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The Best Ways to Organize Books at Home, According to a Librarian



By [Inigo Del Castillo](#)

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Credit: [Liz Calka](#)



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BOOKS you no longer have room for more!

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We recently spoke to Emma Carbone, Senior YA Librarian at the [Brooklyn Public Library](#), and she gave us simple tips on how to organize (and even purge) personal libraries like a real librarian would.

Try vibrational shelving

Carbone personally likes to group her books with a system she calls vibrational shelving, which organizes titles by series/author and also by genre.

"I don't like shifting books when I get new ones so this method lets me add things without having to shift my entire shelf system the way I would if it were alphabetical or color coded. It does also mean I spend time staring meaningfully at my shelves trying to figure out what isn't working and what books need to be moved sometimes, but that's not necessarily a bad thing."

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Think outside the bookshelf

Usually, when we run out of bookshelf space, we turn to tables and chairs or even staircases and pianos. Carbone suggests trying book carts too, in addition to using other clever techniques.

“Book carts are a big trend but honestly when I run out of shelf space I go through my books and pull out a stack to donate or regift and figure out how to maximize the shelf space I already have. I’m a big fan of vertical stacks of books by the same author which usually takes up less space than they would in a row.”

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Another suggestion is to double stack and lay books on top of shelved books, “if you don’t mind playing Tetris while sorting through your books,” she adds.

Also, if you have to store in a box, choose plastic over cardboard. The material is more water-resistant and won’t be susceptible to termites. And to prevent folds and creases, don’t forget to store the books flat or standing upright.

Keeping track of your TBR list

You might also want to try apps like [Goodreads](#) to help you catalog your personal collection online. Carbone swears by it.

“My entire reading life is managed on Goodreads. It lets me track books I read, when I read them, share star ratings, and post reviews. You can also track books you want to read, add status updates for books you’re currently reading if you are a note taker, and create custom shelves to sort books or track the books you own.”

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How best to declutter books

While getting rid of books might be sacrilege to many bookworms, Carbone says to think of it as curating rather than purging.

"I honestly love weeding my personal library—it makes me feel like I'm curating my book collection to only have the best of the best and my most favorite books. [Marie Kondo](#) has a lot of great strategies in 'The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up' which have gone a long way to inform my own book weeding strategies.

"Some questions I ask myself when deciding what books to keep (because I think of weeding as choosing the books I want to make space for rather than the books I want to get rid of): Did I love this book when I read it? Is this a book I'll re-read? Does it have sentimental value because it was a gift or because it was signed? And, perhaps most importantly, how easily could I replace this book if I change my mind?"

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How to care for your books

The ideal place to store books is in a glass bookcase to keep out dust. Carbone also recommends keeping your books stored away from light, which can lead to yellowing or fading. "Dry storage is also key to avoid foxing or other damage from moisture and humidity."

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And perhaps the best bit of advice? Actually reading the books you buy and re-reading the ones worth a re-read. "The best way to take care of a book is to use it. The books I re-read and refer to regularly are always happier than the ones sitting on shelves looking pretty."

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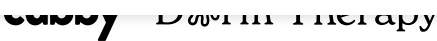
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