

Container Basics

When you decide to get organized, containers are usually a SECONDARY consideration. The first thing you need to do is to get organized – decide what you are keeping, what you are tossing, and where items are going. Then go shopping for the right containers.

When you're ready to purchase containers, here are some key considerations:

Color
Shape
Seal
Size
Label

Color or Clear?

For the most part, choose clear containers. Clear containers are easy to see through so you know what's inside of them.

If the containers are in the garage, or strictly for one type of item like holiday decorations, using non-clear is fine. Sometimes you don't want to see all your "stuff"! When it comes to storing clothes for "children to come", it's not necessary to see what's inside the container, you just need to label it "Size 2 Girls".

On the other hand, it's great to have clear containers to distinguish different items, i.e., which one has crayons, which one has markers, and which one has pencils.

Shape

Choose square or rectangular containers over round containers except for mixing bowls, a lettuce keeper, and a large round basket for balls in the garage. Round containers lose the corners, thereby they waste space.

It's also difficult to put anything else right next to round containers whereas it's easy to put something right next to a rectangular container, especially in the refrigerator or freezer where space is precious.

Rectangular containers are often stackable – a big advantage to utilize your height – a space that is often neglected.

Seal

Be sure food containers seal tightly. If a child drops a container, it's nice to know that the food won't spill all over the floor. Also the heat can help microscopic insect eggs harvest. If you don't want to experience bugs in your food or infesting your entire pantry like lice, it's a good idea to use tight seals on all of your grain products; i.e: rice, cereals, pasta, especially in very hot climates like here in Arizona or in the southern

states. (Note: If you've ever noticed those little white spots on your spaghetti, those are the eggs.)

Tight seals are also great for the times you have a younger child and an older child where toys in a young child's mouth could be detrimental – i.e. a tight seal could keep a toddler from eating Barbie® doll accessories.

Labels

Even if the container is clear, it's a good idea to label all containers. It makes identification faster than trying to figure out what is inside of a container – especially for leftovers in the refrigerator!

Shopping

Before you shop for containers, make sure you have measured the height, width, and depth of the space that it is going into. Check the seal, and decide if you want clear or colored containers.

Happy shopping!

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