

## Book Organizing

To a lot people, books are like treasures. Old books hold a sense of nostalgia and quaintness for so many. But, the reality is, the knowledge they contain is the treasure. Due to technology, the information held in books becomes out of date more quickly than ever. When working with our Senior clients downsizing, it is not uncommon for us to put entire encyclopedias into the recycle bin, along with several bags of books. Too many books can cause problems for health and also pose an organizing challenge.

Scrapbook paper is acid-free so that it does not break down and yellow. However, newspapers, magazines, and books are not acid free and will break down quickly. Also, they collect dust and mold and the paper disintegrates over time. This contributes to poor air quality. The more stuff in your home, the harder it is to eliminate dust and other irritants. Cleaning around stacks of books and knick-knacks is more labor intensive. Paper is also a fire hazard, so it is best to minimize the amount you have in your home. Share your books with others now, before the information they hold is of no use.

### Step 1. Thinning out your library

Let go of books you won't read again, that are out of date, that you disliked, that have never been read and you don't intend to in the next 6 months. Paperbacks were designed to be inexpensive, not archival. Consider only keeping hardcover books, as these are designed to last. Remember that your local library has most of these books and an internet search can provide you with a lot of the reference information in books.



Remove torn dust jackets. You may choose to remove all the dust jackets, for a tidier look. Dust jackets are useful when you take hardcover books along with you, but don't do much good when on shelved books. Use a damp cloth to wipe down the shelves and books.

### Step 2. Arranging books

Categorize books by genre, topic, use, frequency of use. So examples would be reference books, children's books, cookbooks, or travel books. Within these categories, arrange by height and line them up to the edge of the shelf so they all appear to be the same depth.

Alternate stacking methods. Stack some books upright and others lying down. Fat books should be laid horizontally and stacked to create more room. Use these horizontal stacks of books as a pedestal for displaying items.



Use magazine holders to tidy up magazine subscriptions. You can also use baskets or decorative boxes for maps and unbound papers.

### Step 3. Getting the right look

For a modern look, don't be afraid to leave shelves bare. Bring attention to your favorite books that have beautiful covers by stacking a few in isolation, as opposed to filling the whole shelf. Keeping uniform looking books together also appeals to a modern design.

Once the books have been placed on the shelves, find decorative and sentimental items you would like to display. Accessorize with vases, figurines, and picture frames.

Get artistic by choosing items that match the color scheme of your room. Try alternating different shaped items: a square box, a curvy vase, a spherical paper weight. Try painting your bookcase a vibrant color to make it the focus, as opposed to your ragtag collection of books.



Keep the shelf balanced in terms of the size of the books and the items you place on the shelf. You may decide to have one shelf just for photos or collectables to accent these items. You can lean plates and frames against the back of the shelf and place smaller items in front.

The idea of a library in your home has a cozy, nostalgic feel, but books can take up too much room and are too hazardous to keep for just decoration. Keep the books you use and love, pass along the rest while it they are still current for someone else to enjoy.

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