

Sort and Simplify

Is it often a struggle to find what you are looking for? If you want to get organized but don't know where to begin, consider this simple strategy. Commit to tackling one room at a time. Go through all of the items you own and categorize them into one of the following groups: keep, sell or donate.

A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

Find a logical location to store all of the items you decide to keep.

- To make the most of closet space, add shelving, shoe racks, hanging organizers or other storage accessories.
- For more storage in bedrooms, consider containers designed to slide under the beds.
- In the kitchen, a portable island, sidebar or baker's rack will create more room for small appliances and other essentials.
- Throughout the house, storage solutions like shelving units, chests of drawers, stackable bins and wicker baskets make it easier to organize your possessions.
- Keep items that are not used frequently in labeled bins or boxes in the garage, basement or attic.

PICK YOUR PACE

Don't feel like you have to sacrifice an entire weekend to get everything done; consider devoting smaller amounts of time throughout the week as an alternative.

To accomplish more, begin at the time of day when you have the most energy—morning, noon or night.

Start with tasks you can finish quickly; the results will help build momentum.

Play some of your favourite, lively music to lift your mood and keep you focused.

If you haven't worn or used an item in the past 12 to 18 months, you probably don't need it. While it can be difficult to discard sentimental belongings, try to limit yourself to a small box or two and resolve to clear out the rest.

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK

To maintain a clutter-free space and the sense of peace that accompanies it, try the following:

- File, recycle or shelve items as soon as you are done using them.
- To reinforce a positive habit with children, consider making a game of picking up after each activity.
- When it comes to decorating, remember that less can be more; express your style with a few key art pieces, framed photos and accessories.





Sell what you don't need

As you organize your home, you're likely to come across items that you no longer use. A garage sale is a great way to give your unwanted belongings a second home.

PRIOR TO THE SALE:

Set a date and stick to it. This will provide motivation to complete the cleaning-out process.

Promote your sale. Advertise in the local newspaper or online. Hang signs at major intersections around the neighbourhood.

Divide your items into categories such as home decor, appliances, kitchenware, clothing, toys, sporting goods, etc.

Add price tags, but expect to entertain offers. Decide on the minimum amount you are willing to accept for each item in advance.

Have change on hand for those who pay with larger bills.

DAY OF THE SALE:

Set up early. Many garage sale shoppers will begin hunting for bargains first thing in the morning.

Display items openly on tables rather than in boxes so that they are clearly visible.

After the sale is over, consider donating any unsold items to charity. Some organizations will even collect your items from the curb if you call ahead.



Donate

Books: drop off at local libraries, schools or senior centres

Clothing, toys and houseware: deliver to a local charity

Furniture and home decor: your trash may be someone else's treasure

Cars: donate and get a tax deduction in return

Recycle

Electronics: check with manufacturers for recycling options

Appliances: contact your local municipality for information on existing programs

Printer cartridges: return to manufacturers, often they will pay the shipping cost

Tires: visit www.catraonline.ca to find a local program