

How to control clutter

Are your closets crammed full of clothes -- half of which you don't even wear? Are there piles of papers on your tables (and chairs)? The state of our home can be a haven or a source of stress. Recognizing that a cluttered home can be distracting and diminishes our productivity (ever spent half an hour looking for your keys?), many of us vow to be more organized. Here are some ways to manage the chaos:

Big Picture Goals

- Remember you deserve to live in a tranquil and organized environment.
- Have your living space reflect your values and purpose.

Questions To Consider As You De-clutter

- Does this item add value to my life?
- When was the last time I used it?
- Do I have duplicates of this item?
- Does it need to be repaired? Is it worth repairing?
- Could someone else use it, or is it junk?
- If I am going to keep it, does it belong here?

Bite Sized Pieces

- Start with a simple, straightforward, written plan of action to avoid getting distracted.
- Set a manageable goal (i.e. clear the top of a nightstand).
- Limit de-cluttering sessions instead of attempting a mountain of work.
- Don't spend too much time on any one object.
- Sort items as you go along into boxes labeled: donations, repair, etc.
- Alternate unpleasant jobs with tasks you enjoy.
- Delegate when it is something you cannot bring yourself to do.

Make It Fun And Designate A Reward

- Make the environment pleasant: play music, open a window, have a cold beverage.
- Find an "accountability partner" to track your progress.
- Schedule a reward to coincide with a success; reward every step along the way, not just the end result.

Develop Ongoing Habits

- Keep handy what you frequently use; put away items you don't use often.
- Each time you bring in something new, get rid of something you haven't used.
- Take pleasure in your newly organized home and enjoy the freedom of simplifying your life.