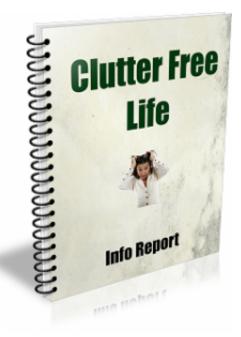
# **Clutter Free Life**

by Admin

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# <u>Clutter Free Life > Free Online Ebook</u>



# **Clutter Free Life**

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### A Clutter-Free Closet – Tips for Changing Seasons

As the seasons change and you have to pull out your sweaters, heavier pants and coats, now is the perfect time to release some clothes you no longer want or need. Follow these tips for a clutter-free closet.

Before you dig out the winter clothes, think about what you want to keep from last season's clothing. Be sure you have enough time to complete the task of cleaning and clearing out your closet before you get started. There is nothing more frustrating than starting a big project like this, having your clothes all over your bed and then having to stop for some reason. Not only do you have to put your clothes back into your closet quickly so you can sleep that night, but you also lose the momentum and desire to work on the task at all.

Get a couple of empty boxes. Mark each of the boxes with one of these "S" words – Swap, Sell, Store and Scrap.

\* Swap – Items in the Swap box are those you will give or swap with a friend who wears your size. You can also donate them to Salvation Army or Goodwill. These are clothes you do not wear any longer but are usable.

\* Sell – Items in this box are those you will sell at a consignment store or online. These clothes are still in good repair but no longer fit.

\* Store – Items in this box are those you will store for next year's use or something that has sentimental value to it.

\* Scrap – Items in this box are stained or torn and therefore no longer usable.

All of your clothes (cleaned and pressed) and accessories for this season should go into one of these boxes. Of course, depending upon the number of clothes you have, you may need more than one "store" box. Be sure to set the "store" boxes aside out of the way. Leave the remaining boxes open so you can place other items in them as you take out the clothes for this season.

Now that you have cleaned out your closet, it is time to start putting this season's clothes and accessories into the closet. Pick out the things you know you will use most often and place them in a prominent place in your closet.

Consider whether you want to keep the rest of the clothes that are not your favorites. Get rid of clothes you no longer like or you know will not fit any longer. Take the remaining boxes out to the car so they are not cluttering your room.

You may want to use this trick to help you learn which clothes you can purge once the season starts. As you place items into your closet, turn the hangers around backwards. At the end of the month, look through your closet and see how many hangers face the wrong way. Take those items out and re-evaluate whether you want to keep them or if they can find a new home with someone else.

Choose how you organize your closet. Some like to place clothes in the closet by colors, others by length and still others by whether you wear them together. You will know the best way to organize them based on your own personal needs. When you are done, you can step back with satisfaction and breathe a sigh of relief that you now have a clutter-free closet.

### **Beyond the Home – Tips for Decluttering Your Life**

Clutter does not only happen at home. In fact, it also can happen in your mind, your body, your schedule, your finances and your workspace. Unfortunately, chances are that if you have clutter in one of those areas, you most likely have clutter in all of those areas. If you have been trying to conquer the clutter in your home, it is time to move beyond and follow these tips for decluttering your life.

Mind – What clutters your mind? Begin by getting a notebook and a pen. Take a deep breath and think about things that you have to do. Write everything down. Once you have written things down, you can see what is necessary to accomplish and you will have a list to keep track of everything else. It can also help if you watch less television as it tends to clutter the mind with things that are not important.

Body – In some cases, people who have a clutter problem also have a weight problem. Sometimes people use both as a self-protection mechanism. If they are overweight or their house is full of "stuff," they will not have to worry about others getting too close and possibly hurting them. Once they begin to let go of the "stuff" in their home, they may find that it is easier to let go of excess weight as well.

Schedule – How many activities does your family have? If your family is like most, each child has at least one activity they participate in after school. Mom and Dad may each have things they do that keep them on the go. To declutter your schedule, sit down as a family and talk about the activities each does that mean the most them. If you can cut out some activities, you will have more time to share as a family and there will be much less running.

Finances – Think about bills you have that are draining. For instance, is it necessary for everyone in the family to have a cell phone? If the answer is no, then let some of them go and have one extra that your teenager can use while they are away from you. Do you watch all of the channels on satellite or cable? Chances are good that you do not, so pare your programming down to what you know you will watch. Stop eating out so often. Even though eating out is easier, it is more expensive and is often not good for your health.

Workspace – Depending on your job, workspace clutter may or may not be a problem. For those with an office desk, workspace clutter may be having too many pictures or mementos. For those in a factory setting, it may mean you cannot find your tools when you need them. By creating a functional and clean workspace, you increase your productivity, which will make the boss happy.

It is unlikely that anyone consciously decides to have clutter in his or her homes or their lives. Unfortunately, clutter tends to creep in and take over once it starts. Use these tips for decluttering your life and you will marvel at the sense of freedom you experience.

## **Decluttering – What It Entails**

The term "decluttering" has been a catch phrase for a number of years. Some think it is simply cleaning a house, but if you have seen television shows about hoarding or cleaning, you know it can be much more than that. So, what does it entail?

The World English Dictionary defines decluttering as the act of getting rid of mess and disorder. This is generally a two-step process:

- 1. Get rid of the current clutter you have in your home.
- 2. Avoid letting additional clutter into your home.

You may have heard the old adage, "A place for everything and everything in its place." For those struggling with clutter, this often becomes a mantra or battle cry.

Start small when you begin decluttering. If your home is cluttered, going through and getting rid of things will seem intimidating. It is easy to become discouraged and overwhelmed. By starting small, even with one single dresser drawer, you see how much you can accomplish in a short amount of time. Quite often, with a small area, you can declutter and clean it in less than 15 minutes. Anyone can do this if is important to them.

Enlist the help of someone you trust. Perhaps your family is full of clutter bugs and they really are not interested in moving out of CHAOS (Can't Have Anyone Over Syndrome). If they will not help you, ask a friend to do it instead. Not only will your friend be there to give encouragement, they may also be able to help you with the hard decisions that often come up when deluttering. Get four boxes – Keep (this room), Toss, Donate/Give/Sell, and Keep (store elsewhere) – and place them in the area where you will start. Try to handle each item only once. When you pick something up, decide if you will keep it in the room where it now is; if it is garbage and can be tossed; if you no longer need it and it can be donated or given; or if it is to be kept in a different location. Look at each item and put it one of the boxes.

When you review each item, try to think about how often you have used it in the last year. Be honest with yourself. If the item has not been used in a year, it is time to let it go - either in the trashcan or into the Donate box so someone else can use out of it.

Be aware of the things you bring into your home. Quickly go through your mail outside near the garbage can. Important mail goes under your elbow. Everything else is probably junk mail and does not need to enter the house. While you open your mail, write down important dates on a calendar. You can then file the mail if still needed or shred it if it has personal information on it.

Adopt the one in/one out rule. If you purchase a new item, with this rule, you would also get rid of one item. This item could be something related to what you purchased or something non-related. The point is to get into the habit of removing one item each time a new item comes into the home.

When you have one drawer, stack, corner or box cleaned out, take a break. If your friend is still there, have a cup of coffee or tea. Then, after your drink is finished, tackle another. Before you know it, you will have a cleaned out dresser, cabinet or one less pile to look at. Then, do your best to keep that renewed area clean and clear from that point forward. Congratulations on a job well done!

#### How to Create a Declutter Strategy

Do the piles of clutter in your home overwhelm you? Do you want to have a clean home but you honestly do not know where to start the clean-up process? It is time to create a declutter strategy.

Walk through your home with new eyes. In fact, some organizers recommend that you enter your house, going room by room, and making a list of everything you want to change. Before you start doing anything, take a close look at the list. Which room or space irritates you the most? Prioritize each area you want clean based on this list.

Rather than trying to tackle an entire room, start with one small area. Focus on that one area - whether it is a counter, a dresser drawer or a bookshelf. Completely clear everything from the area and then go through each item, choosing whether to save it, donate or give it away, or throw it away. As you find items you want to keep, put them back until everything is back in its place. When you step back and see the cleared space, you will feel a sense of satisfaction and may feel new energy to move forward.

You may be tempted to start on the next item on the list, but it would be better to wait. Give yourself a couple of days to a week to get used to having the area clean and see how you do keeping the area clutter free. Your goal is to develop the new habit of keeping this one area cleared. When you feel secure in keeping this one area clear, it is time to move to the next priority item on your list.

The next step is to work on another small area. You may want to have a decluttering spree, but bear in mind that doing too much too soon can wear you out. Instead, plan to spend a minimum of 15 minutes a day cleaning. If you can schedule more time, an hour or two each week would be fantastic. Follow the list of prioritized items and mark the time on your calendar. Guard the time like you would a doctor's appointment to be sure you declutter each week.

Once you have gotten your own clutter under control, it is time to enlist the help of your family. Develop a chore chart for everyone in the family so you are not the only one cleaning. You may be the only one decluttering but it only makes sense for everyone in the family to be involved in general housekeeping. It also helps to develop a routine.

As you go through clutter, whether on your own or with your family's help, remember the importance of not only cleaning but also getting rid of items that you no longer need. You may want to put a "give away" box in each room. When you find an unwanted or unneeded item, place it into the box. Once the box is full, immediately take it to the car and donate it to a charity like Salvation Army or Goodwill. Perhaps someone else will need it.

You may feel like it is taking forever to clear the clutter, but it took more than a day or two to amass it. It will take time to get your home back in order, but once you do, you will be more likely to use the new skills you have learned and keep the clutter from coming back.

## How to Create Pretty Storage Solutions with Items You Already Own

One of the main reasons you end up with clutter in your home is probably because you have run out of storage areas for the things you own. There are things you do not want to let go of, but you have no place to put them. Keep reading to learn how to create pretty storage solutions.

You may be tempted to purchase a plastic tote or another storage item the next time you need to store something. Instead, look around to see what you already own. This will solve three problems – you will have saved money, you will not have brought a new item into your house and you will have found a place to store items.

Make a list of the items you need to store. Most likely there will be a variety of things. Some will be big or bulky like clothing or stuffed toys. Others will be smaller and easier to store. Sort the items by size and kind so you can store like items together.

Glass jars are a great item to store smaller items. Placing buttons in a glass jar, tying a pretty ribbon on it and putting it on a shelf near your sewing area is a great way to store the buttons and have something nice to look at. Having the buttons in the glass jar will also help you find the right button the next time you need one.

Let's face it - nuts, bolts, nails and screws simply are not attractive to most people. You can use the same idea as with the buttons, but use a pretty label to cover what is inside. Place the jar on a shelf to organize small items and keep them handy.

Most houses have cereal or other boxes that they have to dispose of regularly. Rather than toss the boxes, cut the corner off with a craft knife and cover each box with pretty wrapping paper or paint it. Use the covered boxes to store magazines, instruction manuals or warrantee information. Larger boxes, like old suitcases may not even need to be covered. You can store items in the suitcases and stack them next to the couch or chair to use as an end table. No one ever needs to be the wiser.

Paint an old dresser or shelving unit to breathe new life into it. Boxes and drawers can be painted and mounted on the walls for use as a display unit. If you do not enjoy painting, you can also glue nice fabric to the wood or staple it to keep it in place. One of these ideas would be good for a children's room.

You may also want to keep old baskets rather than throwing them out. Wash them off, give them a coat of paint to coordinate with a room and then place it in the corner. This is a great idea for bathrooms. Roll washcloths or towels up and place them in the basket for easy reach. Embellish an ice cube tray with ribbon or beads along the edges. You can then use the tray to store earrings or other jewelry items in a fun way. Think of other small items that you could put in an ice cube tray and you have ready-made storage from something you already own.

The goal with organization and storage is to keep things that you want to keep out of the way. Try to think outside of the box and come up with new ways to repurpose items you already have. You can use these ideas to help you along or perhaps ignite your own creativity to create pretty storage solutions with items you already own.

# Simple Habits to Keeping Your Life Clutter Free

Looking on the internet, you will see many blogs and businesses that offer help to those struggling with clutter. If this describes you, there is help available. And if you follow these simple habits to keeping your life clutter free, you may find you also let go of the clutter in your home.

How many times have you lost your keys, shoes or important papers because there is too much clutter in your home? Families around the country are drowning in clutter that can cost time and money as well as cause frustration. Clearing the clutter from your home, and your life, will take some time and effort but the results will be well worth it.

\* Go through your home and make note of anything in your home that is out of place, items that are piling up or things that bother you. Start with what bothers you most and begin going through the items, getting rid of things you no longer need or want. The goal is to clear small areas, one at a time, until you have cleaned the entire room. Go through each room until you have gotten rid of as much clutter as possible.

\* Create a cleaning and decluttering schedule. Include chores for each member of the family so one person does not have to do everything. If you work on cleaning a little bit each day, it will make keeping your home clean much easier.

\* Rather than stacking mail and other papers all over the room, create a specific area to handle mail and pay bills. This could be a desk or a shelf with an inbox. Be sure to place a garbage can near your mail area so you can throw junk mail out as you go through the mail. Along with the inbox and garbage can, it would also be helpful to keep a family calendar in the area. When you see paperwork that has an appointment or important date, you can write the information directly into the calendar and toss the paper unless you need to return it.

\* Place a coat rack or shelf with hooks near the door you use most often. It is important to have everyone hang jackets and book bags here when they come into the home each day. By placing these items in the same place each day, your family will be less likely to lose things.

\* You can use similar tactics to declutter your office or workspace. A clean work area can make your day more productive, which your boss will most likely appreciate. Develop a filing system so you can find important papers when you need them.

\* Cut back on commitments. Part of having a cluttered life is having too many obligations each week. Families these days are busy – everyone is going in different directions with meetings, sports, band, volunteering or religious activities. Declutter your schedule by asking each person to give up all but one activity. This will reduce the amount of running and allow the family to eat together regularly.

Finally, if you are too overwhelmed with the amount of clutter in your life, give yourself permission to seek outside help. A professional organizer can recommend simple habits to keeping your life clutter free and will help you

develop a routine that will work for your family.

### **Stashing Does Not Equal Decluttering**

Families who are living in clutter may not realize the impact this can have on them – both individually and as a family unit. Research shows clutter to be part of the reason for stress and conflict in a family. It can even be the reason for physical illness. When it is time to do something about the clutter, it is important to realize stashing does not equal decluttering.

What is the difference between stashing and decluttering? Moreover, why is it important to do one and avoid the other? Keep reading to learn more.

What Is Stashing?

Stashing is the process of putting stuff inside of boxes. Drawers, closets, the bathtub and even the stove are common places you might find stashed items. Maybe you think, "out of sight, out of mind." Things may look clean but the mess is still there.

The problem with stashing is that nothing has really changed. You may not see the things you have stashed, but you will still have to deal with them. As an added issue, when you need one of the things you have stashed, you will not have any idea where to find them.

If stashing is something you are guilty of, you might like to know that the root cause of it is usually indecision. If you do not have the time to make a decision about something, you may think it is easier to put it off, especially if your mother-in-law called and said she would be there in ten minutes. Panic sets in and the result is stuffing, cramming and stashing things to quickly get them out of sight. Unfortunately, you will still have to deal with them at some point.

What Is Decluttering?

Decluttering, on the other hand, is the process of going through your mess and choosing to get rid of things you no longer need or want. You have seen that things are overtaking your life and you are determined to do something about it. The problem with decluttering, however, is that it takes much more time than stashing things to get them out of your way.

Congratulations if you have decided to take control of your clutter! Start small so you do not feel overwhelmed by the size of the task before you. In fact, it is best if you start with something like a countertop or the dining room table. You want to work on an area that is small enough that you can complete the task once you have started it.

Make a conscious effort to declutter this one area and keep it clean for several days. You will be so inspired each time you see this one bright spot among the mess that it will inspire you to keep working.

Create a decluttering schedule and stick to it. You CAN do it! Yes, it is true you will not be able to get the entire house "shipshape" in one day. The mess took a while to accumulate, so you can expect it will take a while to make it go away.

If you feel you must stash something for that unexpected visit, use something like a laundry basket that you use regularly to stash things and place it in a closet. This will accomplish two things: you will have cleaned up an area to avoid embarrassment and you will have a reason to clean up your stash the next time you need your basket. The worst thing you can do is go out and buy plastic totes or boxes because chances are you will not open them again.

Stashing may be something you are accustomed to doing on the spur of the moment, but if you take the time daily to declutter and organize the things you keep, stashing will not be necessary. You will have the satisfaction of knowing

that anyone could drop by unannounced or with little warning. You can welcome them into your home and smile because your house is presentable -stashes are not lurking in the closet and socks are not hanging out of the microwave.

## The Art of Letting Go – Tips for Getting Rid of Sentimental Items

Television programs and blogs on the internet talk about the problems associated with clutter. Sometimes people keep the items because they hoard things. Others have collections that get out of hand. Still others hold onto items because of sentimental reasons. When clutter is causing stress or frustrations, it is time to learn the art of letting go.

First-time parents are often guilty of holding on to things for sentimental reasons. They want to keep every homemade card from their child or every picture ever taken of the child. As much as parents love their children and want to remember them as they were, there comes a time when letting go of mementos is all right.

One option to consider, rather than holding onto the items, is taking photos of them. Line your children's drawings up on the table and take pictures. If the drawings were when the child was much younger, taking a picture of them will probably suffice. For newer drawings, take a picture of your child with their drawings and be sure to date them. This will also help you to remember specifics about your child at the time.

Other things people do not want to throw away are photographs. It does not matter if the photo is blurry or the subject is cut off - some people simply do not want to let go of them. Rather than holding on to every photograph, choose the best ones and place them in a photo album. Scrapbooking would be another option, especially if you journal about the photos, as well. What do you do with Grandma Sue's chipped china that is missing several pieces? It would be difficult to part with the set. However, there is an alternative. Rather than getting rid of the entire set, let each family choose one place setting or cup and saucer to keep. Display them with a photo of Grandma Sue and it becomes more than old dishes; it becomes a way to remember a beloved family member and something that was important to them.

Consider the reasons why you are holding onto specific items. Did your favorite uncle leave you a piece of artwork when he passed? If you do not love the artwork, you may feel guilty about not wanting to keep it. Remember that letting go of the artwork does not mean that you loved your uncle less. It simply means that you are releasing it to allow someone who will love it to have it.

If you are having a hard time letting go of anything, take a hard look at all you have. This may sound like a strange exercise, but think about the items that you would miss if you lost your home to a natural disaster. If you could easily replace all but a few things, keep only those items that are most important. Let everything else go.

Seek professional help if you cannot bring yourself to let things go. A professional organizer or even therapist can help you work through the emotions attached to the items. They can help you learn the art of letting go.

## **Tips to Declutter Your Workspace**

When was the last time you saw the top of your desk? If it has been a while, you will want to follow these tips to declutter your workspace. The benefits include, but are not limited to, being able to find what you are looking for when you need it, having room to spread out a project to see the whole thing at

once, and not feeling embarrassed if someone comes to visit your work area.

\* Take an honest look at your workspace and consider what bothers you the most about it. Is it the stacks of unfiled papers or the empty coffee cups? Consider how you want your desk to look and make a list of changes you would like to make.

\* Start with unfiled papers. Add an inbox where you will place all incoming paperwork. This could be incoming mail, papers you need to review or work to do. The point is to have one place for all new papers so you know you have to deal with them. Additional trays will be helpful for things you need to address and those you need to file.

\* As you go through the papers in the inbox, separate the things that need your immediate attention, things that have important dates or contact information and those that you can handle at another time. Write meeting information in your calendar, add contact information to your address book or card file, and either file the paper where it belongs or get rid of it.

\* Create a simple filing system to keep important papers. This could include a tickler file that you will look at when the day begins. A tickler file is a 31-day system that allows you place papers you will need for the future. It is a reminder system to ensure you handle future items on time. Once you have your system in place, use it daily to keep papers from piling up again.

\* Clear all of the paperwork from your desk, even if it means only stacking it in the inbox so you can see what else you have to do. Clear the desk of all other items and decide to create a specific home for each one. If there are some office supplies that you use regularly, you will want to have them available when you need them. Anything that you do not use regularly you will want to place in a drawer or cabinet. When you have a place for everything, be sure you put each item where it "lives" when it is not in use.

\* Once you have your desk cleared off, do your best to keep it that way. Take

15 minutes at the end of the day to clear off the desk so you have a blank slate when the new day starts. Work at keeping your desk cleared for a week before you begin focusing on the next area of your workspace that is cluttered.

These tips to declutter your workspace are by no means exhaustive. They are, however, a good starting place when clutter overruns your desk. You can make a difference in how your workspace looks and how you feel while you are in it. If you know your desk and workspace is a mess, begin today to use a few of these tips and see what a difference it can make.

## **Understanding How Clutter Affects Your Mind and Body**

Do you struggle with clutter? Millions of Americans do. What you, and they, may not realize is that clutter can affect your mind and body. The following information may be helpful in encouraging you to rid your life of clutter for the last time.

How does your home make you feel when you walk in the door at the end of the day? Do you feel peaceful and glad to be at home because it is your sanctuary? Alternatively, do you feel dread because there is a mountain of unfolded laundry in the chair, a stack of magazines spread all over the floor and a sink full of this morning's dishes? Scientific reports claim the state of your house reflects the state of your mind. Disorganization and clutter indicate there is something out of balance. The trick is learning what is off-kilter and how to set it straight.

Living in a cluttered home is stressful – for everyone. Mom is constantly pulled from what she needs to do to help someone find his or her homework. Dad is late for work because he cannot find his car keys. As the pressure to find those things that are lost mounts, so does the tension. Before too long, something or someone snaps.

Think about how you feel when you have misplaced something. You may berate yourself for being careless. You may feel frustrated and ready to give up. When your child comes in to ask a question, you may not respond in a loving manner and feelings are hurt. Decluttering and organizing your home can help alleviate this problem.

Clutter drains you of energy and makes you feel tired. When you have to look at clutter, you most likely feel overwhelmed. You know you need to do something but you do not have the energy. Take time to clear the clutter from one small area. It can help you and your family feel more energetic and more inspired to work on decluttering in other areas.

Did you know clutter could be making you sick physically? No one wants to think about it, but clutter can be the breeding ground for germs, dust, mold and mildew. It could even hide a problem with mice. If you do not believe clutter can make you sick, think of the stress mentioned above. If you have too much stress, you may develop high blood pressure. Dust and mold can cause allergies or worse.

Clutter can also affect your body weight. People with clutter are usually sedentary while those with an uncluttered home are active. Part of this may be because the clutter in the home makes it hard for you to move. You may also be using clutter, like being overweight, as a means to protect yourself. Clutter keeps people at bay and so there is little chance that you will be hurt.

Now that you understand some of the ways clutter can affect your mind and body, consider what you are going to do about it. Will you take a step forward and begin decluttering, or will you let it continue to rule your life and that of your family? Thanks for reading this book. Find more articles at <u>Read-Online-Ebooks.com</u>