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Real-Life Messy Makeovers

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vanity upgrade

Drawer-defining containers, smart organizing strategies, and pretty finishing touches bring order and style to this spacious bath.



PROBLEM: Amy and Jake struggled with effectively using the plentiful storage space in their new home's large bath. Items sprawled across countertops and lay buried within cabinets. Their old bath's small, mismatched containers weren't much help.

SOLUTION: To kick-start the revamp of the bathroom's spacious vanity, professional organizer Lorie Marrero of The Clutter Diet (see bio in "Meet the Pros," page 24) had the couple take everything off and out of the L-shape vanity, then sort by

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1. Satin-nickel brackets upgrade simple white shelves. 2. A tray corrals countertop clutter and makes it easy to move items when cleaning. 3. New wall shelves create chic display space and add personality to the grooming area. 4. A new coat of brown paint warms up the walls and makes the white cabinetry pop.



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5. Pretty and durable bins store extra toilet paper and shampoo in the side cabinets. 6. Clear, stackable boxes outfit a new pullout drawer under the sink and organize items by function, such as eye care, dental care, and hair care. 7. A slide-in tray added to an existing drawer organizes cosmetics. 8. A divided tote for cleaning supplies stows in the deep bottom drawer. 9. Nail polish is cleverly contained in a tiered spice rack in another drawer.

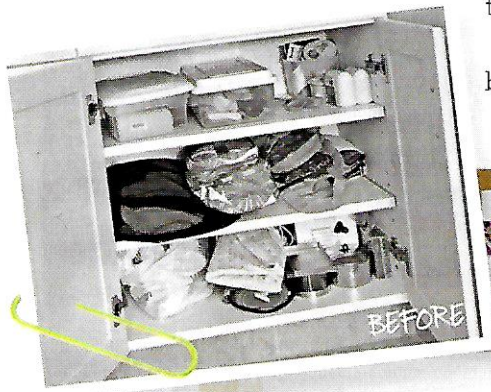
frequency of use. Rarely used, never-used, or expired items were tossed or relocated to appropriate areas of the house. Amy's jewelry, for example, now resides in a master closet dresser.

Daily-use items, such as cotton balls and facial creams, were returned to the countertop, where they can be easily accessed—but they were placed within a pair of serving trays to keep them from taking over the whole countertop. "Corralling everything in trays keeps like items together and at my fingertips—and prevents them from straying," Amy says.

Remaining gear was grouped by grooming chore, such as eye

care, dental aids, and shaving tools. Some of the sorted groups were transferred into individual plastic shoeboxes with clear lids. "Being able to see into the shoeboxes without pulling them out and taking off their lids has been a real time-saver," Amy says. "I never thought clear-top boxes would be any better than my old solid-color lids, but I was so wrong."

The shoeboxes were stacked within a new pullout drawer installed under the sink. "I no longer have to sit on the floor to dig deep into the cabinet and retrieve things," Amy says. To help the couple maintain this



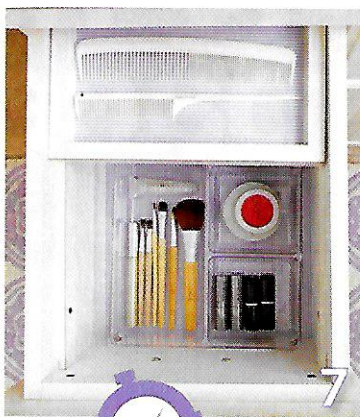
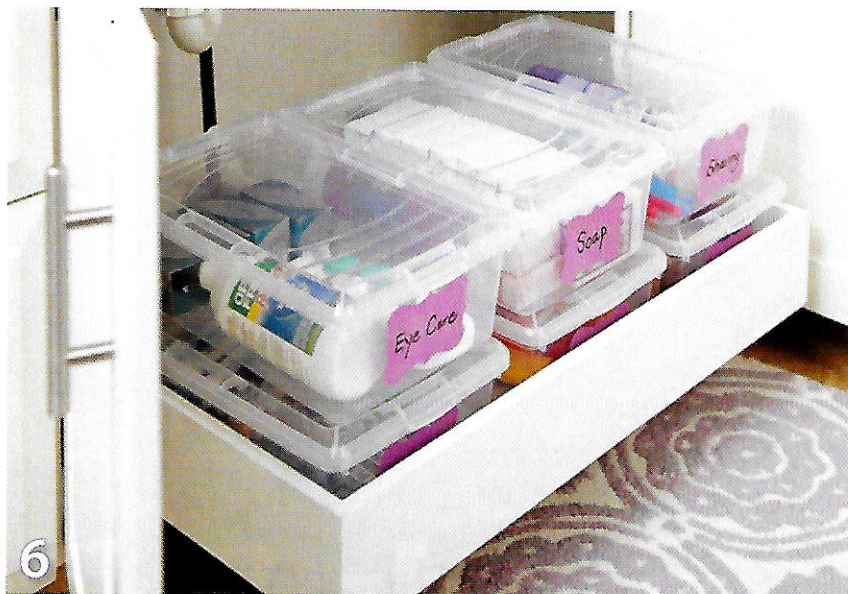
new order, Marrero had them identify the contents of each box with labels.

Meanwhile, slip-in dividers maximize space in a stack of narrow drawers beside the sink and help Amy organize small items, such as cosmetics and nail polish. "Now I don't have to dig through a large open bin to find my manicure tools," Amy says. "I can easily see everything and keep it organized."

Colorful open baskets within the shallow side cabinets establish homes for tall items such as bulk-size shampoo bottles and stacks of toilet paper rolls. Made of woven plastic, the baskets are easy to slide in and out of shelves.

Easy-to-install decorative details finish off the space and bring personality and a unified, streamlined look to the bath. A durable adhesive liner in a stylish pinstriped design protects shelf bottoms, while peel-and-stick trim that resembles a picture frame enhances the vanity's long, flat mirror. "I absolutely love the mirror frame. It turned an ordinary, boring mirror into something interesting," Amy says. A lilac rug and towels provide soft color throughout the space, while larger cabinet pulls are easier to grasp. Slim shelves fill out a barren sidewall—offering display space and style.

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ONE-HOUR CLUTTER CURE

Maximize space under your bathroom sink with these tips from professional organizer Lorie Marrero.

- **Clean up.** Take everything out of the cabinet. Decide what kinds of items to store there, and toss or relocate the rest.
- **Add a lazy Susan.** This revolving storage product ensures you can easily reach items at the back of the cabinet.
- **Put the door to work.** "Consider alternative uses for products on the back of the cabinet door," Marrero says. "A foil and wrap organizer can be used for hair-care products, for example."