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## breathing space

# Organizing your car

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Whether you're a busy parent, a salesperson or both, you're probably always on the go in your car. It's important to keep your car organized and neat. Organization doesn't have to be difficult; in fact, disorganization proves to be more difficult. For example, if you take a short cut to your child's soccer practice or business meeting and happen to get lost, having a map, street finder, or built-in PC locator would be a lifesaver at the time. Along the same lines, what happens if you get up to the toll booth only to realize you've forgotten your money? Thinking ahead of time will save you headaches.

Map your course. When traveling, always keep a supply of maps for cities and towns that you frequent. If you travel across country, invest in a wire-bound map of the United States that has every state with main roads and side roads. If you carry a notebook computer with you, consider purchasing street finder software so you can plan your way whether in the car or hotel room. If you choose to do this, keep maps in the car as back-up.

Clunk your quarters. If you have a long commute or drive frequently, have a roll of quarters and dimes under the seat or in a place where you can quickly put your hands on them.

It's easy to forget about toll roads or not even know they're there if you're in unfamiliar territory. You also may get lost or be out longer than you expected, and get very hungry. With a roll of quarters stashed in your car, you can always afford an order of fries and a drink.

Stash your house keys in the car. Keep a set of house keys hidden in your car and a set of car keys hidden in or around your house. If you ever lock yourself out of your house, there's an extra set of keys in your car. You can keep an extra car key hidden in a magnetic case somewhere under your car, but if you feel uncomfortable doing this, keep an extra car key in your purse or wallet or hidden somewhere in your yard. This may be under a designated rock or attached to the inside of the doghouse or wherever is best for you.

If you lock yourself out of your car and house, you can still get into one of them, and hence the other, without breaking a window or calling a locksmith.

### A TIDY GLOVE COMPARTMENT

Some glove compartments are small, some big. Most of them share one thing in common—a lot of clutter and junk. Only a few papers need to be in your glove compartment—car registration, insurance, safe-



ty inspection and emission test information, and the like. Since most newer model cars have consoles for storing extra items, other stuff can go elsewhere. With a clean glove compartment, you'll have room for a few other items, but pick and choose those carefully. You don't want your car to become cluttered again so that you can't find what you're seeking.

Put trash in the cannot car. If the door to your glove compartment is getting harder to close, it's time to clean it out. The glove compartment is not a trash can or semi-permanent home of unnecessary papers and receipts. If the items are important, take them inside and put them in a folder where you can maintain them. In addition to the above mentioned items your glove compartment need only contain your car manual, a small flashlight, and perhaps recent service records. If you're ever pulled over by a police officer and spend five minutes digging through the glove compartment looking for your registration, take that as a clue to get organized.

Block the bright light. If you've kept your glove compartment free and clear of clutter, there are a few extra items that you can keep there on a temporary basis. An extra pair of sunglasses (in a case) will usually fit perfectly in the glove compartment of your car. This way, anytime you get into your car, you'll always have sunglasses even if you leave the pair you normally wear at home.

Turn on the tunes. One sure sign of disorganization is looking into your car and seeing twenty-five CDs lying on the seats. If you have a stereo player and often opt for listening to your favorite group, educational material, or relaxation tapes as opposed to the radio, keep only a few CDs on hand at a time. If you prefer, you can buy a CD holder. However, if you only have two or three favorites, you can

put these in your glove compartment so they won't be in direct sunlight and they won't be sliding around the seat making it difficult for you to find or reach.

Feed the beast. If you're a diabetic or tend to suffer from low blood sugar, you have to take steps to ensure that you won't pass out at the wheel and cause harm to yourself and others. The best way to do this is to keep non-perishable snacks in the glove compartment or somewhere out of direct sunlight. As tempting as it is, stay away from the chocolate candy as it will melt and make a mess. You may also want to keep hard candy or breath mints in case you need to do business with others after eating a large Italian sub with onions.

Don't forget your gloves. If you live in a cold climate, make sure you keep an extra pair of gloves in your glove compartment (hence the name). If you're in a hurry when you leave your house, it's easy to leave your gloves in another coat. Even though the pair in the car will be a little chilly on a cold morning, they'll warm up and you'll be glad you have them.

Bag up your valuables. Whether you're a busy parent or businessperson, chances are that you have many small items to keep up with in your car. Pens, coins, and other items can be difficult to find when they're thrown in a glove compartment, purse, or briefcase. To make common small items easier to find, put them in a clear plastic case or bag so you can see through to the contents and find what you're looking for easily.

Keeping your car simplified, yet prepared, can make your daily commute and errand-running go more smoothly. ■

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