

3 Simple Steps For An Organized Car

Our cars are one of our most expensive possessions, yet sometimes we treat them like over sized junk drawers on wheels. Take some time this weekend to get your car clean and organized before summer.

Start by removing everything from your car (yep, even the car seats that took you half an hour to install) and give it a good cleaning so you can start with a clean slate.

Step 1:

Now think about how you use your car and start a list of items you will need. List everything, even seasonal items. Do you travel a lot for work? Are you constantly shuttling kids around to sports and other activities? Below is a general list of must haves for your car. Add any additional items that you will need based on your list.

Must-Haves for Your Car

Proof of insurance, copy of registration

Vehicle owner's manual

Cell phone charger

Tire gauge

Trash holder or bag

Pen and pad of paper

First aid kit

Supply of nonperishable food and water

Jacket, hat, umbrella and blanket

Flashlight

Spare tire and jack

Vehicle Emergency kit with jumper cables, flares

Step 2:

Now comes the fun part...organizing the items on the list. To make this easier, we're going to divide your car into 3 parts: front, middle and back.

Front

Keep a small trash container in the front of your car if possible. It's easier to empty that than to dig trash out of the bins on the door. Save the bins for items like umbrellas, flashlights or ice scrapers. These are things that we don't need all the time, but we want them to be handy when we do.

Most glove boxes aren't very big , so you should only keep the essentials in yours:

Insurance info

registration

owners manual

cell phone charger

tire gauge

Other items that should be in the front of your car include things like: pen & paper, tissues, hand sanitizer, CD's, personal seasonal items like gloves or sunglasses, anything from your list that you would need at your fingertips and possibly a mobile desk set up if you work out of your car. There are a lot of different organizing products to help you keep everything neat and accessible. Work with the items you need and the spaces available in your vehicle to determine the best placement.

Middle

If you do a lot of running around with kids you'll definitely want to take the time to set up an area for them and their things. Of course, a trash container in this section goes without saying. For younger kids it's a good idea to have an "activity or travel kit" for each child that contains age appropriate things for them to do while running errands or waiting for siblings at activities etc. Momsminivan.com has printables and game ideas for kids of all ages. Because crayons can melt and pencils break, washable markers are probably the safest bet for younger kids if the "kit" will include coloring or writing. If you put the kit in a small backpack or some sort of seal-able container with a handle the kit will be easy to take with you in case you need entertainment at your destination as well. Don't forget nonperishable snacks and water bottles.

Back

I love collapsible containers for the cargo and trunk areas of cars. They are a great way to contain everything from sports gear to groceries and they fold up and can be stored in a minimal amount of space when not needed. (A collapsible insulated container is a must to help keep perishables cold while your doing your shopping.) Trunkorganizer.com has collapsible containers that are also adjustable. (We love that! The more versatile the better!) Use these types of containers to store your first aid kit (don't forget the sunscreen), a roadside emergency kit and any items that you need regularly depending on your own personal list.

If you're running to practice or classes several times a week it's easier to keep the supplies in a container that you can either keep in the car or transfer in and out easily as needed. (Note: I like to put off season items in a container and store it elsewhere until needed. Then all I have to do is grab the container and switch it out.)

Step 3:

How to keep it this way...

Car trash containers are small. Emptying the trash when you get home every day or once a week (depending on how much you're in your car) keeps it from getting out of control. Reminding everyone that if they bring something into the car, they are responsible to take it back out is another good rule. Eating in the car is almost always a messy proposition, but sometimes it's unavoidable. Based on your family's schedule decide if this is a rule you want to implement.

A little maintenance and a few usage rules will help keep your newly organized vehicle looking great!