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CTRL, ALT, DELETE YOUR CLUTTER

Tips for National Clean Up Your Computer Month

Everyone relies on technology. Computers, laptops, tablets, and phones are staples of modern life. However, it's easy for these devices to become cluttered with old photos, files, and general disorganization. Luckily, January is National Clean Up Your Computer Month and an excellent time to get your technology in order.

START BY DUSTING

Over time, computer towers can become clogged with dust, which creates additional, unwanted heat within your computer. Regular cleanings will increase the lifespan of your computer and protect its essential components. Compressed air is great for removing most of the dust and other particulates. If the fans or filters are too dirty, you can remove them from the tower to clean them better. If you use water or liquid cleaning products on them, be sure they are completely dry before placing them back into your computer.

ORGANIZE YOUR FILES

Naming and arranging the files on your computer in such a way that they're easy for you to find can end up saving you a lot of time. Declutter your workspace by creating one file for pictures, one for Word documents, one for spreadsheets, and one for programs to eliminate the hassle of frantically searching for the files you need.



BACK UP YOUR COMPUTER

Be sure to back up your computer before you start deleting things. This acts as a safety net in case you delete something you didn't mean to. Additionally, consider installing a second hard drive. The extra space can help with storing important files without having to worry about how much room is left.

CLEAN UP SPACE

Any files you'll never use again should be deleted. Likewise, any programs you haven't used in a while should be uninstalled. Check your hard drive for files that might be taking up unintended space on your computer. And remember to empty the recycling bin — it's easy to forget just how much goes in there.

An Unexpected Future

My Improbable Journey Into Law

When I was growing up, I didn't think I was going to go to college, let alone become a lawyer. My father owned a construction business, and I would work with him in the summers. I found the hard work rewarding and took comfort with the idea that I could work my way up to running such a business one day. But life had other plans.

My father passed away during my senior year of high school. He'd gotten sick suddenly, and our whole family was blindsided — in the end, we had to sell the business. Just like that, all my expectations of what my future would bring were washed away. It was sink or swim time; I enrolled in college.

Even after I got to college, I didn't really know what I wanted to do. It felt like everyone else had this clear vision of what they were there to study, and I was just casting about. That's when one of the mandatory classes at Arizona State University showed me a whole new world.

The class was on American government, and I found it fascinating. Learning about the intricacies of our government and legal system isn't something I would

have expected to like in high school, but to my surprise, I loved it. So I started taking more and more classes, and, before I knew it, I was graduating with a political science degree and applying to law schools.

From there, my journey to becoming a personal injury attorney was a simple one. During my second year studying to be a lawyer, I interned at a defense firm that also handled injury cases. I found the work rewarding, but more often than not, I found myself siding with the injured person. So, I switched sides and I've worked in the field ever since. I couldn't be happier.

In the end, I hope my father would be proud. While I wish he could be around to see me get my degree and become an attorney, I take comfort in knowing this was the best way for things to work out given the circumstances.

In a way, becoming an attorney worked out a lot like a personal injury claim: I took a tragic situation and made it the best it

could be. This is my goal for each of my clients. Nothing will completely erase what happened to them, but we work hard to help them push forward and make a tragic situation better.

“Just like that, all my expectations of what my future would bring were washed away.”



I'm proud to be part of a firm that embodies that mentality, where the senior partners work just as hard as everyone else — if not harder — to provide the best representation they can. This isn't where I thought I'd be when I was a teen, but I'm glad to be here.

-Michael J. Mills

HELP YOUR KIDS ACHIEVE MORE THIS YEAR

With Simple and Actionable Goals

With every new year comes an opportunity to reinvent ourselves or start down a new path toward self-improvement. Making resolutions is a big part of many families' New Year's traditions, and parents often have a desire for their kids to take part in that tradition when they're old enough. Following through on resolutions is tough, especially for young children, but with your help, they can achieve their goals.

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH.

You are your children's role model for almost everything, including following through on New Year's resolutions. So, ask yourself if you follow through on your own resolutions. When you proclaim that you will read more books or finally get a gym membership, do you actually try to do it? Your kids will assign as much importance to New Year's resolutions as you do, so by sticking to your own commitments, you can help them stay on track too.

KEEP THINGS SIMPLE AND ACHIEVABLE.

When your kids are forming their resolutions, their first attempts will probably be very broad. Statements like "I want to be more kind" or "I will try to help more around the house" incorporate good values but don't include any actionable steps. Help your kids think of tangible ways to act on those goals. For example, if they want to be tidier, a good resolution might be for them to clean their room once a week or take responsibility for one household chore every day.

DON'T DO ALL THE WORK FOR THEM.

While it's important for you to help your kids formulate their goals, be sure that you aren't taking over. If they're ultimately responsible for their resolutions, they'll feel more compelled to keep them. Instead, suggest different goal areas they could improve, such as home, school, or sports, and let them elaborate.

When it comes to creating habits, nobody is perfect, so even if your kids falter on their goals in the middle of February, don't worry. The important thing is that you continue to encourage them every step of the way.



If You're Hurt and No One Is Around to See It,

Do You Have a Claim?



Witnesses are often a key part of personal injury cases. When a car accident occurs or someone slips and falls, there are usually people around who see it all play out. That third-party testimony can be invaluable when the insurance company questions your claim. But what happens if you get hurt while no one's around?

That's exactly what happened to one of our clients recently. An elevator door crushed her into a wall on an otherwise empty floor, causing severe injuries. She filed a premises liability claim against the building's owners for the harm the malfunctioning automatic door had done to her. But the defendants leaned on one key issue: the fact that no one else saw the injury take place.

The opposition to our client's claim can essentially be boiled down to "How do we know this even happened?" In the absence of video or eyewitness reports, insurance companies will often try to cast doubt on a case in this way. That's why our team knew we had to have compelling evidence on our side.

Very early on in the claims process, we requested the maintenance records from the building owners and the company that maintained their elevators. We ended up having to send this request multiple times and still never received the records from the time of the accident. That entire week was mysteriously missing from their logs.

Thus, we argued that a spoliation of evidence had occurred. The records pertaining to the elevator in question at the time of the accident had either been discarded or negligently misplaced. Either way, it was a major hole in the defendant's case. Having achieved a far better negotiating position, we were able to win our client a favorable settlement.

It just goes to show that some hurdles, like a lack of witnesses, can be overcome. Doing so takes early diligence to collect as much relevant evidence as possible. That's the difference a hardworking legal team can make on your case.

DON'T WANT OPIOIDS? There Are Alternatives

As the ongoing opioid crisis has shown, painkilling drugs can do more harm than good. While drugs are certainly useful in managing extreme cases of chronic pain, many people simply don't want to become dependent on these narcotics. Thankfully, there are alternatives available.

OTHER DRUGS

Readily available, non-habit-forming drugs can provide a surprising amount of pain relief. In fact, the Journal of the American Medical Association found that a combination of over-the-counter products acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil) proved just as effective as opioids. Some prescription non-opioids, such as tricyclic antidepressants, have also been used to relieve chronic pain. Ask your doctor about the possibility of these types of alternative drugs.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Exercise is often an important part of pain management. If you allow your body's muscles and joints to weaken, movement will only become more painful. Licensed physical therapists can help you develop ways to stay in shape while minimizing your pain. They may also use techniques like deep muscle massage to more directly address your condition.



MEDITATION

While the exact medical effects of practices like mindful meditation still need more scientific study, there is some evidence of meditation having an impact on pain. The Department of Health and Human Services reported that "similar brain areas are activated during both mindfulness meditation and pain-modulation techniques mediated by opioid receptors," suggesting that the activity may have a tangible effect on blocking discomfort. At the very least, reducing the stress and tension caused by injuries can be a great addition to any pain management strategy.

Of course, talk to your doctor before seeking any alternatives to prescribed medication. They can help you understand the specific needs of your condition and find the pain management strategy that best fits your needs. If you've been relying on opioids and feel like exploring other options, this is a conversation worth having.

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SOLUTIONS

How to Make Your Own Sauerkraut



Cabbage is in season right now, which means it's the perfect time to try your hand at making sauerkraut. The fermented cabbage requires only two ingredients, keeps for months, and is packed with beneficial probiotics.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs cabbage
- 4 tsp fine sea salt

Equipment

- Jar
- Lid with airlock
- Something to weigh down cabbage, ideally made of a nonreactive material like glass

Instructions

1. Remove outer leaves from cabbage. Slice very thinly.
2. In a large bowl, combine cabbage and salt. Let stand for 20 minutes.
3. Squeeze cabbage to release juices. Let the cabbage continue to soak and release juices for another 20 minutes.
4. Transfer to a jar and press down cabbage until completely submerged in its juices. Weigh down cabbage.
5. Seal jar with airlock. Let cabbage sit at room temperature and away from sunlight for one month. Once fermented, transfer to the fridge. Sauerkraut will keep for six months to one year.