

# One Room, One Item

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by Christine Vick



This tip, which I learned from a friend, is a simple way to keep the house a bit tidier. When you leave a room in your home, pick up one item that doesn't belong there, and put it back in its place on your way to the next room. The goal is to be efficient; if you're going to the playroom, scan the floor for stray toys or books. If your destination is the office, take mail, papers or the stapler with you.

- Don't drive yourself crazy--the point isn't to scurry through the house carrying one item at a time. This only works for tidying, not for a major cleaning overhaul.
- Avoid big detours. If you're headed to the basement, don't pick up a book that belongs in an upstairs bedroom.
- Teach your family this trick. Granted, I usually have to say "could you please take this DVD downstairs with you," but that's easier than carrying it myself. Also, I hope that someday each member of my family sees the beauty in developing this habit (though I may be waiting a long time).
- Make mini-piles on the stairs. This isn't good advice if you have enormous amounts of clutter, but it is okay to put an item or two on the stairs until the next time you go up or down. Be careful not to let the piles linger; you don't want the stairs to become a clutter catch-all.

Adopt this habit and watch the clutter spots in your house diminish--small changes can have surprisingly big effects.

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