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50 Ideas to Get Organized and Enjoy Your Scrapbooking Hobby

By Maria Gracia

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Scrapbooking is a wonderful hobby! Besides being relaxing and fun, it also allows you to be creative and to spend quality time with your family and friends. Plus, it results in a storybook of lifelong memories.

One very important element of scrapbooking is getting it all organized. This includes, but is not limited to:

storing all of your supplies in an organized fashion so they can be found instantly when you need them.

remembering what supplies to pick up at the store, and eliminating duplicate purchases.

finding time to research new and creative ways to spruce up your scrapbooks.

finding enough time to enjoy the art of scrapbooking in your busy life.

TELL A STORY.

Plan your photos, before you shoot. Instead of taking random shots of someone standing here, or someone else sitting there, tell a story. For example, let's say it's Halloween. You may plan on taking four photos of your child: on the hayride taking him/her to the pumpkin field. looking for a pumpkin. finding a pumpkin. with the carved pumpkin later.

GREAT PHOTOS.

Photos for your scrapbooks can be extra nice if you take a little bit of time to learn some basic photography. Visit www.kodak.com for a quick photography tutorial. Getting organized has a lot to do with preparation and this site is filled with helpful tips and ideas.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN.

Organized documentation is important for the serious scrapbooker. The main goal is to eliminate future questions such as "Who or what is that?", "Where and when was this photo taken?", and so on. Document photos as you're taking them, so you'll know exactly what is on each roll of film. That way you'll be prepared when you're ready to organize the photos in your scrapbooks.

TAKE CARE OF THAT UNDEVELOPED FILM.

If you find rolls of film around your house that are ready to go to the developer, bring them today. You may consider mailing all of your film to a supplier such as www.mysticcolorlab.com so you don't have to spend time dropping off film or picking up photos. Simply mail your film out, and you'll get your photos back in the mail a week later. From now on, always get your film developed as soon as you take the used rolls out of your camera.

STORING PHOTOGRAPHS.

Once your photos are developed, you need a place to store them until you're ready to put them in your scrapbook. Keep them separated by year or event, in Ziplock bags. Label each bag with a number, and put a corresponding number on your Documentation Form. Then, store them in a photo box. Keep the box in a dry, cool place to protect your photos until you're ready to put the photos into your scrapbook.

ORGANIZING BOXES OF PHOTOS.

If you have boxes of photos that span from the beginning of the 1900's to now, it's time to start getting them organized. Schedule a day and time to begin sorting through them and stick with your appointment when the day rolls around. Get your kids, or friends, to help out. Begin by making piles, categorized by event or year. If you don't know the exact year, at least sort them by decade. This may take a little while, but once everything is separated, scrapbooking your photos will be much easier and more pleasant. Once they're all sorted, store your photographs as mentioned above.

WORK BACKWARDS.

If you're planning to scrapbook lots of photos from way back, start with the most recent photos you have, and work backwards. Chances are, you have a journal describing recent photos, and even if you don't, you can probably recall the details more easily. Older photos—the ones that you don't have a journal for—will take a little more thinking.

BABY STEPS.

If your scrapbooking hobby seems like a colossal job to you, it's not going to be fun. Don't feel like you have to put ALL of your photos into scrapbooks. You can always put the majority of your photos in acid-free photo albums or photo boxes where they will be safe. Choose a small set of photos to begin scrapbooking. Once you're done with this small set, you can then decide whether you want to dig into your photo albums or photo boxes and continue scrapbooking them, or leave those photos where they are, and simply scrapbook any new photos in the future.

DOUBLE PRINTS.

Double prints will do you no good if they're just sitting in your photo box taking up space. Do something with them. Perhaps send them to someone who is in the photograph. It's a great way to

keep in touch. Or, pass the doubles onto your young children who may like to create their own scrapbooks. It's a great way for them to learn your beloved hobby and decide if they would like it to be a hobby of their own.

RELATED STUFF.

Sometimes, for the purpose of creatively decorating your scrapbook, you may wish to keep tickets, brochures, maps, postcards, and so on, that are related to a particular trip or event. Use manila file folders or catalog envelopes for this purpose. Label the folder/envelope so that you know which photos/Documentation Form it corresponds to. File these until they're ready to be used.

KEEPING IT ALL TOGETHER.

Already have a pretty good idea of stickers, diecuts, etc. that you're planning to use with a particular set of photographs? Keep them in the same Ziplock bag with the photos until you're ready to put them into your scrapbook. This way, everything will be in one place and ready to use.

STICKERS AND SHAPES.

Stickers and punched shapes can be kept in acid-free sheet protectors, plastic baseball card sheets, business card sheets, or even Ziplock bags that are 3-hole punched. Each sheet should be categorized and labeled by theme: birthday, Christmas, Halloween, wedding, springtime, etc. Insert

these sheets into a 3-ring binder. If you have a large number of stickers and shapes, you may want to use index dividers labeled with general categories. For example, a general HOLIDAY category, may hold Easter, Christmas/Hanukkah, Halloween, etc., a general SEASONS category, may hold Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring, and so on.

TINY STUFF.

For very tiny diecuts and other small items, consider storing them in empty film canisters. The clear ones are best, but if you only have opaque ones, simply stick a label—or the actual diecut attached with a piece of tape—on the canister indicating what is inside. Baby food jars serve the same purpose well.

PAPER.

Where do you keep all of that cool paper until you're ready to use it? You can get a plastic, portable filing container—research its composition to assure archival safety—that holds hanging file folders. Label the hanging files by theme or color. You may want to place a manila file folder into each hanging file folder, to keep your papers from curling. Or, you may buy file folder pockets or sheet protectors that fit into a 3-ring binder and store your papers inside each pocket, categorized and labeled. By the way, be very careful not to store acid-free paper with other paper.

STORAGE CONTAINERS.

Do a little bit of research and purchase a scrapbooking organizer, which will hold papers, supplies, etc. There are many products on the market that can help you keep it all together. Many office supply stores carry six-drawer organization stations. They're vertical and have 6 see-through drawers of equal size. Each drawer can be designated for a different purpose—papers, templates/diecuts, stickers, etc. Plus, they have wheels, which makes them very easy to transport from one room to another. Or, if you often bring your scrapbooking supplies outside of your home, such as to a friend's house, use a

portable system that isn't too heavy or cumbersome, and comes with a handle.

STENCILS.

Put your stencils/templates into sheet protectors that can be purchased at any office supplies store. Then insert them into a 3-ring binder for easy access. By the way, you can store two templates in one sheet protector with a piece of paper in between each—white or colored depending on the color of your template. This will make it easier to see the designs and eliminate them from catching onto each other.

SUPPLY CADDY.

If you always scrapbook at home, use a kitchen utensil caddy with a number of divided compartments, like those you normally keep tall kitchen spoons, ladles, and spatulas in. The ones that spin will keep everything you need at your fingertips.

HANG IT UP.

If you're lucky enough to have a room specifically designated for your scrapbooking hobby, hang a large pegboard above your work area. You can then attach scissors, templates, crimpers, rulers, stencils and more, all within easy sight and reach. In addition, you might hang a small ledge or shelf nearby, to store all of your corner rounders, photo corners, and so on. If you prefer everything out in the open, this system will work like a charm.

RUBBER STAMPS.

Store rubber stamps in shallow, plastic containers, a rubber stamping organizer, or a plastic organizer with shallow drawers. Don't stack stamps. They should be stored in a single layer, so that you can

always see the top of the stamp showing the design.

OTHER STORAGE IDEAS.

Fishing tackle boxes—with compartments and levels that expand and collapse—are wonderful for storing scrapbooking supplies and tools. Plastic tool boxes, with many see-through drawers are also great for this purpose.

SCRAPBOOKING MAGAZINES.

Is your closet full of scrapbooking magazines? There are a few things to do about this dilemma. 1) You can go through your magazines, find the articles you wish to keep and organize them into file folders by category. In other words, keep the article, toss the magazine. 2) Or you can keep the magazines in cardboard magazine boxes. If you do this, you should always keep a list of the title/issue of the magazine, the pages that interest you, and a few words describing why they interested you. This way, you can just scan your list, instead of going through the entire magazine to find what you're looking for. You can even use your computer and create the list in a word processing file. Then using the Find feature, you can simply search for key words in your document.

HOLD THAT THOUGHT.

Rather than keeping all those great scrapbooking ideas and tips in your head—you know, the ones you pick up from magazines, web sites, etc.—keep a 3-ring binder with some notepaper inside for all your thoughts and ideas. Plus, when you see something in a magazine, you can simply tear the page out of

the magazine, 3–hold punch it, and place it in your binder. The same goes if you see something on a web site that you wish to refer to later; just print it out and insert it into your binder. You can even separate the binder into a few different sections, such as page layout ideas, organizing ideas, neat tools/supplies, etc.

CHOOSE A DESIGNATED WORK AREA.

Scrapbooking is more fun and less of a chore, when everything is in one place and in close, accessible proximity to your working area. Designate a room, or a portion of a room, in your home for this activity. You should be able to retrieve your supplies, photos, etc. in seconds, without having to walk into another room, or rummage through a closet.

SHOPPING.

Use an organized shopping system so you remember what you want to pick up for your hobby —scissors, crimpers, papers, etc. This will also eliminate purchasing items that you already have. When you think of something you need, immediately put it on a SCRAPBOOKING PICK UP list, and bring this list with you when you go shopping. Using 3 inch x 5 inch index cards, make examples of your cuts and punches on them. Label and keep them in your day timer, or a tiny 3–ring binder. Bring these cards with you when shopping for scrapbooking items, and you'll never buy duplicates. This also works great for remembering what color pens/pencils you have. Just draw a line on your index cards and label them.

USE WHAT YOU HAVE FIRST.

Resist the urge to buy a million new papers, punches, and so on, until you've used some of the craft supplies you already have. Unless you're planning on opening a scrapbooking warehouse, it's best to be choosy before emptying your wallet on new items, when you already have items you could use in your current supply.

SHOP ONLINE.

You'll save a lot of time running back and forth to the store, if you commit instead to making your purchases online.

TRADE.

If you have something that you haven't used in a year or more, such as craft scissors, stickers, etc., swap them with a friend. Who knows? Perhaps your friend will find immediate use for this item, and you will get something you can use right now in return.

GOALS.

Always set goals for your scrapbooking hobby, perhaps one to two pages a week. This is especially necessary if you're creating a scrapbook for an upcoming special occasion.

PLAN.

Before you start working on your pages, plan ahead. Arrange your photos in chronological order and gather stickers, diecuts, etc. that correspond with your photos. Think about your layout and how you plan to document each photo. This will ensure you're going to be happy with the final results, and will

reduce the need to redo things.

DO THE TWO STEP.

Step One: Assemble your pages with your photos, documentation and critical diecuts.

Step Two: Decorate with stickers, stamps, etc. The two-step process will help you get the critical part (step one) done faster, and then you can continue with the second step (less important) later on.

KEEP YOUR PAGES SIMPLE.

Although you may really feel the need for creating a work of art on occasion, if your goal is to get a scrapbook done as quickly as possible, keep it simple. Getting photos and documentation in the album is the main goal. Save your really creative moments for extra special scrapbooking projects. And remember, too much stuff on any one page, takes away from the photos.

QUICK COLOR SCHEMES.

Quickly, organize your scrapbooks with colors that compliment each other, by referencing a good color harmony book. You can pick one up at your local bookstore. They include hundreds of color combination examples. Color Harmony, by Hideaki Chijiwa, is an excellent book for this purpose.

MULTI-TASKING.

Looking for a few minutes here or there to catch up on your scrapbooking? Take and make all your phone calls in the same room as your designated scrapbooking work area. Then, while you're on the phone with your friends or family, you can crop, frame or mount at the same time. Or, instead of making punches when you need them, make a bunch of punches at once while you're watching television, or are on the telephone, or when you're waiting for a pot of water to boil. This will save time later because your punches will be ready when you need them.

GET YOUR KIDS INVOLVED.

Many people like to get their kids involved with the actual project, such as arranging stickers, applying diecuts, etc. If you would rather your kids were not involved with the actual project, give them a project of their own. You can always find a few photos that you're not going to use in your scrapbook, some inexpensive paper, kid scissors, etc. Then have each child make their very own scrapbook. Either way, the kids will be occupied, which will give you time to enjoy your hobby.

ELIMINATE BICKERING.

If you have more than one child that is involved with a scrapbooking activity, get them each their own plastic storage box and/or accordion files to keep their own supplies in. This way, when they want to work on their scrapbook, all of their supplies will already be separated. You may even color code their supplies, plastic boxes, etc. so they always know which stuff belongs to them. For example, blue container, blue scissors and markers labeled in blue for Billy, and all pink for Sally.

FAMILY TIME.

Scrapbooking is a great way to spend some time with your family. Get the whole family involved and around the table at the same time. It's a great time to share ideas and dreams with each other. Can't seem to get the male family members involved? Perhaps they can sit at the table while the females are scrapbooking, and they could do something they enjoy at the same time. At least everyone will be

together and having fun.

TEAM UP.

Scrapbooking is a great way to spend time with your friends and catch up with each other. Start a scrapbooking club and meet at each other's homes one day every few weeks. Make a party of it!

IDENTIFY.

The next time you get together with friends, or a scrapbooking club, put a little piece of colored tape on your scissors' handles, the sides of your punch tools, pens, etc. Then, everyone could share, but you'll be sure to get your tools back when it's time to go home.

DON'T TAKE THE KITCHEN SINK.

If you're going to be scrapbooking at a friend's home, take a few minutes to plan what you want to work on. By doing this, you will only have to carry those supplies you're going to use. In other words, if you're going to be working on a wedding theme, there's no reason to be carrying all of your holiday items with you.

CLEAR THE WAY.

If you are spending too much time looking for supplies, background papers, photos, frames, that great rubber stamp and so on, then, it's time to organize your work station. Declutter and toss out or trade those items you don't need, you don't like, etc. Organize your supplies into binders and storage containers. You should always be working on a clear surface, with only the current project in front of you.

CLEAN UP THE SCRAPS.

If there is a wastepaper basket right near your work station, all of the scraps that you're not planning on using can be tossed immediately. Don't leave trash on your work surface. If you visit a friend's home, you may want to carry along an empty tissue box so that all scraps can be discarded immediately, and make clean-up for your host quick and easy.

PUT IT AWAY.

Always have a home for your supplies, and when you're finished using them, take a few moments to put everything away. You should be able to start fresh with a clear mind and a clear surface.

BIG ITEM/SMALL ITEM.

Never place a big item over a smaller item, because if you do, it will be out of sight, and difficult to find quickly.

ERGONOMICS.

Organize your work area for increased productivity. Make sure it's well lit. Have a comfortable chair to sit on. Your supplies and tools should be within arms reach.

SAFETY.

Organize your scrapbooking with safety in mind. Use a protective covering for your table. Craft mats are great for cutting on. Scissors and other sharp tools should be face down in a holder, and out of a

young child's reach.

MAKE IT EASY.

Different personality styles require different organization systems. Make sure you use an organization system you can live with—one that works with your style and that allows you to find things without delay. If you find things easier when they're alphabetized, then use that type of system. Perhaps you're better at finding things by color. Then use that system. Your organization system must work in harmony with your personality.

DON'T DO SO MUCH.

Finding the time for your scrapbooking and/or rubberstamping hobby can be difficult if you have too many things going on in your life. Reduce or eliminate the activities you don't truly enjoy. Reduce the activities of your children. Get on an organized cleaning schedule, so you're not wasting the entire weekend cleaning up. Make easier dinners that are healthy, but take half the time to prepare. Get your family to help out with household chores and obligations.

SPARE TIME.

Those spare minutes that we all have can be put to good use. Have to wait at the doctor's office for your appointment? Sketch out a quick layout idea. Waiting for the wash cycle to finish? Sort out some photos, or gather supplies for tomorrow's scrapbooking project.

WRITE IT DOWN.

Don't ever leave your home without a small notebook in hand. You're bound to come up with a thought, or a cute caption, for your scrapbook. If you don't write it down right away, you may forget about it. You may also want to keep a small pad and a pen right near your bedside, in case you have a bright idea in the middle of the night.

ENJOY!

Plan, organize and schedule some time to enjoy your creations with family and friends. Scrapbooking is all about fun, laughter, memories, and touching moments!

Maria Gracia – Get Organized Now!

FREE Idea-Pak and E-zine filled with tips, ideas, articles and more to help you organize your home, your office and your life at the Get Organized Now! Web site!

Tips For Wedding Scrapbooking

By Dana Goldberg

Your wedding is meant to be one of the most memorable days of your life and wedding scrapbooking is a unique way of capturing those memories. The beauty of wedding scrapbooking is that there is such a wide choice of embellishments and other items that you can use to enhance your scrapbooking project. However, it is also worth considering all of the other bits and pieces that can be used from the big day itself. A wedding invitation, preserved flower from the bride's bouquet and groom's buttonhole

are just some of the ideas that you can include in your wedding scrapbooking album. Instead of having a keepsake box with these items all mixed up and probably getting damaged they make a wonderful addition to the scrapbooking album and will be preserved for years to come.

Digital cameras are so popular now and this makes a wedding scrapbooking project easier, and harder! If you send out a request for all wedding guests to send you their photographs you may well be inundated with pictures to sift through for your wedding scrapbooking album but at least you will have plenty of choice. The solution for most wedding scrapbooking pages is to keep them as clutter-free as possible. The idea is to have only the key elements in the journaling to enable viewers to simply enjoy the atmosphere of the wedding scrapbooking pictures. A picture of the newlyweds need only have a few words with their names, date, and location of wedding stated on the main wedding scrapbooking page. It is easy to be overenthusiastic and purchase every wedding scrapbooking related embellishment that is available but this will only create a confusion of unnecessary items and detract from the beauty of the moment and possibly ruin your wedding scrapbooking album.

The reception is going to be the major source of pictures for the wedding scrapbooking pages and you need to be careful exactly how people are portrayed. It is worth having a lot of pictures from early on to choose from. Other aspects that can be included in the wedding scrapbooking project are a copy of the father of the bride's speech, the cover design from the couple's first dance song or anything else that you fancy.

The beauty of modern wedding scrapbooking is that you can alter pictures if necessary using computer software. Obviously you can crop pictures to suit but you can also change the background if it was a particularly grey day outside or remove red-eye from indoor shots to ensure that your wedding scrapbooking photographs are enhanced to their best possible extent.

Dana Goldberg is the owner of Scrapbooking Tips. Learn scrapbook making online and get many free scrapbooking ideas and scrapbooking tips with. A free informational site which presents tips layout examples, and topic articles. Visit

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