



Clutter - What's your Style?

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Ready for some clutter therapy? Krista Green of Organized for Life says that people fit into two types: filers and pilers. Filers tuck things out of sight; pilers like everything visible. "You may not sit at one extreme or the other, but you'll always be along the continuum," says Krista. Find out where you fall by taking STYLE AT HOME's simple quiz, check your score, then read on for solutions geared to your profile.

- ❶ You write down an important phone number. You put it...
 - A In my Rolodex
 - B In the garbage - right after I promptly input the number into my PDA
 - C In the third pile to the left of my computer, on a pink Post-it Note stuck to the green file under my paperweight
- ❷ Your entire file is contained...
 - A In my PDA
 - B In my agenda. Plus my calendars. And Post-its
 - C In my agenda
- ❸ Your grocery list...
 - A Is on an Excel spreadsheet, divided by the section of the store where items are found
 - B Is stuck on the fridge door, with items added regularly
 - C Gets written just before I go shopping, as I scan the fridge and cupboards for what I need

- ❹ How devoted are you to your hall closet?
 - A Barley. Everything seems to gravitate to the backs of chairs or banisters
 - B Very. As soon as I walk in the door, my coat goes in, as do my shoes and hat.
 - C Somewhat. Most of my gear is in there, except for the odd purse left out on the table
- ❺ How quickly can you find a shirt in a pile of unsorted laundry?
 - A A minute or two
 - B The blink of an eye
 - C A few minutes
- ❻ Growing up, your parents' relationship with money was...
 - A Comfortable. They always seemed to have enough
 - B Not good. There were times when money was tight
 - C No different from anyone else's, as far as I could tell

- 7 Are you the sentimental type?
- A Totally
 - B Not really
 - C A little bit
- 8 Shopping online: a brilliant idea or a waste of valuable time?
- A Ridiculous! You can't browse or try things on
 - B OK, but shopping in person is fun
 - C Brilliant! Everything's just a quick click away
- 9 When co-workers stop by your cubicle for a chat, they...
- A Get down to business
 - B Comment on how neat it is
 - C Clear a patch of space
- 10 Your thoughts on sock organizers?
- A We're familiar allies
 - B I don't need them - all my socks are paired up and stashed in my top drawer
 - C What's a sock organizer?

What's your score?

ADD UP THE POINTS THAT CORRESPOND TO YOUR ANSWERS AND SEE CLUTTER CONTINUUM, BELOW, TO FIND OUT IF YOU'RE A FILER OR A BIT OF BOTH.

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | A - 2
B - 1
C - 3 | 6 | A - 1
B - 3
C - 2 |
| 2 | A - 1
B - 3
C - 2 | 7 | A - 3
B - 1
C - 2 |
| 3 | A - 1
B - 2
C - 3 | 8 | A - 3
B - 2
C - 1 |
| 4 | A - 3
B - 1
C - 2 | 9 | A - 2
B - 1
C - 3 |
| 5 | A - 2
B - 3
C - 1 | 10 | A - 1
B - 2
C - 3 |



CLUTTER CONTINUUM

10 to 14 points File Fantastic

Congrats! "Filers classically are what we believe to be more organized," says Krista. But don't get too smug: "The true measure of organization is effectiveness," she says, and some megafilers' systems could use a bit of tweaking. "Many filers get too specific, so they have file folder, even hundreds of them, and some of those files may have only one sheet of paper in them!" Consolidate your files, putting your micro-organized project files into more general hanging folders. Since you don't need any visual cues to locate stashed items like pilers do, you adore cabinets and electronic organizers, traditional closets and drawers where items are neatly packed away. In the kitchen, closed storage rules, with everything stacked behind cabinet doors. In the bathroom, drawer dividers ensure essentials are where you expect them to be. Purge your closets and cupboards once a year, which shouldn't be hard, as you see your things as just "stuff." Ready for a splurge? Custom built-ins are your dream décor upgrade

15 to 24 points Semiphile

Because most people fall along the continuum between filers and pilers, many, like Krista herself, find they are "top-of-mind pilers, needing only the active things to be visually available, filing away their archived materials." A consultation with a professional organizer - which is beneficial to everyone, not just pilers - would yield many useful tips geared to your situation. Employing a series of fix-its targeted at both hyperorganized filers and visually oriented pilers is most effective for you. Make your home life easier by customizing your space with mixed closed and open storage, such as an antique armoire with a door-fronted main compartment, and drawers underneath; that way, you can keep baskets of must-sees contained in the larger portion (possibly visible through a chicken wire insert), while neatly tucking away more seldom-used items in the drawers.

25 to 30 points Pile Driver

Pilers get a bad rap, but Krista credits you with knowing exactly where everything is within each of your many piles. She also acknowledges the psychological aspects that make it hard for some pilers to part with items. "Many people grew up in Depression-era families where money and possessions were tight - when you acquired something, you were not parting with it," she says. Other pilers may need to purge something old when they add something new. Hope is on the horizon. Stock up on must-haves like pretty baskets to stash everything from mail to makeup (your natural inclination is to rummage through baskets, so don't fight it). Install closet organizers: having items visible on shelves and specialized racks will keep your bedroom floor garment-free. In the kitchen, opt for open or glass-front cabinetry so you can scan your collections at a glance. Donate unwanted treasures to charity; knowing it's for a good cause might make parting easier. Consult a professional organizer - at about \$40 to \$150 per hour, it's worth the investment.



