

Simplify Your Life by De-Cluttering Workbook



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Clutter is Common

No one goes through life without accumulating stuff. And, too much stuff contributes to clutter and disorganization.

According to the free on-line dictionary, clutter is defined as a disorganized heap or mass of objects; a state of disorder.

If you answer no to these questions, then it is clutter:

- Do you use it or even like it?
- Does it have a "home?"
- Can you repair it or finish it?



My Clutter Causes:

_____ I just can't take care of it by myself - Physical limitations

_____ It means too much to me - Emotional attachment

_____ It's not my mess - Someone else's clutter

_____ I might need it someday – Saving it for the future

_____ Can't pass up a good deal

_____ I don't have time.

_____ No place to put anything - Not enough room

The last thing I was looking for that was not in the place I thought it should be:

Managing clutter can help manage stress.

Manage Clutter to:

- 1) Save time
 - Find things easier
 - Increase productivity
- 2) Save money
 - Make a habit of buying only what is needed
 - Save money on additional storage costs
- 3) Enhance Health and Safety
 - Reduce fire hazard risks
 - Reduce safety risks
- 4) Improve Emotional Well-being
 - Clear your mental to-do list
 - Reduce worry
- 5) Promote Healthy Relationships
 - Reduce embarrassment
 - Offer a more inviting living space



It is now time to sort your items.

Sorting Your Stuff into Piles

1. Pitch
2. Donate, Sell, Recycle, or Gift
3. Put Back
4. To Be Determined



Item Identification

When deciding what to do with an item, ask yourself these questions:

1. When was the last time I used this?
(Decide what your own acceptable time frame is – 1 month, 6 months, etc.)
2. How often do I use it?
3. Where do I use it?
4. Do I have more than one of them; do I need more than one?
5. Is it usable, if so, will I ever use it again? (old cassette tape deck)
6. If I didn't have this item would it even impact my life?
7. Could someone else use it?

Clutter Clusters Work Sheet

First, list places where you feel that you have clutter. Then break down that area into specific clutter clusters. Then list possible next steps to work on that area of clutter.

Rooms/Areas

Kitchen	Garage	e-mails
Living/family room	Office	filing cabinet
Bedroom	Craft area	photos
Spare room	sentimental item	junk drawer
Collections	Basement	other _____

Example:

Kitchen

- Table
- Pantry
- Junk drawer

Steps: Organize the junk drawer.

Shred unnecessary paper and clear it off the table.

Organize can goods and throw out expired items.

Room: _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

Steps: _____

Room: _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

Steps: _____

Room: _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

Steps: _____

Room: _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

Steps: _____

Room: _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

Steps: _____

General Tips

- Store similar items together
- Take it in/Toss it out
- Gather all of your paper items in one place
- Reduce the amount of paper/phone calls/emails
- Simplify your gadgets
- Rent or borrow items when possible
- Toss items with missing parts
- Generate less stuff

How to simplify keepsakes:

- Display proudly or store appropriately
- Keep part of an item
- Gift in your lifetime
- Downsize collections
- Repurpose and organize photos
- Use technology



Do you have a keepsake in mind that you could repurpose? What is your idea?

De-Clutter Upkeep

- Spurt Strategy - Take 5-15 minutes sporadically during the day to pick up and put away any stray items. Take advantage of your free time before your favorite show begins, before heading out in the morning, or just before bed.
- Prompt Put Away - If there are any tasks that can be completed immediately do not put it off. It will be worth the time it takes to do it right then. For example, hang up your coat, put away the dishes, put your keys on the hook, place your shoes by the door, fold the blanket, hang up your clothes, etc.
- Castaway Container - If you come across something in your closet or drawers that know you will no longer use, place it immediately in the castaway container for donation/resale. Once the container is filled, take the necessary steps to move these items along. Otherwise, this can become a secondary clutter issue.
- Good Riddance Routine - Doing de-clutter maintenance on a regular basis will soon become your good riddance routine. This will lessen the chance that clutter will build again. This means taking a thorough look at your clutter clusters regularly.

Benefits of De-Cluttering

- Observe others enjoying the items that you have given them
- De-cluttering now will make downsizing later much easier
- You will know what you have and not need to waste money on buying duplicates
- Make money by selling your stuff
- Donate items and get a tax write off
- Saves valuable time
- Promotes healthy relationships and physical and emotional health
- Promotes safety

Notes:

[illegible]

De-Clutter/De-Stress: Simplify Your Life



We all have clutter

It's time to get rid of the clutter and the stress!

Today I've decided my first de-cluttering project is: _____
(Room you plan on starting with)

My timeline to have the entire project completed by is: _____

Task List:

Complete by:

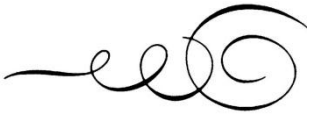
- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |

I will donate my unwanted items to: _____

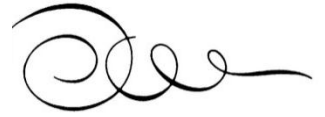
After this project, I will tackle the remaining rooms in this order: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____



Where to Sell, Recycle, or Donate Your Items



Clear your home of clutter and stress today!

Illinois Extension Links:

http://www.thisland.illinois.edu/57ways/57ways_29.html

<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/unusedmeds>

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/clutter/dealing.html>

Places to Sell:

www.etsy.com

www.ebay.com

www.craigslist.org

www.Amazon.com

Books:

www.Bookscouter.com

www.cash4books.net

Cell Phones:

www.Gazelle.com

www.nextworth.com



Have a garage sale!

Places to Recycle:

<http://www.therecyclingcenter.info>

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle>

www.habitat.org/restores - Habitat for Humanity – electronics recycling

www.cristina.org – Cristina Foundation – Computers and tech gadgets

www.recycle-steel.org – steel recycling

www.call2recycle.org – rechargeable batteries

www.earth911.com – hazardous wastes



Places to Donate:

Donate items locally:

Books can be donated at your local library, school or hospital.

Blankets and pet supplies can be donated to local animal shelters.

Clothes and household goods can be donated to your local shelter.

In addition you might consider the following places to donate: Nursing homes, family, neighbors, churches, historical society, museums, domestic violence shelters, thrift stores.

www.habitat.org/restores - Habitat for Humanity

www.donationtown.org/illinois-donation-pickup - Donation Town

www.ilamvets.org/schedule-a-pick-up - Illinois Amvets

www.amvetspickup.org/pickups/ - Select states

<http://www.clothingdonations.org> – Vietnam Veterans of America
<http://www.charitynavigator.org> – Charity Navigator
www.goodwill.com - Goodwill
www.salvationarmyusa.org – Salvation Army
www.veteranpickup.org – Military Order of the Purple Heart
www.Soles4souls.org – Soles 4 Souls - gently worn shoes
www.dressforsuccess.org – Dress for Success – women's dress clothes
www.freecycle.org – Freecycle Network
www.catholiccharitiesusa.org

Reducing the Amount of Junk Mail

www.dmachoice.org – Direct Marketing Association Mail Preference Service
www.ims-dm.com/cgi/ddnc.php - Deceased Do Not Contact List
1-888-5OPTOUT – Pre-approved credit card offers
www.catalogchoice.org – catalogs



Live Life Simply Quotes

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| "In everything, love simplicity" | – Saint Francis de Sales |
| "It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy, that makes happiness" | – Charles Haddon Spurgeon |
| "...very little is needed to make a life happy" | – Marcus Aurelius |
| "I am learning that a man can live profoundly without masses of things." | – Richard E. Byrd |
| "Live simply so that others may simply live." | – Mahatma Gandhi |
| "Our life is frittered away by detail" | – Henry David Thoreau |
| "Simplicity is an exact medium between too little and too much." | – Sir Joshua Reynolds |
| "Have nothing in your home that you do not know to be useful and believe to be beautiful." | – William Morris |
| "In a sense, clutter is the end result of procrastination" | – Jeff Campbell, author |
| "The more you have, the more occupied you are. The less you have, the more free you are." | – Mother Theresa |
| "Don't own so much clutter that you will be relieved to see your house catch fire." | – Wendell Berry |
| "Simplicity is making the journey of this life with just baggage enough." | – Charles Warner |

- “The sculptor produces the beautiful statue by chipping away such parts of the marble block as are not needed – it is a process of elimination.” – Elliot Hubbard
- “If you look at your entire house as one unit of junk, you’ll never do anything because the job is too overwhelming. Take it one drawer at a time.” – Janet Luhrs
- “Out of clutter find simplicity, from discord find harmony, in the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.” – Albert Einstein
- “Less is more.” – Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
- “Anyone who has ever cleaned out a closet and taken stuff to Goodwill knows how liberating it is. You feel lighter, your mind feels clearer.” – Cecile Andrews, author
- “Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.” – Confucius
- “If you genuinely want something, don’t wait for it – teach yourself to be impatient.” – Gurbaksh Chahal
- “Don’t let the fear of losing be greater than the excitement of winning.” – Robert Kiyosaki
- “Outer order contributes to inner calm.” – Gretchen Rubin
- “The more things you own, the more they own you” – Author unknown
- “Never love anything that can’t love you back.” – Author unknown
- “Stow as you go. (Put things back right after using them)!” – Sandra Felton
- “The best things in life...aren’t things.” – Art Buchwald
- “You can’t have everything. Where would you put it?” – Steven Wright, comedian
- “A place for everything and everything in its place.” – Mrs. Beeton, *The Book of Household Management*, 1861
- “How many things are there which I do not want?” – Socrates
- “Happiness is a place between too little and too much.” – Finnish Proverb