



ORGANIZE YOUR HOLIDAY DECORATING IN SIX EASY STEPS

When I was a kid, holiday décor consisted of a Christmas tree and a plastic snowman in the yard. A few red placemats on the table, and voila! - we were ready for the yuletide. Decking the halls for today's holiday home can include boughs of holly in every room of the house, multiple Christmas trees, seasonally appropriate pictures on the walls, and even a wreath for the car. Whether you're digging two boxes of decorations out of the attic or forty-two boxes of decorations out of storage, remember FROSTY: six easy steps to preparing your home for the season:

F: Freshen Up
R: Ready the Rooftop
O: Overcome the Ornerly
S: Set out the Santas
T: Trim the Tree
Y: Yearn for the New Year

STEP ONE: FRESHEN UP

Give your home a pre-holiday scrub. Your decorations will look sparkly and festive against the backdrop of a clean home. Keep it up with weekly wipe downs. If it's too late for a whole house cleaning, focus your energy on the kitchen. You'll be glad you did when neighbors drop by or out of town guests arrive. **(When: First week in November)**

STEP TWO: READY THE ROOFTOP

Outdoor lights are labor intensive, and getting them up can be weather dependent. It's hard to trade the couch and a football game for roof-climbing in the wind and the rain! So get your lights up the first dry weekend in November. Flip the switch after your Thanksgiving feast and be the envy of the neighborhood! **(When: First dry opportunity in November)**

STEP THREE: OVERCOME THE ORNERY

There's nothing prettier than one of those miniature snow villages with tiny trees and lampposts all aglow. But setting it up is another story. If you've got a holiday decorating task or two that gives you fits, requires a ladder, or just simply takes a long time, get it done early. You'll enjoy the fruits of your labor all season long. **(When: Third week in November)**

STEP FOUR: SET OUT THE SANTAS

Your house is clean, the outdoor lights are hung, and you've tackled the toughest tasks. Now it's time to continue decorating your home with all your favorite collections. Unpack your Santas and snowmen, hang your Christmas stockings, and set up the Nativity Scene. It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas! **(When: Shortly after Thanksgiving-or sooner if you like)**

STEP FIVE: TRIM THE TREE

Save your tree trimming for the first or second week of December. A cut tree, even with water, can dry out after a few weeks. Fresh cedar garlands, wreaths and poinsettia's should also be purchased at this time. **(When: Early to mid December)**

STEP SIX: YEARN FOR THE NEW YEAR

It's never too early to start planning for next year! Take your decorations down room by room and package them in large plastic containers clearly marked with labels. Keep all the items from a single project together in one or two boxes. For instance, pack the lights, extension cord, tree skirt and tree stand together in one box. **(When: the week after Christmas or just after the New Year)**

Always remember, the holidays are meant to be enjoyed, not just endured. If you find yourself overwhelmed by all the tasks, give yourself a present: opt out! Your memories will be of time shared with family and friends, rather than endless lists of errands. Enjoy the season!