



**“Help! We have a serious clutter problem—every area and surface is covered,”** Susan Horn of St. Ignace, Michigan, told us in the entry that won her a professional kitchen clutter cleanup courtesy of WD and Glad ForceFlex. Turns out that, though Susan definitely needed help, her woes—jumbled cabinets, an unorganized pantry, a kitchen surface that caught everything—were pretty much universal. Luckily Betty Huotari of Logical Placement and Debbie Stanley from Red Letter Day Professional Organizers had a ton of chaos-control ideas.

# dream-come-true kitchen

Woman's Day and Glad ForceFlex  
clean up a contest winner's clutter

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN GOULD BESSLER

Debbie (left) and  
Susan start by  
clearing everything  
out of the cabinets.





“Look at everything you go to put away and ask: ‘Do I really need this?’”

### sort and purge

● **Creating a work space** Betty and Debbie borrowed banquet tables and set them up in Susan's living room. Then they removed everything from the kitchen cupboards and sorted it into categories. “It beats spreading things out on the floor,” says Betty. Boxes were labeled Donate, Yard Sale and Mementos.

● **Paring down duplicates** Once everything was out of the cupboards, Betty and Debbie were able to take stock of what Susan actually had. “We found large

quantities of plastic bags, plastic eating utensils, glassware, cookbooks and candles. Seeing all of it together made it easier for Susan to part with some of it.”

● **Tossing the old** “Obey expiration dates,” says Betty. “Getting rid of expired food and medicine, no questions asked, freed up a lot of space in Susan's pantry and cupboards.” Betty and Debbie also started a shopping list and added to it as items were purged. “In Susan's case, there were things like children's cold medicine that need to be replaced the next time she shops,” says Debbie.

● **Corralling collectibles** Susan's husband Gary's collection of beer steins atop the cabinets along the sink wall looked jumbled. The organizers boxed up most of them, keeping just a few to display above the fridge (1). A caveat: “As long as it doesn't crowd out other things, keep the sentimental stuff that makes you smile,” says Debbie.

### getting organized

● **Redirecting traffic** A key element in solving Susan's problems was putting items close to where they're used. “For most people it makes sense to keep dishes and glasses near the dishwasher or sink,” says Betty. “Food that kids can help themselves to should be within their reach, and anything that's off-limits to them must be stored out of sight.”

● **Making it clear** Susan had been using collectible tins for storage. The problem? She couldn't see inside, and the odd shapes made stacking impossible. The tins went in the Yard Sale box, and Susan got a new clear container system (2) called Sky Rail (neatcontainers.com), with transparent boxes that open easily

and stack in a honeycomb pattern: One can be pulled out without the rest collapsing. Other large clear plastic containers (3) hold items on the pantry and baker's rack shelves, creating a clean, streamlined look.

● **Beating paper pileup** The baker's rack that Susan had originally intended as a kitchen desk had become a chaotic catchall. Three simple Christopher Lowell office accessories (officedepot.com)—a

magazine file, bill organizer and letter tray—keep mail and paper neat (4).

Gladware containers in the drawers (5) hold office supplies. A dry-erase board (6) serves the same purpose as all the magnets and sticky notes on the fridge, but makes a huge

improvement cosmetically. Now appointments, to-do's and grocery lists are all in one easy-to-find spot.

● **Clearing things up** Allowing only daily- or regular-use appliances on countertops frees up valuable real estate (7).

### and finally

● **Starting small** If you have a lot of clutter, it can be daunting, says Debbie. “Promise to clean out just one cabinet or drawer. After that you'll probably be motivated to do more.”

Susan's reaction to her makeover: “Oh my gosh, it's great! Now I don't dread going into the kitchen.” **wd**

Want more? Go to [womansday.com](http://womansday.com) and click on “Web Links” at left.



From left: Betty, Susan and Debbie filled Glad ForceFlex trash bags with pared-down duplicates and items to be stored.

