

DECOR

Packing up the holidays doesn't have to be painful

Save yourself a headache next year by packing up Christmas right with tips from a pro



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▲ Fri., Jan. 1, 2016 | 3 min. read

Article was updated Jan. 04, 2016



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What goes up must come down, including holiday decor. “When decorations start to feel more like clutter, it’s time to put them away,” says organizing guru Marie Potter, marketing director for [Professional Organizers in Canada](#). She offers these tips to keep your treasured decorations organized and looking good year after year.

The loss of a favourite ornament due to careless packing can be heartbreaking. Use the traditional egg carton approach to keep your small, delicate decorations safe (don’t forget to remove the hooks) or create your own ornament storage box by gluing rows of upright plastic cups to a piece of corrugated cardboard cut to fit inside a box. “Create several stackable layers. Wrap each ornament in tissue and drop into cups,” explains Potter. Plastic ornaments can be stored together in clear bins. Group like with like so everything is easy to find.

[Holiday ornament storage](#), \$38. At Solutions or solutions-stores.ca.

Say no to squished wreaths! Using a twist tie, attach your faux wreath to a wire hanger and place inside a repurposed garment or plastic dry-cleaner bag and hang from a basement rafter or on the back of a closet. Or, says Potter, invest in a [zippered wreath bag](#) with a hook, or a plastic container to protect your wreath from dust and damage.

Tangled lights are the bane of every holiday decorator. Potter has her own light-wrangling solution: wrap the lights around a large coffee tin and cut a slit in the plastic lid and poke the plug inside. Keep extra light bulbs inside the tin and next year you can easily plug in the lights to locate any bulbs that have burned out. A [Christmas light storage kit with spools](#) is the easiest way to keep larger outdoor strands tidy, she says.

[Light Kit Storage](#), \$20. At Canadian Tire or canadiantire.ca.

This DIY portable wrapping station can be used all year long, says Potter. Wrap a 19-litre (5 gallon) painter’s bucket in an apron with pockets for markers, tape and scissors and store your multiple rolls of wrap inside. Swapping out your wrap by season? An under-the-bed storage system will keep your essentials in perfect shape.

[Canvas gift wrap organizer](#), \$25. At Home Depot or homedepot.ca.

Is the original box for your tree long gone? Sew a tree storage sack using an old sheet, using twine for a drawstring and luggage straps to cinch it together for easy carrying, says Potter. Or invest in a sturdy [zippered tree storage bag](#) or duffle, but consider where you will store the tree to decide if a horizontal or vertical solution will work best, she notes.

[Holiday tree bag](#), \$60. At Solutions or solutions-stores.ca.

Something so lovely should get special treatment. Place felt separators between each plate to prevent scratches and chipping, then [store china in a quilted case set](#). No room in a hutch? Save space by storing these cases on a top shelf of kitchen cabinets — the one over the fridge is a good spot — to accommodate their once-a-year usage, suggests Potter.

[SALT Quilted 6-piece Dinnerware and Serveware China Storage Protector Set](#), \$27. At Bed Bath & Beyond or bedbathandbeyond.ca.

Greeting card organizers may seem like a relic in the digital age, but consider the uses. Sentimental types can use it to store special cards, crafty folk can save the prettiest ones to be repurposed into gift tags and more, while the super-organized can shop the post-holiday sales for great deals on next year’s mailings. “If someone has moved, keep the envelopes too, and update your address book or computer contact list all at once after the holidays,” adds Potter.

[Card storage box with dividers](#), \$14. At Solutions or solutions-stores.ca.

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