



TRANSCRIPT

Episode 43: Week By Week Guide to a Stress Free Holiday Season

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Get Organized HQ podcast. I'm your host, Tasha Lorentz. Every week we share practical strategies for less stress and more peace as we dive into all topics life and home organization. I'm so glad you're here for this week's episode.

Welcome back to the Get Organized HQ podcast. Before we dive into this week's episode, I did want to let you know that we are going to be wrapping up season one of the Get Organized HQ podcast the week of Thanksgiving. So after the week of Thanksgiving, we will not be posting weekly new episodes.

You can of course go back and listen to previous episodes, but we will have an episode every week until the week of Thanksgiving. That includes the week of Thanksgiving. And then we are going to wrap up season one of this podcast. But thank you so much for listening along and I hope that you have been encouraged to live a life of less stress and more peace.

PLANNING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

And we've got a little bit more organizing goodness coming your way. Today we're going to, we are going to be talking about how to have a stress free holiday season.

We are about eight weeks out from Christmas and so we're just going to be going through a week by week guide to, breaking down the tasks, getting them done so that you can have a stress free holiday season. Thanks for tuning in.

All right, well, here we are. We are four weeks out from Thanksgiving, eight weeks out from Christmas. And if that makes you start to have a little bit of an internal panic and how is all of the things going to get done, this is the episode for you.

A WEEK-BY-WEEK GUIDE

We're just going to talk through a simple week by week guide to preparing for the holiday season, how you can break everything out by tasks. And here's the funny thing, preparing for the holidays, it's a lot like breaking out any other project. If you have a lot of things that you need to do, any project that you're working on, I always recommend having a master list and then breaking that down into smaller manageable chunks.

So what we don't want to do is have some master plan and say, okay, eight weeks from now until Christmas. And so today I'm going to do this and tomorrow I'm going to go buy the holiday gift wrap and the next day I'm going to order all of the gifts for the kids and the next day I'm going to order all of the gifts for the adults and a week from Tuesday, I'm going to

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place the order for the holiday cards and like get it all so minutely mapped out to where first of all, it's really easy to get behind that if you've said I'm going to do this thing on this day and this thing on that day and then you miss one day.

AVOID FEELING BEHIND

Oh, I already feel behind on my plan. And what we want is a stress free holiday season and feeling behind typically leads to more stress. So how can we avoid that feeling? And the other thing is you just simply don't know what the next eight weeks are going to bring.

Right? So eight weeks, I mean that is a relatively short amount of time. But a lot of things can happen in eight weeks, right? You can have, maybe you get a cold and you're not feeling as well one week. And so this was the week you were planning to do your holiday shopping, but you're just really not feeling up to going out and doing all of this shopping.

STAYING FLEXIBLE

Or maybe, some family decides to come in and visit and you didn't know that they were coming or they changed their travel plans and you thought you had all the days leading up to Thanksgiving and actually they're coming in the Monday of Thanksgiving week. And that's great and exciting but once again it changes the plan.

And so we want a flexible plan. And one thing I found when it comes to tackling projects that works pretty well for me is to try to assess what do I want to generally get done on a week by week basis. Now I will say I have done a lot of project management, okay.

PLANNING IS A LEARNED SKILL

So several of you probably know I do a lot with the Get Organized HQ virtual conference and I kind of manage the tasks for, for that. And so I do think that getting a feel for how many things you can get done in a week and also getting a feel for where it's okay if not everything gets done is a little bit of a learned skill.

It's kind of like a muscle that you strengthen over time. And so you kind of have to know your personality. But I can say for myself that I can have a pretty good plan in place and I can be okay if something needs to get bumped so to the next week.

BREATHING ROOM & FLEXIBILITY

And I think that having that flexibility is really important. And we're also going to try to build a little bit of that flexibility into our plan so that we're not running ragged, so that if something comes up or a week gets thrown off or something doesn't get done or something gets delayed, we aren't feeling behind.

And so that's the goal is to have a plan, but let it have some breathing room, let it have some flexibility so that if and I would almost say when something gets thrown off, you aren't feeling stressed and frazzled and behind. All right, so I'm just going to dive in to an eight week plan that's going to carry you now through Christmas.

WEEK ONE: CLEANING TASKS

What are, the main things you can focus on each week? So week one this week, it's where we're at right now. Let's talk about cleaning. Can you go ahead and tackle some of your deep cleaning tasks this week? Now what specifically

Tasha Lorentz

you need to do for this is going to depend on what your holiday season looks like.

Do you have people coming to stay with you or are you going to be the one going to travel somewhere else? If you have people coming to stay, then those high traffic areas, the guest room, things like that, are the places you're going to want to focus on. And so when we're getting ready for the holiday season, there's a lot of stuff to do.

PRIORITIZE HIGH TRAFFIC AREAS

Now is not the time to say, let's go organize the storage shed. I mean, that'd be great. My storage shed needs organized, let's be honest. But now is not the time to focus on that. Focus on those high traffic, areas. And even if you aren't going to be hosting, think through, okay, what are the areas that my family is going to be using and needing the most often?

Am I going to be doing more cooking or baking? Maybe you're going somewhere else for Thanksgiving, but you're going to be preparing some food at home and taking it. And so getting your kitchen cleaned and just in really tip top shapes that you feel good working in your kitchen.

WHAT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Maybe it is, getting your clothing switched over. Maybe you still have all of your summer clothing hanging in the closet. You want to move that to one side and get your seasonal clothing moved over so that when you're packing you can see the things that are in this season, things like that.

And so thinking through your cleaning tasks and thinking through what really matters to

you, what's really going to make a difference, and you might even kind of want to make a tiered list and say, okay, so the things that really need to happen, washing the linens in the guest room, wiping down the fridge shelves, that is one that I highly recommend.

If you have not recently just pulled everything out of the fridge temporarily and wiped down those shelves, you will be amazed at how your refrigerator feels with clean shelves that don't have anything spilled on them. Like, even if they don't have massive spills on them, like they just pick up little bits of things.

KNOW YOUR NON-NEGOTIABLES

And so getting the refrigerator cleaned out is. It is such a good feeling. Highly recommend. But think through what are the most important things for you and then maybe what are some second tier things. I think it's really helpful for our brain to know this is like the non negotiable.

I have to have the guest room clean. I have to have, maybe you have stuff on the guest bed. I have to have that cleaned up and put away so someone can come and sleep on the guest bed. That is a non negotiable. I would like to, in my case, vacuum the dog hair from behind the couch.

BONUS TASKS

Because let me tell you, it, it accumulates a lot behind the couch, but people aren't going to be staring behind your couch all that much. And so that's probably a second tier thing, right? If I get to it, if I have time, fantastic bonus. But if I don't get to it, nothing bad is going to happen.

So kind of having that priority in mind and then

Tasha Lorentz

this week diving into the cleaning tasks that you can. And also as you're going through these coming weeks for the holidays, just having a clean house, I mean, you can take that deep breath, you have space to work.

WEEK TWO: MEAL PLAN FOR THANKSGIVING

So week one, cleaning. Week two, let's focus on your meal plan and shopping list for Thanksgiving dinner. So are you the one primarily hosting Thanksgiving dinner? Are you responsible for getting a turkey or a ham or whatever it is that your family eats on Thanksgiving? Or are you going somewhere else and maybe you are taking a side dish or something?

This is a great week. Maybe to reach out to the person who is hosting and say, hey, I wanted to confirm what did you need me to bring? And, just having that plan in place, you don't have to go ahead and make the food this week, but having your meal plan and your shopping list saying, these are the food items I'm responsible for and these are the things I need to purchase for it.

PLAN & DELEGATE

And especially if you are the one hosting and coordinating a Thanksgiving dinner, this is a great week to make that plan and then start delegating. Maybe you've had people who have said, hey, like, let me know how I can help. This week is a great time to go ahead and start reaching out to them and saying, hey, I've been working on the Thanksgiving meal plan.

It would be awesome if you could bring a dessert or a veggie side dish, or can you be in charge of bringing drinks this year and going

ahead, sending those texts, communicating with those people, getting it all written down. And organized so that, you know, it's all taken care of and having the plan in place.

WEEK THREE: GROCERY SHOPPING & BLACK FRIDAY PREP

And then that'll lead us into week three where you can do your Thanksgiving grocery shopping trip, right? Going ahead and getting the things that you need, making sure you have the ingredients on hand.

And the other thing I'd recommend doing is taking just a couple of minutes, maybe opening up a, note in your phone if you are a Black Friday shopper, if you like looking through the deals.

I mean, I absolutely do. I mean if there's going to be deals everywhere, I am absolutely going to be going to all of my favorite websites and being like, well, how much percent can I get off from my, you, you know, favorite place to buy shoes or my favorite place to buy clothes or my favorite place to buy makeup or whatever.

MAKE A MASTER PLAN

But having a master plan can be really helpful for so many reasons. First of all, it can help prevent you from purchasing clutter. So if you can think through, you know, I've really been needing to get some more makeup. I'm almost out of my makeup products and so one of the first stores I'm going to try, for me, I buy all of mine at Tarte.

You may buy it. I mean, Ulta is a really common place people buy it. Target, even wherever you buy your makeup. And so maybe you're making a list in your phone and you're saying, when

Tasha Lorentz

it's Black Friday time, I am going to look and specifically see does this store have a deal on my makeup. And the thing I love about something like this is that you're truly saving money.

SHOP INTENTIONALLY

Now I am definitely not above going out and doing some Black Friday shopping, walking into the store and saying, man, like, what an awesome pair of slippers. And they're on sale for \$10 and I'm going to buy them, right? Like, I have done it. I will do it again. I don't even regret doing it. Okay.

But when you make a master plan for something like Black Friday, that is when you really start saving money. When you take a little bit of intentional forethought to say, what are we really needing?

Or what are the holiday gifts that I still haven't purchased that I think there's a decent chance that they're going to go on sale for Black Friday, that's when you can really start saving some real money on things that you are going to purchase anyway so you don't have to have some huge master game plan or some timed out schedule that at 6:00am I'm going to check the store and 7:30am I'm Going to go to this store.

PURPOSE & DIRECTION

But just making a list of. Okay. I mean, at this point, Black Friday really is Black Friday weekend, right? We've got Black Friday and Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. And the sales just kind of stretch out the whole time. But having a plan of over the course of that weekend, these are the things that I'm specifically looking for and that can kind of give

you some purpose and some direction and make sure you're really taking advantage of the sale in the way that's going to save you the most money.

WEEK FOUR: ENJOY THANKSGIVING

Now let's talk about week four, which is Thanksgiving week. And the goal here is to focus on enjoying the holiday rather than worrying about the next one. Now, when there's not a whole lot on the schedule for this week, the great news is that if some of the other things didn't happen, if there's some cleaning tasks that you haven't gotten to or that you even want to revisit, you know, maybe a couple weeks out, you weren't ready to wash the linens in the guest room yet, you can go ahead and do that at the beginning of Thanksgiving week.

Or maybe there's something that you didn't. Weren't able to pick up at the store yet for your Thanksgiving meal. You can go ahead and squeeze that in here. And so you have a little bit of buffer room going into Thanksgiving week and you can take that deep breath, enjoy the time with your family, because the goal here is to have a plan in place so that when the holidays come, you can enjoy them instead of, being stressed by them.

WEEK FIVE: THANKSGIVING RECOVERY

And week five is what I'm going to call Thanksgiving recovery week. So what do you need to do to feel back on track and recovered from the Thanksgiving holiday? Were you hosting? Maybe you need to do a little bit of tidying up, you know, washing the linens that were slept on, cleaning, up, just vacuuming, doing all the basic tidying tasks that happen after people have been staying in your home.

Tasha Lorentz

Maybe you were the one traveling. And so this for you looks like unpacking, catching up on laundry, things like that. Also this week is a great time to set up any Christmas decorations that you haven't gotten out yet.

So I know everyone decorates for Christmas at all different times of year, but if you have a Christmas decoration that has not been set out yet, week after Thanksgiving is definitely the time to do it because there's not very much time left until Christmas.

HOLIDAY CARDS

And the other thing I would encourage you to make sure that you have done this week is your holiday cards. So if you don't have those ordered yet or mailed out yet, going ahead and getting rolling on those, whether they be Christmas cards or New Year's cards that you send out, going ahead and getting those ordered.

One thing that can be really useful, it takes a little bit of time upfront, but if you tend to order from the same company. Now, not every company offers this service, but I know, for example, Shutterfly does. They have an address book service. And so you can actually put the addresses that you're going to be sending your cards to into Shutterfly, and they will actually mail and send your holiday cards for you.

SAVE TIME FOR NEXT YEAR

And so that's the type of thing that I feel like it takes a little bit of that upfront, work. You got to track down all your addresses, you got to put them into Shutterfly, but that could save you so much time next year.

The only thing you'd need to do would be to go

through and update any addresses that people who have moved and, and letting them do the work of addressing, stamping, mailing all of the things for your envelope.

So that's just a little pro tip with those. I have not actually used that service before, but I am planning on using it this year and doing that upfront legwork and getting my address book set up in there just to make it super duper easy.

WEEK SIX: FRESHEN UP YOUR SPACE

All right, and then in week six, let's revisit cleaning. So way back in week one, which is actually, you know, the week this episode releases, But we're talking about week six now. So when we get to week six, it'll be way back in this week. You've already done your deep cleaning, right? And so probably we don't need to redo a lot of those deep cleaning tasks.

But with Christmas being right around the corner, now is the time to kind of freshen up any spaces. Maybe you want to wipe down your refrigerator shelves again, maybe you want to clean off your stovetop, maybe you want to run the vacuum in the guest room, Things like that. Just freshening up any cleaning.

Anything that kind of over the last, you know, six weeks of being lived in, because our homes are intended to be lived in, has started to get a little dirty or a little messy again, going ahead and revisiting that space.

CHRISTMAS MEAL PLANNING

And then this week, I would also recommend making your Christmas meal plan and shopping list just like you did for Thanksgiving.

So if you're hosting, then the same process

Tasha Lorentz

going through and saying, here's the things we need. Let me reach out to people, see what other people can contribute and bring. If you're going to be going somewhere, reaching out to the host and saying, hey, what can I bring? Getting the things on your shopping list, getting a plan made for what you need to prepare.

WEEK SEVEN: SHOPPING AND WRAPPING

And then in week seven, this is where you go and you actually get the things off that grocery list. You can make those foods if they're things that you can make ahead of time. And definitely trying to get some of these things earlier rather than later because when we're in the week before Christmas, we don't want to, if we can avoid the rush, that is the best thing.

Right? So the Friday before Christmas week is probably not the best time to be going to the grocery store if you can avoid it. If you can't, well, you'll be there with everyone else who is also can't avoid going the Friday before Christmas. And it's not going to be a make or break either way. Sometimes at this time of year you just have to be a little bit flexible on brand or exactly what it is that you thought you were going to buy if stores are starting to sell out of some of those most common items and things like that.

GIFT WRAPPING

And during this week seven, I'd recommend going ahead and getting your gifts wrapped if you can. And so having that done, I find gift wrapping to be the type of thing that I anticipate being really fun. And I don't mind doing it, but it can also really take longer than I think and end up being less fun than I thought.

So going ahead and getting that checked off the list, maybe put on some fun festive music or a movie while you do it, and getting all of that done.

WEEK EIGHT: ENJOY THE HOLIDAY

And then that just leaves week eight to enjoy the holidays and to trust that the essentials are done and that anything that didn't get done it is non essential. And you can just take that deep breath and enjoy your holiday, whether you're the one hosting or you're the one traveling, whatever it looks like for you.

So hopefully this eight week game plan has helped you kind of break down the things that need to be done into manageable chunks.

Leave yourself a little bit of breathing room each week. Don't stress. You know, if you're going to get your holiday cards out in the week after Thanksgiving and they don't make it until the following week, it's not going to be a, make or break. They'll still get out and by having this plan in place, it's going to help keep you on track regardless.

WRAPPING UP

So thanks so much for tuning in to this week's episode of the Get Organized HQ podcast, and we will see you back here next week.

Tasha Lorentz