

Organizing Tips from the NAME Online Group

Compiled and edited by Preble McDaniel

We all know that the more organized we are the more we can get done, but sometimes it is hard to know how to organize. We hope these tips will help with that.

• Project Boxes •

Carol Ann Frost likes the Iris brand Photo Storage Boxes. She says that the small boxes hold a lot, especially in her favorite scale, 1/2" scale. She puts labels on the edge of the smaller cases to see through the top of the larger boxes. She then categorizes by theme. A couple of others hold inch scale items and one has things that are not scale specific like bunka, silk ribbon, floral tape, even a few of my tools.



Terezinha used a hanging storage closet. These are made of plastic and a cloth type material that goes over it. You need to assemble it yourself. She says the one she purchased has shelves and two hanging rods. On the hanging rod she added hanging closet cubes. She uses each cube to store projects in progress. She likes that when not in use she can zip up the closet.



Terri Y. purchased the Billy System Bookcases from IKEA and the paper shoe/photo boxes sold at craft store to go on them. She likes to try to color coordinate them but does so by different hobbies. She stores her mini projects that she is currently working on into one box. She changes the labels as she completes one project and moves on to the next.

• Tool Storage •

Joanne Root uses travel toothbrush holders to store craft knives, tweezers, and paint brushes. They are inexpensive to buy and are so compact. She says they're great for carrying these items in one's toolbox from workshop to workshop or for storage at home. They come in a wide range of colors so you can "color-code" the tools that each stores, like purple for tweezers, white for paint brushes, etc.



Katy Greene uses the empty power drink plastic containers to put all her tools in sorted by tool. She says the label on the

package easily peel off. She keeps them lined up in front of her work space. You can write on the container or add a label, plus they are transparent. Then she puts all the containers into a plastic crate. Inside the larger crate is a smaller crate that holds glue, other containers with open tops for other tools to tall to fit in the power drink containers. She tries to always put something back after use. She says that having the tools right out in the open helps eliminate the frustration of "now where did I put . . . ?"



Kathy V. uses the old style drawers that go under your computer monitor from a thrift store. She also suggests using silverware compartment or small baskets to put your supplies in, such as tape, pens, tools, magnifiers, etc. right in front of you while working. Use silverware baskets (wire kind for holding silverware and napkins) to hold markers and glue bottles (upside down).

Terri Young says she has a rolling cart with 10 drawers to hold those larger tools like clamps, cutting utensils, sandpaper, and things that take up valuable real estate in the studio.

Carla McIntyre uses empty yogurt containers to hold glue bottles. For small bottles of glue and carrying in her work bag, she uses new specimen bottles which are discarded from catheter kits at her work. She says this keeps those little bottles ready to go at club meetings and workshops.

Carla also uses stackable drawers designed to hold cardstock for scrapbooking on her work table to easily access sandpaper, small clamps craft knives and extra blades, etc.

Preble says she started with a simple tackle box. But she needed a second box/container for glue, so it could stay upside down. She tried a silverware caddy for a dish drainer - just add foam in the bottom to keep the skinny or pointy tools from slipping out. A caddy could be made using cleaned empty soup cans wired together. Add a handle and you can even carry it to a mini club. Being able to carry my tools to mini club was a real important aspect to me for a long time and so even what I have today meets that need even though I do not have a local club right now.

• Ribbon, Thread, Floss •

Thuy Means says to use a wooden hanger, loose leaf book rings, zip bags. This is an easy way to organize anything like embroidery floss or kits. Use standard 1/4" hole punch to make hole in zip bags, thread through rings found in office supply stores. Hang on your hanger and place in closet. Open your closet and know what you have at a glance.



Thuy also suggest pant hangers as a great way to hold ribbon spools and anything with a donut hole like tape. This can also be hung in the closet.



Veronica Risko shared an idea to use cardboard tubes from paper towels to wrap ribbon, lace or trim on. She says to secure the ends with a non-rusting straight pins. She suggests putting the tubes on the pegs of a wall board meant to hold thread spools.

Preble says that she purchased secondhand a bunch of ribbon/trim stored this way and one recommendation is to not insert the pin through all the ribbon particularly silk. Instead secure only the end against the tube itself. This is to avoid pin holes throughout the ribbon.

Lynn Miller says she uses 4" x 6" index card cut in half. Then she folds to create a little "book". For white and cream lace she uses colored card. For colored lace and trim she uses a white card. She tapes one end of the lace to the "back" cover and wrap most of the length of lace around it. When she gets to the last few inches of lace, she closes the "front" cover and wraps a single layer of lace across it. This allows the pattern to be clearly revealed against the contrasting card. Then she puts these into 3" x 5" plastic zip bags so ribbon/trims stays nice and clean. She also punches a hole in the corner and gather them on large (2-1/4") hinged split rings. She then groups by color.

Kathy V. shared that she likes to fold fabric neatly and stand them on end. Then she stores them in a dresser drawer so she can quickly see what she has.

Preble stores all her fabric by color in gallon size zip bags because she has collected some small pieces doing swaps. Like Kathy's, Preble's bags all stand up in a drawer. When ready to find a fabric she pulls out one bag and can sort through the bag.