



# STYLE

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## HOME STYLE

January 3, 2007

### Home Front: Resolution Solutions

by *Melissa Scott Sinclair*

Hey, it's not your fault the house gets messy. You're fighting a fundamental law of the universe: entropy, the tendency of systems (i.e., the living room) to become disordered. We asked three local professional organizers for New Year's resolutions that will help you restore order to your life, one step at a time.

Now, repeat after us:

1. "I resolve to resist sale seduction."

This time of year, stores are eager to unload all the robot dogs, neck massagers and other junk they didn't sell by Christmas. You can snap up great bargains (like your holiday cards for next year). But Alisha Gray-Johnson, president of Messless, advises that you first ask three things: Do I love it? Can I afford it? Where will I put it? If it's a purchase you just can't resist, then use it as a reason to scrutinize what you already have. "When you bring one thing in the house, take two out," Gray-Johnson says.

2. "I resolve to give my clutter a good home."

Katherine Lawrence, owner of Space Matters, offers this tip: "Always have a donation bag." If a box or bag for giveaways is always in reach, you'll never again return a too-small shirt to your closet or leave books lying around that you know you'll never read again. Choose a single charity and note when home pickup is offered.

3. "I resolve to get some help."

No, not that kind of help (though we know the holidays may have knocked you a bit off balance). Just abandon the idea that you have to do everything yourself, counsels Olivia Acree, partner in A Sorted Affair. Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, as they relate to cleaning and organizing, she says. "The idea is to find somebody else to do the dislikes and the weaknesses." Hate picking up the house when you get home from work? Teach your children to help and reward them. Or hire the neighbor's teenager to watch the kids while you straighten up. Make a deal with your spouse. Employ a cleaning service. And take a well-deserved break. **S**

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