

## 7 Steps to Simplify Your Stuff

Want to start 2019 with less “stuff”? The benefits of owning fewer possessions include less to clean or dust, less to organize, more money spent on experiences rather than possessions and more energy to put into your greatest passions. But where do you begin?

1. Start with the area that bothers you most or will impact your daily life the most. Whether it's that “junk room”, a cluttered kitchen or an overflowing closet, tackling this problem area first will help keep you motivated to continue.
2. Have your goal and vision of success! Whether it's downsizing for a future move or just hoping to have less clutter, keep reminding yourself of how great it will be to reach your goal!
3. Set the timer. Decluttering can feel overwhelming, so set the timer and tackle tasks for short periods of time. Even if you only have 5 minutes, you can:
  - Grab a bag and fill it with items for donation. Once the bag is filled, put it in your car right away. You can also do this with items you want to discard.
  - Pick up 5 things, and find places for them.
  - If you already have a “To Donate” pile, take 5 minutes to box it up and put it in your car for charity.
  - Each day, find at least one item to give or throwaway. When going up or down stairs and your hands are empty, pick one thing to take and get rid of.
4. Have your boxes, bags or totes handy for items you wish to Keep, Trash and Donate, but also include these:
  - The “Maybe” box is filled with items you think you might need in the future. After you pack it up, seal it and write a date on the calendar a few months out. When the date arrives and you didn't need anything from the box or miss it, then maybe it's time to let it go!
  - Don't get distracted while cleaning again! Make sure to have a container for items that don't belong that you will deal with later. This will make sure you concentrate your efforts on just one area at a time.

5. Pay attention to how space is used. Some home organization pieces can help, but don't go overboard! The goal is to get rid of possessions, not find the best way to fill every square inch with storage.
6. Stop the clutter from coming in! Be a smart shopper and use a list so you don't create stock piles of items. Also designate a spot for incoming papers & recycle out of date magazines and newspapers once they are read.
7. Ask great questions. How long since I last used this? Is it still useful to me? Would I buy it again? Who could use it now? The truth is your items don't have to become trash. There are many great organizations who can put your items to work for others in our community. When you donate things you aren't using, you not only lighten your load but help your community in the process.



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