

Declutter Your Living Spaces

The average person will spend a total of 3,680 hours, or 153 days of their life, searching for misplaced items.* Typically, the only time many of us think about decluttering our homes or spaces is when we're getting ready to move. Whether you're moving or just want to save time and space, this easy five-bin approach is a great way to start simplifying your living environment.

The 5-bin approach

Decluttering the home can be overwhelming. However, applying the five-bin approach to reorganizing and discarding items may help you feel less anxious and more in control of the process.

- ▶ **Bin 1: Items that need to be put away.** Place items that belong somewhere else in the home in this bin. Eventually, you'll put them away; the intention is to put them somewhere while you're clearing the room.
- ▶ **Bin 2: Items to be fixed.** Place items that you plan to fix or that need to be washed or cleaned in this bin, such as toys, dirty clothes or scuffed shoes.
- ▶ **Bin 3: Items to donate.** Items in this bin are in good condition, but you no longer need or use them. They can be given to friends or family, sold online or donated to a local charity.
- ▶ **Bin 4: Items to be recycled.** This is where you'll place items made of paper, plastic or glass that you don't want to keep. Add all empty drink bottles, food containers, and magazines or newspapers.
- ▶ **Bin 5: Items to discard.** Place expendable items in this bin that you can't recycle or donate.

What about sentimental items?

Many of us have items we can't bear to part with because there's a memory or other sentimental feeling attached. Here are a few tips for handling sentimental items that may start to create clutter.

Decide if it's worth keeping. If you use or enjoy the item, hang on to it. However, you may not need to retain every piece of artwork your children created. It can be helpful to ask a relative or friend when deciding which to keep.

Choose a few items that remind you of a loved one. If you've inherited many heirlooms, see if other members of your family would like some, too. Donate the rest.

Keep in mind; you can get rid of an item without getting rid of the memory. Take a photo of the item to place in a journal or scrapbook and write why it means so much to you.



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*Source: Becoming Minimalist



Organization tips for each room of the house

Kitchen

The kitchen is the hub of the home, and it tends to collect the most clutter from other parts of the house. Start clearing one area of the kitchen at a time, beginning with storage spaces, including the pantry, cupboards and drawers.

- In the pantry: Throw away stale or expired items and donate canned goods that you know will go uneaten but are still edible.
- In the cupboards: Remove chipped dishware, as well as utensils, pots, pans and bakeware that are damaged beyond repair.
- Keep the kitchen clutter-free: Put items where they belong and leave a small bin to collect items that don't belong there.

Living room

Too much clutter makes it difficult to relax. The mantra for this room is, "A place for everything; everything in its place."

- Create easily-accessible, permanent storage space for items you use most often, such as the remote control.
- Fold throws and place in a decorative basket within reach of the sofa.
- Sort through your electronics to determine what works and if you still use it. Store your frequently used electronics where you tend to use them.
- Recycle back issues of magazines and newspapers you've already read. Donate books you don't want to keep and categorize the others in your library.

Bathroom

Create more space in your cabinets, linen closet and on the counter.

- Clean out the medicine cabinet and discard outdated medications, skincare and makeup.
- Organize the drawers and shelves so the items you use the most are readily available.

Bedrooms

In the bedroom, clutter seems to center around storage areas, such as closets, drawers and nightstands.

- Clear out dressers, wardrobes and closets by removing non-seasonal clothing you haven't worn in more than six months and items that no longer fit. Sell or donate pieces that are still in good condition.
 - Organize your drawers by function: undergarments, activewear, t-shirts, etc.
 - Depending on your bedroom, purchase a hanging storage unit or floor shelf for shoes.
 - Separate anything that should go to the cleaner or a tailor.
- Remove everything from the nightstand and place items that belong elsewhere in Bin #1.



Mudroom/Foyer

This is where we tend to drop things when we get home.

- Clear items off of entry tables and decide what to put away, recycle or toss.
- Place keys in a pretty bowl or on hooks so you don't have to waste time searching for them.
- Remove coats, shoes and boots that are out of season, don't fit or need to be repaired.