your fingertips. Yet, how many of you can say that you have that “well-organized” room? As we start a new year give your sewing room a fresh face-lift. Let us give you some pointers on how to reorganize your tools and stash, so you can finish projects with ease.

How your sewing machine, ironing board, and cutting table are laid out depends largely on the space you have available. However, step back and take a look at your sewing area, to make sure you have efficiently arranged each station. If you tend to use things in a certain order (piecing blocks on the machine then ironing those seams) arrange the stations so they are in a similar traffic pattern. You’ll take fewer steps and be more efficient at each station.

Make sure that tools are located where they get the most use. For example, don’t put your appliqué pressing sheet by the cutting table. Give it a permanent home by the ironing board where it will be used most often. It will be at an arm’s reach when you need it most. The same applies for tools at the other stations. Designate baskets/bins/boxes at each station for tools that you use frequently. Remember to replace things in their proper storage area so you’ll always know where they are.

Fabric is probably the thing we all have the most of. Sort your fabrics by color, and then organize within each color group. In your red category, for example, you might organize by batiks, novelty, florals, flannels, and homespuns. If you keep a consistent “filing system” in each color it will be easier to find what you’re looking for when you start a project. Be diligent about replacing fabrics to their proper place (or when inserting new fabrics), so that your system stays neat and tidy.

Vinyl project pouches with zippers have become a popular storage item. You can store in-progress projects in a single pouch, or you can use the see-through pouches for scraps, strips, or a kit. These pouches store flat, which makes it easy to tuck them on a shelf, in a box, in a filing cabinet, etc.

You owe it to yourself and your sewing area to make a trip to your local organizing store. Many states have Container Stores, and this is a great place to start. Spend time browsing and take brochures and measurements of the containers you see. Revisit your sewing area to decide which containers will work best for you. This can get expensive, so if you’re on a budget (or would rather spend money on fabric!) do the same search in your own home. Baskets, jars, buckets, trash cans, shoe boxes, zippered-sandwich bags in various sizes, coffee cans, can all be used to organize your supplies. Simply cover them with fusible-backed fabric for a decorator touch, and put them to work!

You’ll have more fun in your sewing room, and be more efficient, if your tools and supplies are easy to find. When you have a spare 10 minutes you’ll be able to dash into your sewing room and work on a project. Although it can be a little time consuming to set up your work area, take the time to do it right, and you’ll reap the benefits for years to come.

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