

Decorating Ideas

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DIY

# Home

## A Place for Everything

BY DANIELLE BLUNDELL

*For Emily Ley, creator of the Simplified Planner, the key to an organized home is a mix of pen-and-paper to-do lists, hardworking storage and flexible routines. Try her smart tactics to get ready for the new school year.*

How about them pineapples? Emily loves this trendy tropical motif that's also a sign of hospitality. Spot at least eight fruit-shaped objects in her office.



Prop styling: Elizabeth Demos.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
DAVID TSAY

## Home: Neat Ideas

Don't hide collectibles in a closet. Put the oversize ones to work as wall art, like Emily did with this airplane propeller replica found on eBay.

Fake a built-in with a shelving unit that's roughly the size of your wall. This plain Ikea entertainment center now looks like a million bucks, thanks to gold-painted knobs and colorful books.



Sometimes two is better than one. Pushing together a pair of bright blue utility carts makes a giant coffee table with plenty of storage for magazines, mementos and toys.

Emily upgraded her Restoration Hardware sofa with stain-resistant outdoor linen from Perennials. "Ketchup wipes right off," she says.

The best place to park a basket for throws and pillows is right beside the couch.

### Emily's Style, Simplified

Invest in quality furniture to anchor your spaces, and fill in the blanks with inexpensive decor from places like One Kings Lane, Target and HomeGoods, where this huge diamond patterned rug cost less than \$400!



A trio of bulletin boards, one for each child's drawings, photos and invitations, creates a colorful backdrop for the breakfast nook. "They're just craft store cork boards wrapped in fabric," says Emily.

# E

Emily Ley craves the breathing room of white space—in her work as a designer, in her days as a busy mom and in her surroundings. But the Tampa, FL, home she shares with her husband Bryan and their children is far from boring. The airy, open concept layout, grounded by neutral furniture and accessorized with bright pops of color, echoes the cheery-meets-minimal aesthetic of Emily's stationery. "My planner and paper goods are all about living more simply, and our rooms definitely reflect that," says Emily. "There are no elaborate patterns or super-fussy finishes. For us, it's just comfy classics and a happy stripe or two." Still, three small kids—Brady, 5, who's just starting school, and twins Tyler and Caroline, 18 months—means a lot of stuff. To help manage everyday clutter, Emily shopped for smart storage pieces, from small bins and rolling carts to a full wall of cubbies. The family didn't need a formal dining room, so Emily turned it into her company headquarters and splurged on a gorgeous built-in for displaying products and treasured photos. "My goal with decorating is to balance the inspirational with the practical," says Emily. "We love this house and want to use every square inch of it."

Home: Neat Ideas



Cabinets that extend all the way up to the ceiling eke out extra room for serving bowls, special dishes and infrequently used small appliances.

Handy pull-outs hide behind pretty flat-panel doors. This sliver of a cabinet houses a fully stocked spice rack, which cuts down on countertop clutter.

Every command center needs a family calendar to keep track of activities and events. Dry-erase boards provide a foolproof option for the constant schedule changes that come with running a business and having school-age children.

In the playroom, labeled bins and stacked drawers make cleanup a cinch.



Art supplies sit at the ready for impromptu crafting, while two huge baskets corral toys. Emily often keeps her Simplified Planner, notepad and a cup of pens here so she knows where to find them. "I always have a bunch of running lists: to-dos, groceries and our family schedule for the day—plus my a.m. and p.m. to-do lists posted on our fridge," she says. "This area is like my home base for all of that."

Emily's Style, Simplified

All the walls in Emily's home, with the exception of her office, are painted in PPG Tundra Frost (PPG1009-1), the faintest shade of gray. This new neutral works with everything and reflects natural light just like white.

Brady's big-boy room wouldn't be complete without nightstand storage drawers for favorite books and bedtime essentials.



## SANITY SAVERS

*Form meets function in these bold basics.*



Emily Ley Pineapple Cup, emilyley.com, \$24



Emily Ley Magazine Box in Navy Stripe, emilyley.com, \$18



Sauder Multi-Cart in Peacock Blue, sauder.com, \$150

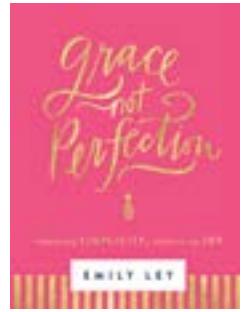


ClosetMaid Cubeicals Fabric Drawer in Chalkboard Ocean Blue, closetmaid.com, \$9



Sugar Paper Desk, target.com, \$400

For bonus photos, answers to the pineapple search activity and much more from Emily Ley, visit [familycircle.com/emilyley](http://familycircle.com/emilyley).



This October, Emily is releasing a book, *Grace Not Perfection*, a guide to mindfully streamlining and prioritizing. Here's how she gets things done.

1

**Outsource tasks that make you miserable.**

I'm not the best cook, so a few days a week I purchase dinners from a neighbor with a catering business. Play to your strengths—there's no need for mommy guilt over your shortcuts.

2

**Sundays are for taking stock of the week ahead.**

My idea of restful is preparing myself so that things run smoothly. We use Sundays to pick up the house, do laundry and make weekday lunches.

3

**Think of your space as a tool and organize accordingly.**

Shoes, phone, keys, wallet—if you create a place for them, you'll know where to find them.

4

**Divide and conquer chores.** Write household duties on a Post-it, and split them with your partner. Get your kids involved too!