



HOW I ORGANIZE OUR HOME

DUCKS IN A ROW DOWNLOADABLES

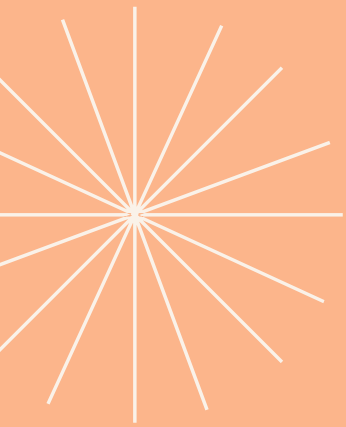


Table of CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Scheduling	2
Blank Monthly Calendar	
Weekly Schedule with Notes Section	
Cleaning	6
Visual Cleaning Rhythm	
Seasonal Cleaning	
Food Organization	8
Weekly Meal Planner	
Weekly Grocery List	
Freezer Inventory	

A TRELLIS FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

“More structure” isn’t always the solution to overwhelm... But I have often found that, like a trellis providing stability for a growing plant, sometimes it’s exactly what I need to thrive.

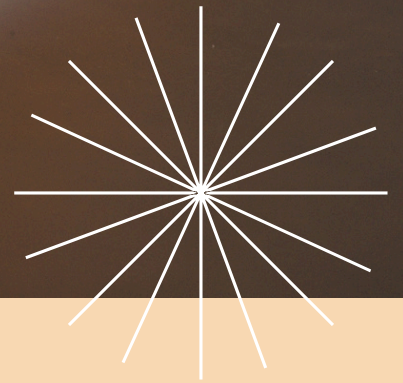
When we moved to Denmark, I found myself juggling the demands of motherhood (soon to be 3 under 5) with the demands of running my own small business (as a copywriter at letmarywriteit.com) with the demands of meeting the many requirements of the Danish citizenship process (becoming fluent Danish being just one of those.)

Perhaps you are good at mentally organizing the various commitments you agreed to, keeping a running to-do list going in your head, washing your bedsheets with some semblance of regularity, and remembering you need to buy more olive oil at the store - I am not. So I created a few tools to help me orient myself within the whirlwind of who-what-when-where that seems to be perpetually circling around most of us, regardless of what specific balls we’ve got up in the air.



I’ve always been a visual person. This means that: 1. It makes a big difference for me to have my week schedule, cleaning goals, personal intentions, etc. physically put in front of me, and 2. It makes a big difference for me if those things are at least somewhat aesthetic. If I’ve learned anything about myself, it is that I will engage minimally, at best, with an ugly piece of paper (even if important things are on it.)

What I’m writing here is not groundbreaking. I just deeply appreciate when others share with me their experiences and what’s working for them - so that’s what I’m attempting to offer you. I hope what’s available here blesses you, and that it helps you get at least a few of your ducks in a row!



let's talk
SCHEDULING

SCHEDULING

What I Use

BLANK MONTHLY CALENDAR

Before a new month begins, I sit down & fill out a fresh “Blank Month Calendar” with all the things my husband & I currently have entered in our shared Google Calendar - birthdays, events, appointments, etc. This gives me a necessary overview of our commitments, & shapes how I approach the month (for example, how quick I am to say “yes” to something, or how intentional I am with making space for downtime.)



WEEKLY SCHEDULE WITH NOTES SECTION

Before a new week begins, I take a closer look at what’s sitting in our Google Calendar - usually more things have popped up since I filled in our monthly calendar, or there were smaller things written in that are nice to take into account when zoomed into this week, but not necessary to shove into a tiny month-overview square. I typically use the “Notes” section as a glance into the next week (I often write things like “Big project due Monday” or “Away next weekend” or “Mom’s birthday next week” to give the week I’m currently in a little more context.) I sometimes use it to write down major to-do’s or questions we need to have answered by the end of the week.

SCHEDULING

My process

COLOR-CODING

After filling in both my week & month overviews, I go back & highlight each item with a color corresponding to a certain category (usually based on who that event “belongs to,” or what type of event it is.) This helps to further visually organize everything, which helps me to get a better handle on what exactly my coming week / month looks like.

My color-coding system*

- 1 color per person in our family
- 1 color for full-family events
- 1 color for events that are just my husband & I
- 1 color for happenings that aren't necessarily events (birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, etc.)

**Before I had a whole family to take into account in my schedules, my color-coding system was:*

- 1 color for school
- 1 color for work
- 1 color for appointments
- 1 color for social events
- 1 color for happenings that aren't necessarily events



SUNDAY EVENINGS

I don't really know when it happened, but Sunday evenings have become sacred to me: While a difficult or unproductive Sunday evening doesn't have to set the tone for the week, I've found that a purposeful & peaceful Sunday evening often creates positive momentum that Monday can pick up on. So part of a solid Sunday evening for me includes sitting down to prepare for the week ahead - filling out the weekly schedule (& a new month's calendar, when necessary), meal planning, etc. Having this set-aside time assures that it gets done without feeling like one more thing I need to find time to do.

SCHEDULING

THE MOTHERBOARD

We have a “motherboard” - pun not intended, as I think the space benefits more than mothers alone - which is a fabric pin board where we have our monthly calendar, our weekly schedule, & our meal plan for the week all placed. It sits in our dining room, which is a great central location for when we’re trying to remember what we have on Wednesday night, when during the month that birthday party was scheduled, & what it is we planned to cook for dinner tonight.





let's talk
CLEANING

CLEANING

What I Use

A VISUAL CLEANING RHYTHM

I am a woman of grand cleaning aspirations... & very little follow-through. I have organized this visual cleaning rhythm into one of the few structures that makes the task of keeping house feel approachable to me: Having the daily tasks broken into “morning” & “evening” to-do’s, & then having one “bigger” chore that shifts each day, feels attainable. I can’t keep up with the rhythm in every season (looking @ you, pregnancy fatigue) but even then, it’s a nice point of reference for whatever I DO currently have the capacity for.



SEASONAL CLEANING

How often are you supposed to clean your dishwasher? Strip your pillows? Wash your curtains?? I don’t actually know - but I know that if I put those things into a seasonal cleaning chart, they will happen more often than if I didn’t have them written anywhere.

I really appreciate and value the shift in seasons (especially now that I live in a country that actually experiences all 4,) & being able to check-in with what cleaning tasks could be happening around our home helps me feel like I’m physically engaging with the transition to a new part of the year.





let's talk
FOOD PLANNING

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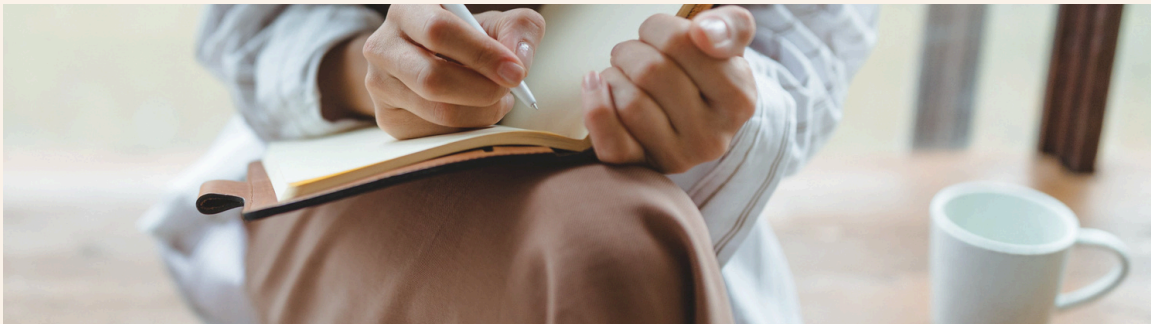
What I Use

WEEKLY MEAL PLANNER

I'll be honest with you - most weeks, I write in "oatmeal" next to breakfast & "ryebread" (meaning: a simple Danish open-faced sandwich) next to lunch, & just draw arrows that carry through the week... maybe adding in "waffles" as brunch on Saturday. But even just planning our family dinners & snacks in advance is SO very key for my sanity around 4:30 pm each day.

WEEKLY GROCERY LIST

Having the different items for our grocery run categorized by the area of the store they're most likely to be found in is yet another key thing for my sanity... Otherwise, you best believe I will inefficiently pinball around that store for twice as long & end up forgetting one ingredient per meal anyways.



FREEZER INVENTORY

The freezer is a magical place where shelf-life slows down... but that matters very little when I've completely forgotten that I blended up some broccoli stalk last week (or last year) to add into vegetable soup the next time we make it. I am at least marginally less likely to forget about it when I'm able to scan the "produce" section of our freezer inventory before getting started on that soup.

FOOD PLANNING

My process

CHECK AHEAD

On a good week, I will check our pantry / fridge / freezer to let some of the existing groceries in our home influence the meals we'll make the coming week.

A "WHAT'S FOR DINNER" DATABASE

We have previously used AirTable & are slowly switching over to Notion as a place to collect the recipes for meals we've tried & liked: This is where I go when I sit down to plan out meals for the week. In more hectic seasons, I've written down the top 10 meals that come to mind (in a nice-looking format, of course) & pop it on our fridge, to minimize the choice list & make it more quickly accessible.

ORGANIZE AS YOU GO

As I choose a meal for the coming week, I open the recipe & record the needed ingredients by category into our grocery list. When I try to fill in our grocery list from memory of what's in the different meals, things get forgotten & left off. Once I've recorded all the ingredients for meals, I'll fill in basics that are needed but not part of any recipe (like toilet paper, or the chocolate cookies I eat every evening when my little children have gone to sleep & can't lick them before I eat them.)



I want to finish off by reiterating (in case it wasn't clear enough as-is) that this booklet is not a display book of all the ways we "have it together"... all of these are ideals, or what things look like on the very best weeks (so: not every day!) None of these things are the magic trick for having a smooth week, clean house, or straightforward meals. BUT, they have been trellises that make room for growth in all those areas for me. I hope they do the same for you!

happy organizing!



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