



# 10 DECLUTTERING TIPS

- 1. Get rid of damaged or hazardous items first.** This includes broken furniture or appliances, anything that's expired, outdated electronics and cables, and ripped or stained clothing. This step can give you the momentum to tackle more challenging tasks.
- 2. Know where to donate.** Before you get into your decluttering, you will want to know where things are going. An easy option is to search for any Goodwill or Salvation Army stores in your area and note their donation hours.
- 3. Give away duplicates.** Many people who grew up during the Great Depression never quite shook the fear of not having enough. Be honest with yourself about how many towels, sets of sheets, or coffee mugs you actually need.
- 4. Consider giving away some family heirlooms.** Many of us keep objects with sentimental value to pass on to loved ones after we're gone. However, it can be more meaningful to personally share these gifts with the people you care about. This allows you to explain the history of the item, why it has meaning, and why you want them to have it.
- 5. Break the job down.** If you're feeling overwhelmed, choose one of the following strategies:
  - Commit to decluttering for a designated amount of time each day, even if it's only a few minutes.
  - Tackle one room at a time. In the kitchen, break the task down to one or two cabinets at a time.
  - Have a bag or box handy for items to donate. When it's full, donate it and start a new one.
  - Adopt the 12-12-12 rule of decluttering. Whenever you can, find 12 items to donate, 12 items to throw away, and 12 items to put away properly and keep.
- 6. Don't fall into the "basket trap."** It's fun to shop for pretty baskets and bins and imagine that they will solve your clutter problem. Declutter first, then see what additional storage solutions you might need.
- 7. Give it 90 days.** If you're on the fence about whether to keep something, put it into a "90-day box." If you didn't need it during that time, let it go. Obviously, seasonal items like holiday decorations and winter boots are exempt from this strategy.
- 8. If you have the time, tackle your closet** by turning all of your hangers backward. Once you've worn an item, hang it back up facing the right way. At the end of the year, part ways with anything still facing backwards.
- 9. Consolidate meaningful items.** Maybe you have bins full of drawings your children made you or an entire china cabinet full of your mother's figurines. Pick the top one, two, or three pieces from each collection to hold on to and let the rest go. If you're consolidating drawings, photos, artwork, or letters, consider scanning them and organizing them digitally.
- 10. Find designated spaces for daily items.** The items people lose the most are often the ones they use every day. As part of your decluttering effort, consider designating specific spaces for the things you use frequently. At the end of the day, you can check to see that everything is in its place, eliminating the frustrating searches for reading glasses, phone chargers, and car keys.