



HOW TO DECLUTTER YOUR HOME BEFORE A MOVE & SAVE ON LIVING COSTS



A simple guide that'll get you ready
to moving to a new home



ORGANISING YOUR HOME

First, a few ground rules:
COMMIT TO CHANGE.

ORGANISING YOUR HOME

TAKE IT SLOW

Be realistic in your organising efforts. After all, you can't tame years of household chaos in a single day. If tackling an entire room is too daunting or time consuming, for instance, attack just one messy drawer instead.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

You may be tempted to rush out and buy a fancy container system to jump start your organising efforts, but buying things to store your belongings before you begin organising them is premature (not to mention expensive). Wait until you've gone through your stuff before investing in storage systems. Until then, a few cardboard boxes are all you need.

SORT AND PURGE

One of the most important steps in getting your house in order is going through your belongings. Be brutal about throwing out what you rarely use. A good rule of thumb: If you haven't used something in a year, chuck it. If you just can't bring yourself to do that, box it up and stash it in the basement. If another year goes by and you still haven't used it, get rid of it.

STORE THINGS SENSIBLY

Once you've finished purging unnecessary items, put the remaining things in a logical place based on what they're used for and how often you need them. Store the items that are used often, in an easy to reach spot - stash the cheque book in your "bills to pay" file, for instance, and your child's lunchbox next to where you store the drinks and snacks that go in it.

BUILD ORGANISATION INTO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

No matter how efficient an organising system you establish, your home will need periodical upkeep. Rather than throw up your hands in the face of the encroaching chaos, find ways to build regular household maintenance into your routine: Make a date with your kitchen calendar while the coffee brews each morning, or sort through your junk drawer while you chat on the phone. (And don't neglect to enlist help from the people that help make the mess in the first place).



ORGANISING YOUR HOME

ORGANISING THE ENTRYWAY

Set up an “inbox”. Place it near the front door to serve as a holding place for mail. A basket big enough to hold magazines and manila envelopes works well. Sort through the contents during downtime - moving important letters and bills that require action to your desk or home office - and recycle the rest immediately.

Set up an “outbox.” A basket or shelf near the door comes in handy for things that need to go out: paid bills, school permission slips, dry cleaning, or your dog’s leash.

Find a spot for your keys. Hang them on a hook or put them in a bowl near the door, and make it a rule to always stash your keys in this spot.

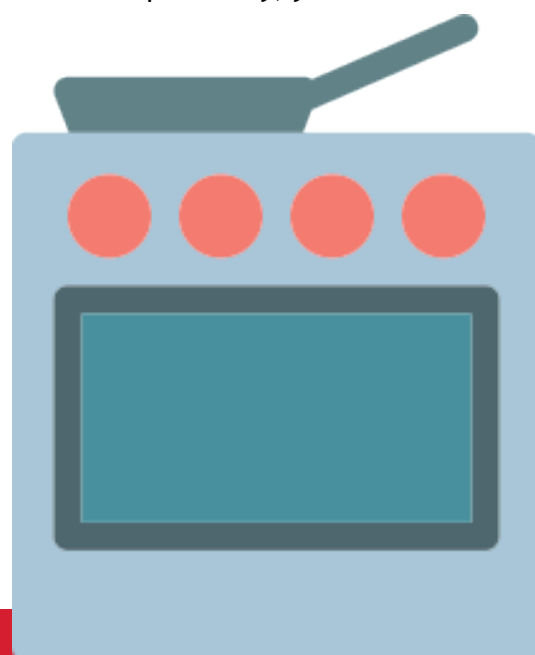
Make the coat closet work for everyone in the family. Attach hooks at waist level on the inside of the door so your children can hang up and retrieve their own jackets and umbrellas.

ORGANISING THE KITCHEN

Create a master calendar. Keep it next to the phone and check it before turning in at night to see what the day ahead holds. You can even colour-code entries for each member of the family. Of course, many people keep their family calendars online or on their smartphones, but one centralised spot where everyone can see what’s going on including the kids can work better to help keep everyone on track.

Invest in cabinet and drawer dividers. You can find ones that hold and separate everything from lids to spice bottles at most discount stores or at specialty retailers. These simple organisers prevent your cabinets and drawers from turning into messy jumbles or bottomless pits, and help you make the most of limited space.

Store staples efficiently. If your habit is to throw groceries into the cabinet haphazardly, you’ll waste time rooting around in them trying to decide what to make for dinner each night. Instead, stock food items in the same place each time you buy them and group similar items together (Also, use plastic or metal shelves that go inside drawers and cabinets to stack canned goods so you can see the labels clearly.)



ORGANISING YOUR HOME

ORGANISING THE KIDS' BEDROOM

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

To learn the best way to set up children's rooms, look no further than a preschool or kindergarten classroom. Just as they do at school, divide your children's space into zones with arts and crafts in one corner, say, and reading in another - so they always know where to go for certain activities and where to find things and put them back.

TAKE TOYS OUT OF THEIR ORIGINAL BOXES

Organise them by type in clear bins that are clearly labelled. If your children can't yet read, draw a picture or cut a photo of what belongs in a particular box out of a magazine or catalogue and stick it on the side. This will help when they're looking for something or are ready to put things away.

CHOOSE CHILD-FRIENDLY FURNITURE

Hang hooks and shelves at a child-friendly eye level so they'll actually be able to use them. Choose children's furniture, or regular furniture with child-friendly proportions, over pieces designed just for grownups. If kids have to climb on chairs to reach for things in a tall bookcase, for instance, they'll probably neglect to put them back when they're done - not to mention put themselves at risk of a fall if they do.

COLLECT AND SELECT

Children's artwork piles up faster than you can say "clutter". To manage the constant wave of arts and crafts, stash precious scribbles in a file or shoe box (keep three-dimensional items such as clay sculptures in lidded boxes, available in stationery, homeware and discount stores). Once a month, go through everything with your kids and pick a few representative pieces of artwork to keep.

MAKE OLD TOYS NEW AGAIN

Regularly take a portion of your children's toys out of circulation, box them up, and put them away in the closet or basement. You can then bring them back into circulation at a later date but use the opportunity to remove for good any toys that are broken beyond repair or that your kids have outgrown.

THINK OUT OF THE BOOKCASE

If your child can't yet read book spines, store his favourite stories in plastic bins or wicker baskets. Make the most of wall space. Use floating shelves higher up on the wall to display prized belongings your kids won't need to take down too often but still want to keep. This could be things like stuffed animals, clay creations, or soccer trophies. This gets them out of the toy basket and bookcase, while still allowing your kids to enjoy them. Another option is to use a "toy chain" with clips (available at many homeware stores and children's retailers), which is hung from the ceiling to efficiently store and display stuffed animals.

TEACH KIDS TO SORT THEIR LAUNDRY

Install two hampers in children's rooms, one white (for the whites) and the other a bright hue (for colours). Even toddlers can learn to put dirty laundry in the appropriate bins as soon as they undress.

ORGANISING YOUR HOME

ORGANISING YOUR BEDROOM

CUT CLUTTER ON BEDSIDE TABLES

Instead of amassing a jumbled pile of magazines, books, remote controls, and sleep aids like eye masks or sound machines on your nightstand, place a basket or small crate on the floor on each side of the bed to hold these items.

MAXIMISE CLOSET OR WARDROBE SPACE

Hang extra rods at waist height to create another storage tier, install closet racks and shelf dividers to organise, and use shoe cubbies to make the most of limited floor space. Also consider grouping clothes by kind - sweaters, trousers, T-shirts - or by season.

ORGANISING THE BATHROOM

CLASSIFY WITH COLOUR

Assign a specific colour towel to each child and make sure she has her own hook to hang it within easy reach. Expand this colour-coded system to other items as well - toothbrushes, combs, and toiletries - and assign a drawer or a bin (marked with the appropriate colour, of course) to each member of the family.

GET BATH TOYS OUT OF THE WAY

Toy baskets made of plastic or netting that suction to tile walls are a great way to clean up clutter after baths. You can also opt for step stools with handy storage compartments underneath.

ORGANISING THE HOME OFFICE/ FAMILY PAPERWORK CENTRE

MAKE AND KEEP MAIL-SORTING APPOINTMENTS

Frequently sort through the mail you've moved from your entryway "inbox", keeping a wastebasket handy so you can recycle envelopes and other unnecessary items immediately. Then make piles of mail that need to be dealt with immediately, mail that can wait, and mail that needs to be filed.

CLUSTER LIKE ITEMS TOGETHER

Keep your cheque book, bank statements, and bills in the same spot, a logical and efficient grouping.

SET UP A BILL-PAYING SYSTEM

To save yourself from having to sit down and write cheques month after month, consider signing up for online billing and/or Direct Debit. This way you can pay your bills online and you can keep an electronic record of everything too.

MANAGE PAPERWORK

Get a filing cabinet (choose one on casters for easy access and mobility) and assign a separate folder to each type of paperwork: one for medical records, one for school notices, one for insurance forms, and so on.

ORGANISING YOUR HOME

ORGANISING THE FAMILY ROOM

CUT ELECTRONIC CLUTTER

If you find yourself tearing off the couch cushions in search of your remote control on a daily basis, store it and other electronic gadgets in a drawer or in a lidded box on the coffee table instead.

BECOME A DISCRIMINATING READER

Keep magazines and newspapers from forming mountains by subscribing only to publications that you regularly read cover to cover. You might consider cancelling your subscription and reading online instead. Most magazines provide at least some of their content on their websites. And if you're hanging on to an old magazine because there's an article in it that you just have to read, tear out the article and recycle the magazine.

HIDE DVDS, CDS, AND VIDEOS

Rather than stacking them in precarious piles, store videos and DVDs in shallow drawers or boxes with their labels face-up for quick identification. Likewise, store CDs in holders made especially for this purpose, or consider ditching the discs altogether and uploading your music to your computer or mp3 player.

SORT THROUGH PICTURES

If you keep every blurry snapshot you take on your hard drive, you'll quickly compile a huge but not very exciting family photo record. Instead, sort through your pictures when you upload them and delete any you don't want to keep. Or scan through your digital photos regularly and drop your favourites in folders organised by month or year.

DESIGNATE A "KID PLAY AREA"

Set up a small corner in the family room just for your kids. This allows you to hang out together while they play and provides a set place for their stuff - which relieves you of having to cart it all back to their rooms each night.

MAKE SPACE FOR PLAYTHINGS

Toy baskets are a must in the living room and any other place your family spends time together. That way your children can have their stuff handy, and you can quickly throw it all in the basket when you're expecting company or when you simply want to reclaim some adult space at the end of the day.





DONATE YOUR CLOTHES TO CHARITY

Everyone has items in their closets that they haven't worn in years. But something you don't love anymore could be another person's new favourite outfit!

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IT MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD

The knowledge that you're helping others is hugely empowering and, in turn, can make you feel happier and more fulfilled.

IT STRENGTHENS PERSONAL VALUES

Having the power to improve the lives of others is, to many people, a privilege, and one that comes with its own sense of obligation. Acting on these powerful feelings of responsibility is a great way to reinforce our own personal values and feel like we're living in a way that is true to our own ethical beliefs.

GIVING HAS MORE IMPACT THAN EVER

Many people are concerned that their donations to charity may be reduced by tax or administrative costs, preventing the full amount from reaching the people or causes they really want to help. If you're a UK taxpayer, you can boost the amount of every donation you make by giving through Gift Aid, an Income Tax relief created to help charities get the most out of the funds they receive.

IT INTRODUCES YOUR CHILDREN TO THE IMPORTANCE

Children naturally love to help others, so nurturing their innate generosity is likely to mean that they grow up with a greater appreciation of what they have, and will carry on supporting charity in years to come.

IT ENCOURAGES FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO DO THE SAME

Family giving creates a bond, helping to bolster relationship through a shared goal and raising more money than could otherwise be possible through individual donations. Chances are, many of your family members are already giving to charity, so working together could help you to make an even more positive impact.





ORGANISING YOUR PAPERS

Taking the time and effort to develop a systematic way of organising your papers can result in a lot less stress and hassle in your life. Try the following ways.

ORGANISING YOUR PAPERS

START SIMPLE

Come up with a filing system that's relatively easy to use. You don't want your filing system to be more stressful than the stress it's supposed to alleviate.

BE COLOURFUL

Files of different colours, or tabs and labels of different colours can not only turn your filing system into a work of art but also make it easier to find different subjects and interests.

DON'T SCRIMP WHEN YOU BUY A FILING CABINET

Invest in a cabinet of good quality. Poorly made filing cabinets tend to break down in the crunch. When your files get larger and heavier, their weight can strain a cheap filing cabinet and make it difficult for the drawers to open smoothly – or to open at all, for that matter. And try to find a cabinet that won't make your room look like a claims-adjusters office. Many of the traditional office cabinets are big and, frankly, pretty unattractive.

KEEP IMPORTANT PAPERS WHERE YOU KNOW THEY'RE SAFE

Keep your documents in a safe place, but make sure that you can easily get hold of them when you need them. Keep track of the following: Automobile information; Bank account numbers; Birth certificates; Credit card numbers; Deeds; Important receipts; Instructions; Insurance policies; Loan agreements; Marriage certificate; Medical records; Mortgage agreements; Passports; PIN numbers; School transcripts; Service contracts; Tax returns (last 5 years); Warranties; and Wills. Some of these categories warrant their own separate file. Some, like your important numbers, can be combined. For the more important documents, you may want to keep the originals in a safe or in a safety deposit box, and keep available copies in your files.

AVOID LOWER MORAVIA

The most common error people make when creating a filing system is to come up with categories that are too specific. If you continue in this vein, you'll be overrun with file folders in no time, and you'll have a heck of a time ever finding anything if you ever want to. Start with fewer, broader categories.

NEVER PUT ALL YOUR PAPERS IN ONE BASKET

An approach described by organisational expert Stephanie Culp suggests that you have four baskets for your paper (in addition to the extremely important wastepaper basket):

A To Do basket: The wire see-through kind works best.

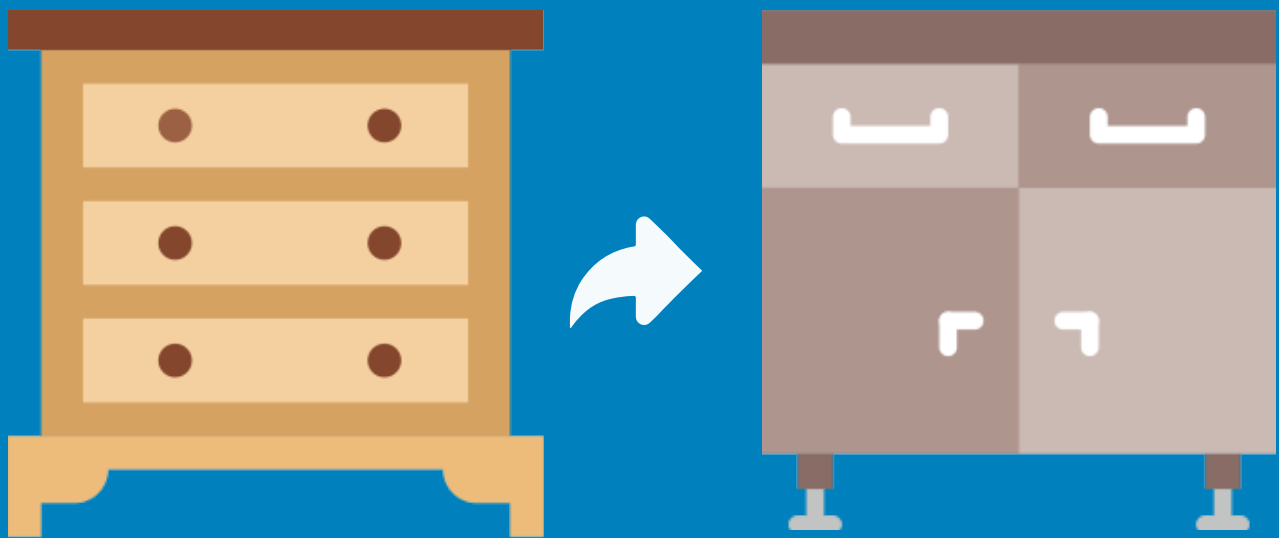
A To Pay basket: Again, wire works best here.

A To File basket: Use a larger wicker basket.

A To Read basket: Try an even larger wicker basket with handles. Keep the "To File" basket under your desk, out of the way of your more immediate paper needs. You can keep the "To Read" basket in a different part of your home such as your bedroom or study so that you can catch up on your reading whenever the opportunity arises.

FINE-TUNE LATER

At a later date, take a look at what's in your files. Usually, you find that a file is either underused or bulging. If you find that you have only one or two things in a file folder, find or create a file that's broader in scope. Alternatively, if you find that a folder is overflowing, create subcategories, either by topic or by dates.



RENEW OLD FURNITURE

RENEW OLD FURNITURE

REMOVE WATER RINGS FROM WOODEN SURFACES

Dampen cloth and apply a bit of toothpaste onto affected area. Rub gently. Add small amount of baking soda if spot persists.

REPAIR SCRATCHES ON LEATHER FURNITURE

Pour a very small amount of olive oil on cotton cloth. Rub cloth onto scratch using light circular motions. Allow the oil to dry for an hour, then wipe it off with a clean cloth.

OLIVE OIL & VINEGAR WOOD FURNITURE POLISH/CLEANER

Pour a very small amount of olive oil on cotton cloth. Rub cloth onto scratch using light circular motions. Allow the oil to dry for an hour, then wipe it off with a clean cloth.

ADD SHINE TO GLASS TABLE TOPS

Squeeze out lemon juice from half of a lemon. Use juice on table top and rub with cleaning cloth. After removing excess, buff table top with a wad of newspaper.

REPAIR SCRATCHES ON WOODEN SURFACES

- Crack open a walnut and rub the nut “meat” over the scratch several times.
- Wait a few minutes to let the natural oil from the nut soak into the wood.
- Buff the area with a soft cloth.
- Use permanent marker, shoe polish or melted crayon of same colour.
- Smear petroleum jelly over a scratch and leave it overnight.
- Wipe away in the morning and polish the surface

USE WALLPAPER

Cracked surfaces can be covered by wallpaper - it's quick, easy and effective.

FIX DENTS WITH AN IRON

Place a damp rag to the dent and then run a hot iron over it for 30 seconds.



We hope all these points help you de-clutter your home so you're all ready for the big move.

However, don't stress if you can't get it all done just do what you can and make a plan for when you can tackle the rest.

In the meantime, draft in some expert help and call us so we can help you make your move go smoothly.



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