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Container(s) and a label marker to label the containers. The Challenge To set up a system that helps you keep scraps organized and usable. To de-junk and sort your scraps, and get those you keep into a system. I used to have several boxes of scraps (paper, ribbon, and other surplus supplies) in my closet. If I needed a scrap, I'd dig through the top two inches of the boxes and usually end up frustrated. I'd leave the mess, go to my shelves and choose a full sheet of paper, or a larger piece of ribbon to finish my project. When the project was completed I'd toss those scraps into one of the boxes (my system). I'd feel guilt, and the cycle continued. I fooled myself into thinking the kids would use what was in the boxes, which they didn't, and I rarely did anything meaningful with them either. I had no functioning system and kept the full boxes because I didn't want to be wasteful, and I didn't want to recycle them – "just in case" I needed something someday. I had clutter, no idea what to do about it, and scrap guilt! Sound Familiar? The guilt came primarily because I let it, but also because I'd paid for perfectly good materials and I didn't want to waste them. Interestingly, once I figured out how to store my scraps, and cleared out the clutter, good things happened. I became more resourceful with my consumable supplies, more aware of how I could cut paper and ribbon, and I recycled more. And, instead of seeing scraps of paper, leftover paint, bits of ribbon, or "mistakes," as something to feel bad about, I accepted them as part of the creative process. I also started going through my scraps first when I started a layout. Guilt is now gone and my creativity flows abundantly. Whether you have stacks, piles, or boxes and drawers full of scraps (you may or may not use someday), I promise, it feels absolutely wonderful to make a plan and tackle the clutter once and for all. Hopefully, my story, and the tips and ideas shared here will motivate you to completely handle this area of your space. It's time to get honest and answer some exploratory questions. First, is the way your scraps are organized and contained really working for you? Second, do you actually use your scraps, or is scrap guilt making you keep things you don't need? Finally, do you want or need something better? If you honestly USE your scraps, then chances are you have a system that works, and you should probably focus on organizing something else. But, if you NEVER touch your stash, except to move it when it's in your way, then think seriously about donating everything to a teacher or charity now, or recycling your scraps. Then, establish a system to recycle or donate on a regular basis to keep your stash at a minimum. If you WANT to use your scraps, then you need to decide what to keep and what to get rid of. What constitutes a scrap to you anyway? Here's where you need to establish the "rules" that will govern your scraps. Step 1: Create Your Boundaries For Stacy, anything less than 12 x 12 is a scrap (she's a 12 x 12 scrapbooker). All scraps that are smaller, 8.5 x 11 papers, 8 x 8 papers, etc. go into her scrap drawers, so she has quite a large collection of scraps. The smallest paper she keeps in her system is 2 x 2 because she rarely uses anything smaller. If a paper is smaller than 2 x 2 it immediately goes into a donation box or her recycling bin. You, however, might use smaller pieces, so decide where to draw the line on what to keep versus what to toss, and stick to it! In my system, I can keep any size of scrap I want as long as it fits into its assigned container (more details about that below). Step 2: Decide on Your Storage Method The most common way is by color, e.g., ROY. G. BIV and other papers you use regularly (vintage, florals, textures, etc.). You can also sort scraps by size, or intended use—like rectangles for photo mats, or strips for borders. Step 3: Sort Scraps Sort through all of your scraps to find what to keep and what needs to be gone according to your new boundaries. Here's a good way to sort: Place all scraps on a large work surface. If they're not all in one place, take time to gather them up and bring them to this place. Sort this pile into smaller piles by color, shape, or whatever system you chose. While you're sorting, toss anything that's bent, too small to use, torn, or ugly. If scraps are in odd shapes, trim them so that they're in a more usable form. Take a good look at your pile sizes. Keep this image in your head as you check out the list of possible storage solutions below. You're going to look for a containment system that can hold your piles (including future growth), and one that works with your scrapping style, room décor, and available space. Following are some container options for scraps. Check them out and see if there's one that will serve your needs. Scrap Paper Container Possibilities Hanging files in a mobile cart or filing cabinet Vertical organizers 3-drawer wooden chest units 3 Ring Binder with page protectors Expandable file folders Multi-bin literature sorters Desktop files Retrosepct Paper and Accessory Organizer Envelopes - choose the size based on your pile, and store upright in pretty bins or baskets. Map chest or drawers for larger collections 3-drawer plastic units, in 12 x 12 or 8.5 x 11 - these are stackable as well, which makes it easy to have one color per drawer The Totally Tiffany/ScrapRack System Stacy stores her scraps in a map chest with drawers. She has two color groups of scraps inside each drawer, with the bottom drawer holding all of her multi-colored scraps. In each drawer the scraps are divided by size into shallow bins. In the larger bins (from the Container Store) she stores large paper scraps. In front of these bins are long, skinny border strips. In the middle, two smaller bins hold 2 x 4 scraps. In front of these middle bins are photo mats. I use labeled Paper Pouches for my scraps, which are organized in ROY G. BIV order with a few other categories. These pouches work perfectly with my cardstock and paper system because they fit inside the Cropper Hopper Paper Holders I use to contain my cardstock and paper. It's a simple system that works with how I think and move in my space - things are positioned so they work together so I don't have to look in multiple places in my studio. For example: If I need to make a green mat for a layout, I first check my green scrap bin for a color and size that will work. If there's nothing there, I stay in the green Paper Holder (where the scrap bin is) to look for a full sheet of green paper to use. Everything I need is in the same place, and scraps are just as important, accessible, and usable in my work as a full sheet of paper. "If I love it, think I will use it, and it fits into the pouch, I can keep it. If not, it goes into a small box I give to my grandkids' teachers. If they don't need them when the box is full, I recycle. The size of the container is non-negotiable; it can't be replaced with a larger container. The system is easy to maintain because it takes me less than two minutes to process when the pouch is full. I dump the contents out onto my workspace, purge them into two piles (keep and discard) and put the cleaned out bin and sorted contents back into its "home." The other pile goes into the donate box in the garage. I have a rule that any and every system in my studio has to be easy to retrieve things from, and then put away. This system supports that goal. I also have card making bins. One is home to card kits with envelopes and the other is where I keep fun paper scraps big (and good) enough to become a card or card front. They are no larger than 4.5 x 11. The scraps in the second bin are also used to help me come up with new color and pattern combinations. When I want to make a card from scratch, or want to challenge myself to do something new on a layout, I dump the scraps from this bin onto my work space to see what interesting and usable combinations of color and pattern show up amid the stash. The last part of my scrap organization is a bin for borders. I like to use borders as "anchors" in my layouts, so I needed to have one place to go to look for what I needed. Any patterned paper, border embellishment left over from a collection, scrap ribbon longer than 6 inches, or anything else that can become a border goes into this bin, digger-style. I purge it from time to time to keep clutter at bay. More Insight Scraps happen! They're a realistic part of our amazing art form. In order to diminish the stress that can come from out-of-control scraps, we need to have a system for how, and if, we contain and store them. If you're a digger, having a one drawer, box, or bin of scraps is an ideal option—as long as you go to this place first to find what you need. If you want to "find what you need quickly," organize your scraps by color in assigned bins. No matter the method you choose, try to keep it compatible with the system you set up for your cardstock and patterned papers and try to keep these systems in the same area of your studio. When you do, both systems will flow together and make scrapbooking easier. Note: Ribbon, twine, and fabric scraps are addressed in detail in Lesson #12 of our free class, Get Organized. Summary When a scrap storage system is in place and functioning, there is less scrap guilt, more order, and you'll use scraps to your advantage on a regular basis. Your scrap dilemmas will be solved shortly. Congratulations! The results from your work are going to feel as good as they look! If you're looking for information on how to store your 12" x 12" scrapbook papers, you can check out these two informative articles here and here. This article is part of our free class called Get Organized. You can sign up and take the class free here. Paper obsessed? Yep, that's me! If you're the same, your stash of scrapbook paper has gotten out of control and needs to be reigned in, I can help. Let me show you how to organize scrapbook paper so you can find what you're looking for and your system is as pretty as your papers. I even created a free coordinating guide you can download to help you along the way.Not only do I show you how to organize 12x12 scrapbook paper, I also show you ways to organize 8 1/2 x 11 paper and your scrap paper stash. As a bonus, I show you how I organized my stash of scrapbook papers and how I keep it contained.Note - if you just want to see the ideas of how I organize my scrapbook papers, just scroll towards the bottom. But if your stash is a mess and you're ready to organize, then keep reading!Getting StartedTo get started organizing your scrapbook paper, you can download the free 12x12 Scrapbook Paper Storage Ideas PDF guide from the Resource Library. It is item 2C in the Organization section. The library is a free resource that contains cut files, tutorials and guides available for your personal use. The page is password protected. If you do not have the password, please complete the form below and it will be emailed to you. There is another form at the end of this post. The first step to organizing your scrapbook paper is to find a landing zone, a clear open area for gathering all of your scrapbook papers. Take a walk through your craft room, gathering all of your 12x12 and 8 1/2 x 11 scrapbook paper and cardstock, scrap papers and specialty papers, putting them in the landing zone and sorting into the following main categories:Cardstock - 12x12Cardstock - 8 1/2 x 11Patterned Paper - 12x12Patterned Paper - 8 1/2 x 11Scrap PaperSpecialty Paper (glitter, foil, etc.)Get Rid of - papers that are torn, damaged, you don't like and don't see yourself usingYou have now gathered all of your scrapbook papers into one area and know how much you really have. This isn't meant to shock you, it's meant to help you with finding a home for them. Where are you going to store them and how much space are you giving them? Dedicate space to your paper and in return, don't let your contents out onto my workspace, purge them into two piles (keep and discard) and put the cleaned out bin and sorted contents back into its "home." The other pile goes into the donate box in the garage. I have a rule that any and every system in my studio has to be easy to retrieve things from, and then put away. This system supports that goal. I also have a closet. I dedicated 2 rows, 4 cubes per row, to my cardstock and patterned papers.Your turn. Review your craft space to determine where your scrapbook papers are going to be stored and how much space they get. Along with where, you also need to think about the workflow and where you sort your papers when matching them to photos.Think about how you are going to store your papers. Are you going to lay them flat on a shelf or stand them up? Do you have containers you want to put them in? Do the containers fit where you want to store your paper? For me, the answer to the last question was no. You see, I was using the Iris project containers and while they worked great for storing my papers, they did not fit in the Expedit cubes. Therefore, I decided to use the Totally Tiffany 12x12 Fab Files instead. They do fit on the bookcase and are great for grabbing and going.12x12 Scrapbook papers organized in 12x12 Totally Tiffany Fab Files Stored in the Expedit bookcaseThe next step in how to organize scrapbook paper is to sort the papers into general categories or themes.You probably have a good idea of the types of papers you have and the main categories for your patterned papers. If you need some help, here is a sampling to get you started.Christmas/WinterFall/HalloweenLove/ValentinesSpring/EasterSummerFamilyBirthdayKidsBabyPetsSportsSchoolGeneric PatternsYou can start with these or pick your own. Make sure you grab a stack of post-it notes or scrap paper and write your categories down, one category per piece of paper. Label each pile.You don't need to come up with all of your categories right now. You can add categories or combine categories in the next round. Next round? What? Yes, it is common to do this sorting 2 to 3 times. Keep doing it until you are happy with their categories and the categories are manageable.You have a couple options. One option is to set them aside and look at these after you sorted all of your papers. This option worked for me as it gave me a better idea of how to categorize these. Or, think about the type of layout you would most likely use with this paper. Is it a layout of the family or of your daughter or of friends? Go with the category you think of first. You can always put a note in the other categories mentioning which paper lines are stored where.Yep, we do this again. After you have sorted all of your scrapbook papers, look at your piles. Are there some piles with only a few papers and some piles that are overflowing? Consider combining the small piles with other, complimentary categories. Think about categories which are closely related. Some categories I chose to combine are school and sport. Other categories I combined are family and birthdays. One reason I combined categories was because I was using the 12x12 Fab Files and wanted to make the most of each container. You may choose to keep some categories smaller and use paper files to store them.When that happens, you should sort through those papers again, looking for a smaller category you can pull out. In my case, I had an overflowing pile of travel-themed papers. Within the travel papers I removed the camping and outdoors papers to make their own category.Continue sorting, purging and evaluating your piles until you are happy with them. What does that mean? It means there is no right or wrong answer. It means that if you feel the category contains a manageable amount of papers to sort through when matching them with photos, it's good.When that happens, and it will, set the papers aside. Once you've sorted all of your other papers, come back to those and ask yourself:Do I have space for it?Is there a similar pattern I like better?Do I truly see myself using it?If your answer is no, it's time to move these papers to the get rid of pile.If you still can't decide, then put those papers in a box. This box is for the papers and supplies you're not quite ready to get rid of, but not sure you want to keep them, either. Mark it with a date 6 months or a year from now. If you haven't touched the box by that date, you don't need them and can get rid of them.The easiest way to organize cardstock is by color. Make piles of each color and sort them in rainbow order - red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. I add the whites and pinks before the reds, and the browns and blacks after the violet. This order is visually pleasing and the in-between colors can go well, in between where one color transitions to the next.This depends on how much 8 1/2 x 11 paper you have. Most of my paper is 12x12, but I still have a few patterned papers and a sizable stack of 8 1/2 x 11 cardstock. If you have a lot of 8 1/2 x 11 patterned paper, you can go through the same sorting process as the 12x12 patterned papers. If you have a few sheets, you can mix them in with the 12x12 papers. Next, do the same thing with your 8 1/2 x 11 cardstock. If you only have a few sheets, mix it in with the 12x12 sheets. If not, find a spot for them and sort them in to rainbow order. I stored these in a Large Multi-Purpose Bin from the Container Store.8 1/2 x 11 Cardstock sorted into rainbow order and stored in a Multi Purpose binWe all fall in love with paper lines or buy paper collections. Find a way to keep them together and subdivided within the larger category. A couple suggestions are the Paper Files by Storage Studios, Fab File 12x12 File Pockets by Totally Tiffany, and 13x13 Plastic Sleeves from ScrapnTime.com. The 12x12 Fab Files each come with 5 of the 12x12 File Pockets. I do mix these with the 13x13 Plastic Sleeves from ScrapnTime.In these sleeves and file pockets, I keep the coordinating papers, 12x12 stickers sheets and any scraps from the line. Occasionally, I keep other coordinating embellishments in a small baggie with the paper, but I 'm careful it doesn't get too bulky.Paper lines are sorted and stored in 12x12 Paper Files and 13x13 Crystal Clear Zippered BagsGood question. Start by sorting them in rainbow order, same as cardstock. As you are sorting, get rid of pieces that are smaller than 6x6. I store mine in a container without any type of divider between the colors. If you want to keep them divided by color, you could use a 12x12 plastic sleeve or 12x12 Paper Files or the 12x12 Fab File Pockets.The Ikea Kuggis containers come in a couple sizes. They have a sleek look, tapered sides and work well for holding paper scrap scraps.Congratulations! You made it through step 2. That's a big one! Now it's time to make all of your hard work come together. If you haven't already done so, now is the time to pick containers to hold your papers. Find containers that are appropriate in size for the amount of papers you have and the space in which you have to store them. Warning - if all of your papers and containers don't fit your space, you may have to go back to step 2 and do more sorting with a focus on purging.Here are a couple quick tips for how to store scrapbook paper:I prefer to store paper vertically instead of horizontally. I find it's easier to pull papers out and put them back when the papers are standing up instead of laying flat.Do not store papers directly on the floor, especially if your craft space is in the basement. They can soak up moisture from the floor and warp. Do not overstuff a container. It makes it hard to pull papers out when they are crammed together which increases the risk of damaging your paper.If your container does not have a full back and paper flops over the back edge, place a piece of 12x12 chipboard behind the papers to support them.Here are ideas for containers to use for storing your papers. Remember, pick containers that fit the space and are functional.A decorated 12x12 X-Large Fab File from Totally Tiffany. These come with 5 - 12x12 File Pockets which are great for keeping your lines of paper together.12x12 Fab File X-Large by Totally Tiffany. I use these for storing all of my themed patterned paper. They come plain, but you can customize them with vinyl as I did for this one. There is a handle and space for a label on top and on the side which makes the great to grab and go to a crop. They also come with 5 - 12x12 File Pockets which are great for keeping your paper collections together. I also use the 13"x13" Crystal Clear 2mil Zip Bags for keeping my papers sorted within the Fab File. These are available in packs of 10 or 100.Clear 3-Drawer Organizer is great for storing cardstock.This clear 3-drawer organizer is found at Michaels. You can easily see your cardstock colors through the trays. There is a hole in the bottom of each tray you can poke a finger through to push the paper up for easier access. My only issue with these is it is that the trays should have slightly more room for the paper and work best for cardstock.The Small Multi-Purpose bin from The Container Store is perfect for holding individual sheets of scrapbook paper.Multi-Purpose bins from The Container Store. These come in small, medium, large and XL. I love them and use them for a lot of different scrapbook supplies and even camera gear. If I didn't already own the acrylic drawers, I would use these for my cardstock. I do use them for my generic patterned papers.Clear acrylic stacking trays that hold 12x12 paper12x12 Acrylic Stacking Trays - I use these for my background and specialty/foil/glitter papers. It's easy to slide a stack out and grab what I need. I can also store the scraps right in the tray. These also fit perfectly on top of the acrylic paper drawers in each of the Expedit Cubes.The plastic storage crate holds a lot of papers and is fairly inexpensive, but works best when you don't have to move it to access the paper.Plastic Crates. These are relatively inexpensive and hold a lot of paper. However, they work best when you can access the paper without moving the crate. The crates get heavy, especially when full of paper.It's easier to find non-traditional scrapbook storage for this size paper. Here are some you can try:The Like-It Bricks Stackable Letter Trays provide easy access storage for 8 1/2 x 11 papers. Like It Bricks are modular and have other components that can be stacked on top to take advantage of vertical space.Acrylic trays from office supplies stores work well. These are the Like It Bricks line found at The Container Store.The Fold N File by 31 is a great option for 8 1/2 by 11 paper. It also has handles making it easier to grab and go.The Fold N File by 31 is a fun option for storing your 8 1/2 x 11 papers. It fits neatly on a shelf. The only issue is that the papers visible.This is a discontinued basket from 31, but is a great example of how you can store your 8 1/2 x 11 paper in a basket.While this basket is discontinued, it does make a great example of how you can add a little country charm to your scrap supplies while showing them off.8 1/2 x 11 Cardstock sorted into rainbow order and stored in a Multi Purpose binFor my personal stash of 8 1/2 x 11 cardstock, I chose the Multi-Purpose Bins from The Container Store. My goal is to use these papers up before cutting into my 12x12 sheets. 8 1/2 x 11 and 12x12 cardstock could be stored together in these containers, too. I did mention that I have used several of these for organizing my scrapbook supplies, right?We've made it this far and only have the scraps to go. I figured that if you've made it this far with me, I'd actually walk you through my thought process on deciding which container is right for my scraps.A brown 31 tote started as my scrap paper bin.I used this tote from 31 for the longest time to hold my scrapbook paper scraps. It did work well, at first, but it became overstuffed and hard to access the papers. I wasn't using the papers faster than I was adding to it because I had a hard time flipping through them to find the perfect scrap especially as it got overstuffed. The issues with this container is that it's fabric, so the sides have some give and extended beyond the opening, the straps weren't long enough to making carrying it easy and the bottom wasn't sturdy. I had also tried sorting my scraps by color using manila folders as dividers. Good thought, but big mistake. They aren't sturdy enough or taller than some of the scraps and got lost in the container. The Pluggis 4 gallon recycling bin works for scraps of paper and even 12x12 sheets.As I changed containers, I purged my scraps and tossed smaller scraps and pieces that were torn, bent and damaged. Next, I tried the Pluggis 4 gallon recyling bin from Ikea. It worked well and is quite sturdy. Note how the sides flare out a bit. This makes flipping through the scraps easier, as long as it doesn't get overstuffed! Although I liked it, I thought it was a bit bulky for what I wanted. Note: we're not at that point in organizing yet, but this would make a great container for your projects in progress. Plus, it fits in a cube in the Expedit and Kallax Ikea bookcases.The Ikea Kuggis containers come in a couple sizes. They have a sleek look, tapered sides and work well for holding paper scrap scraps.I did one more round of purging my scraps and decided on this Kuggis container from Ikea. I felt that this was a manageable size to grab off a shelf and flip through to find the perfect scrap for my project.Wow, there you have it. How to organize 12x12 scrapbook paper along with 8 1/2 x 11 papers and paper scraps. It's a journey. The destination is worth it!Done - all of my papers are organized and stored neatly in my bookcase.Here is my papers look like, all organized and stored together on the bookcase.How did your paper organization turn out? What worked and didn't work for you? I'd love to hear about it and see pics!You're on a roll with organizing, have you checked out How to Organize a Craft Room?If you haven't already downloaded the 12x12 Scrapbook Paper Storage Ideas PDF guide from the Resource Library, you can do that now. The password to access the library appears in the confirmation message and in your email in-box.Thank you and happy sorting!

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