



Shaping Up America's Kitchens!

Your Toolbox for Building a Healthier Family

Hey busy mom... is your kitchen a disaster zone? Do you wish family meals were healthier? More organized? More pleasant? Are your grocery trips like scenes from the twilight zone? Do you 'zone out' when planning meal ideas for your busy family?

If you answered yes! to even one of these questions, this toolbox is for you! It provides simple tips and tools for making the most chaotic kitchen run smoother, giving you more time to concentrate on the important things—like nurturing your family's bodies and souls.

Tools help you perform tasks faster, easier, and better. This Factivity Folio will give you the tools to tune up or overhaul the organization of your kitchen.

Kitchen Organization Factivity Folio #1

Why bother?

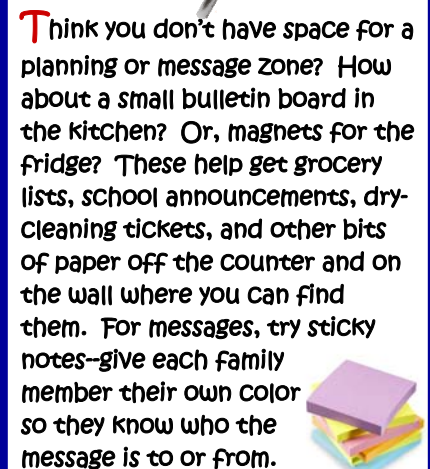
An organized kitchen is the first step to healthier, more organized, calmer meals. And, healthy meals build healthier families.

Where Are Your Zones?

To prepare meals more easily and effortlessly, start by making kitchen equipment and supplies easy to find and access. *A blender on a high shelf may be easy to find, but it's hard to access!*

Well-organized kitchens are set up in work zones that contain the equipment, appliances, counter space, and storage space needed for tasks performed there.

- 🍷 **Planning and Message Zone** includes counter space for writing menus, making shopping lists, and posting messages for the family.
- 🍷 **Food Storage Zone** includes the refrigerator, freezer, a pantry, cabinets, or shelves for canned and dry foods, along with counter space for unpacking grocery bags.
- 🍷 **Food Preparation Zone** contains the sink, counter space to prepare ingredients (wash fresh produce, slice foods), and storage for kitchen equipment (can opener, salad spinner, measuring cups, mixer). Storage containers, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, and freezer paper are kept here, too.
- 🍷 **Cooking and Serving Zone** includes the cooktop and ovens, counter space to set ingredients, hot pans, and serving dishes to be filled, and storage space for cooking and serving equipment (pans, potholders, spatulas, and serving bowls).
- 🍷 **Clean-up Zone** contains the sink, dishwasher, counter space for stacking dirty dishes, and storage space for sponges, detergent, and other cleaning supplies.
- 🍷 **Eating Zone** may be a counter or table in the kitchen or another room such as an adjoining dining room.



Think you don't have space for a planning or message zone? How about a small bulletin board in the kitchen? Or, magnets for the fridge? These help get grocery lists, school announcements, dry-cleaning tickets, and other bits of paper off the counter and on the wall where you can find them. For messages, try sticky notes—give each family member their own color so they know who the message is to or from.



Got a Small Kitchen?

Zones can overlap! Pair complementary zones to save space. For instance, the food preparation and clean-up zones share the sink. The same counter space may be used for planning and preparation.

Zones work in kitchens of all sizes – look for creative solutions.

Action Step: Making Zones Work

1. Take a good look at your kitchen.
2. Identify the equipment (small appliances and tools), major appliances, and counter and storage space for each work zone.
3. Pick a zone that needs the most attention and analyze your situation. (*Hold off on the food storage zone—its special needs are the focus of the next Factivity Folio.*)

Analyze the Situation

Q. Is everything related to the zone's activities (major appliances, small equipment, counter space, and storage space) located close together?

A. If counter or storage space is not adjacent to a zone's appliances (or sink); think about how you can adjust things. You probably cannot move the major appliances, but you could rearrange storage space so that the closest space matches the zone's activities.

Short on space? Move equipment into a zone when you need it with rolling carts or storage bins.

If overflow from one zone spills into another zone, it's probably time to thin out the number of items being stored. Ask yourself these questions when a zone has no vacancy.

- Is everything in the zone directly related to its activities?*
- Is everything stored in the zone used often?*
- Can you easily reach all of the zone's equipment?*
- Can you quickly find all of the zone's appliances and equipment?*



Clean up clutter around the sink: hang a dish towel rack or hooks inside the cabinet, add a pump soap dispenser, and recycle a plastic container to hold sponges.

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Organize Your Zone!

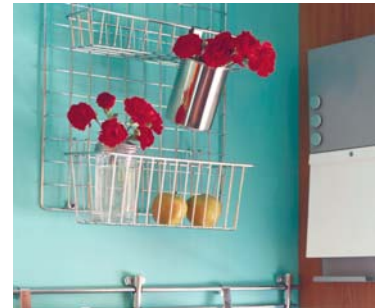
Kitchen tools and dishes often are put where they fit, rather than where they are used.

Instead:

- adjust shelf heights to accommodate the zone's equipment.
- add an expandable shelf that adjusts to the width of a cabinet to reclaim underutilized vertical space.
- hang more shelves, if space allows.

Get More Space!

Sometimes zones—especially their counter space—contain materials totally unrelated to food preparation. In most kitchens, there just isn't enough counter space—when it is cluttered, there is even less! Counter clutter slows you down because you have to clear it to cook or restrict yourself to tiny amounts of space.



Counters and kitchen tables seem to clutter up fastest right after school! Keep them clear by creating a "landing strip" where kids of all ages can drop their stuff! It could be a shelf in the laundry room, a plastic tub in the TV room, or a colorful file

- ✓ Stackable bins, rolling mesh drawer units or shelves, even paper stackers sold in office supply stores can help your family store their valuable papers and let you re-claim counters.
- ✓ Another (*and free*) way to clear counter clutter is to move seldom used items or small appliances (bread machine, mixers) off the counter to a closet or basement shelf.



- ✓ Claim the space under the wall cabinets. Don't let a chunky knife block steal counter space in the food preparation zone, install a wall-mounted magnetic knife holder—it's great for pizza cutters, vegetable peelers, and tongs, too!
- ✓ Take a look at your ceiling. Could you hang a pot rack? Think of all the cabinet space you'll save!

Free Up Space - Move infrequently used items to a high shelf or store them in another room.

Counter space saving tips:

- Hang paper towel racks, coffee mugs, wine glasses, can openers, and a microwave oven under wall cabinets.
- Get knickknacks off the counter and onto a decorative shelf or windowsill.
- Add an under cabinet rack to hold spice bottles.

Promote Easy Access!

Moving one item to reach another or needing a stepladder to reach items used regularly burns up time. Reserve 'prime real estate'—easy to reach and see areas—for items you use often.

Maximize accessibility:

- ✓ Add a lazy Susan
- ✓ Group similar items in a basket
- ✓ Hang racks on the back of doors
- ✓ Use tiered and expanding shelves
- ✓ Install roll out shelves or pullout bins
- ✓ Use vertical racks to slide baking pans in and out
- ✓ Invest in a lightweight, sturdy stepstool or folding ladder if you must use high shelves for everyday items



If you aren't familiar with the many types of organizational items, take a walk through the nearest kitchen store, office supply, or home improvement center.

Find Organizational Items At:

- (\$) Dollar stores, Garage sales
- (**) Discount retailers
- (***) Kitchen or Office, Home Improvement stores

Be creative, use:

- ✓ Shoe boxes
- ✓ Shallow, sturdy boxes
- ✓ Watch for sales!



Find what you need!

Searching through a jumbled drawer to find what you need is frustrating and time consuming. Organize with drawer dividers, especially the ones you can configure to fit your drawers and utensils.



Storing more than one zone's equipment in a cabinet? Post a list inside the door to quickly see what's inside!

Many kitchens have far more equipment than they really need.

This checklist of kitchen equipment is all you need to prepare a wide variety of delicious, healthy meals!

- Kitchen scissors (for trimming fat from chicken, cutting dried fruits, and snipping herbs)
- Sharp paring knife and chef's knife
- Can opener
- Plastic cutting boards (one for fruits and vegetables and one for meat—buy them in different colors to keep them separate)
- Salad spinner
- Colander (for washing produce and draining pasta)
- Vegetable steamer
- Silicon spatulas
- Wooden spoons
- Pot holders
- Large (10-12") non-stick skillet
- Medium saucepan for heating sauces
- Large saucepan for cooking pasta, rice, and soups
- Casserole dishes in various sizes
- Microwave Oven
- Containers for storing and freezing food



Now that you have analyzed the situation, it's time to get to work!

Zone Assessment

1. Zone being analyzed: _____

2. Ask Yourself:	Yes	No	If no, what are my plans for improvement?
Are zone appliances nearby?			
Is zone storage nearby?			
Are zone counters nearby?			
Are counters clutter-free?			
Is zone equipment nearby?			
Is equipment easy to find?			
Is equipment easy to reach?			
Is everything in the zone <i>directly</i> related to the zone?			
Is everything stored in the zone used <i>often</i> ?			

3. Amount of reorganization needed: Very little Some Total Overhaul

4. The top 3 changes that I will make to this zone are:
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

5. The supplies I will need (like bins, baskets, racks) to make these changes are:

6. The major barriers to accomplishing these changes are:

7. The strategies I will use to overcome these barriers are:

8. The strategies I will use to get my family to help me make the changes and keep the zone in shape are: _____

9. The date I will start on this goal: _____ I will complete this goal on: _____

10. The zone I will tackle next: _____