

Five Easy Ways to Cut the Clutter

Clutter. Some may have more than others, but we all have it in some shape or form. It accumulates easily. It starts innocently with one or two things and then before you know it, you are surrounded by mountains of stuff. You don't even know how it all got there in the first place. It just seems to have appeared one day.

1. Use it or lose it.

This is particularly helpful when you are attempting to get rid of some of your stuff. How do you decide which to keep and what to toss? Basically, if you are not using something, get rid of it. Future time should not be a consideration here. "Use it" refers to the here and now. It does not mean some time in the future. You don't have to use it everyday, but you cannot use the excuse that it "might come in handy some day".

2. Love it or leave it.

Items have to pass this test. You only have so much room available so doesn't it make sense that anything taking up space should justify itself? This is not a complicated test. Your things need to have a valid reason for being there. Walk through each room in your house and start looking at every item with a critical eye and then ask yourself – why am I keeping this? Am I tired of cleaning or dusting this? Do I enjoy seeing it in there when I walk into this room? Does it still suit my tastes today? Do I love it? Remember that, less is more. Less stuff creates more space.

3. A place for everything.

And everything in its place. It's an old maxim, but it has never gone out of style. It is much easier to put everything away when it has a home assigned to it. One of the reasons for clutter is that we simply have not created a 'home' for our belongings. Making 'homes' for your belongings is an easy routine to enact. For example, a cup that holds an assortment of pens, pencils and scissors on your counter now becomes a 'home' for those items. And if you know that the scissors 'live' in that cup, you'll know exactly where to put them when you are done using them.

4. Don't put it down, put it away.

Some clutter is just stuff that belongs someplace else. In the busyness of our days, we sometimes put things down just for now. Trouble is, often we don't get back around to putting it away until the pile has grown and is close to toppling over. It really only takes a few extra seconds to put things away where they belong. Remember that you are not saving time, you are storing it up for later and the interest charges are high. A lot of clutter in your home will disappear if you follow this rule. Your home or office will look so clean that others will marvel at what a great housekeeper/office keeper you are!

5. Quit buying stuff

Prevent clutter from coming in. Before you buy something, ask yourself whether you really need it or will it just end up as clutter. Where will you put it once you get it home or into your office? The next time you decide that you want to buy another irresistible item, stop and ask yourself the key question above. After a while you'll get good at it. Another trick is if you really think you want something, don't buy it on the spot. Go away, and leave it for a week. If you still want it, then go and buy it. Often, we forget about it, so how important was it in the first place.

Less clutter means less stuff to clean, polish, maintain, store, insure and fret about. When you get rid of the stuff you no longer use, don't love, and have no room for, organizing what's left behind will be so easy you'll wonder what all the fuss is about.

Excerpts from an article by Georgia Forrest
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