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“Kitchen Refresh”

Spring is the perfect time to refresh and declutter your kitchen after months of busy holidays. As one of the most frequently used spaces in the home, the kitchen can quickly become cluttered with overcrowded cabinets, disorganized drawers, and forgotten food items. Taking time this spring to deep clean and declutter can create a space that feels fresh, functional, and ready for the months ahead.

Start by setting aside a day or even a weekend to focus on your kitchen. Work through one area at a time, such as cabinets, drawers, the pantry, the refrigerator, and the freezer. In each space, start at one spot and work your way around to ensure nothing is overlooked. As you go, sort items into four categories: keep, store, donate/sell, and throw away. Return only the items you regularly use to their proper spot, grouping similar items together so they are easy to find. For example, creating a baking area with flour, sugar, and mixing tools in one place can make cooking more efficient. Seasonal items, like holiday bakeware, can be stored in higher cabinets or in a separate storage area with other seasonal décor.

Cabinets and drawers often hide the most clutter. Remove everything, clean surfaces thoroughly, and allow them to dry before reorganizing. Toss broken or unused items. If you haven't used a utensil or gadget in a year, it may be time to let it go. Extra kitchen tools can be donated or passed along to someone who needs them. Using drawer organizers, bins, and baskets can help keep everything in its place. Store frequently used items between shoulder and knee height to make them easier to access.

Spring cleaning is also the perfect opportunity to focus on food safety. Check expiration dates as you declutter. Spices typically last six months to a year, and canned goods should be rotated so older items are used first. Pay attention to how long foods have been stored, especially home-canned items, which should be used within a year. In the refrigerator and freezer, remove all items, wipe down shelves and drawers, and label leftovers with dates to prevent waste.

Once your kitchen is clean and organized, maintaining it is key. Put groceries away immediately in the correct spot, clean out the fridge weekly, and return items to their proper place after use. Keeping the kitchen organized should be a shared effort. Encourage everyone in the household to take responsibility for putting items away and maintaining the system. It may take a few weeks for these habits to stick, but consistency will help create a routine that lasts. A well-organized kitchen not only looks and functions better, but it can also save money, reduce food waste, and make meal preparation safer and more enjoyable. By taking the time to declutter and reset your space now, you'll set yourself up for a smoother, more efficient kitchen all year long.

Information comes from Kansas State University Publications.