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Declutter Your Home in 11 Easy Steps

By Maria Gracia

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Feeling overwhelmed at the thought of organizing your home? Start on a smaller scale instead and it will be a whole lot easier.

For example, instead of starting with the entire house, commit to starting with one room.

Follow these 11 steps, and you're well on your way to an organized home:

1. **PICK A ROOM** — ANY ROOM. Decide on what room to start on. Write it at the top of an 8 1/2 x 11 inch sheet of paper. This will be your Action Sheet. Example: BEDROOM A
2. **CHOOSE AN ENTICING REWARD**. Designate an appropriate reward to give yourself on the Dumping portion of the job. The reward concept serves as your motivation, so be sure to choose something that you'd really enjoy! Write this reward on your Action Sheet. Example: Treat yourself to a massage or go out for a nice dinner — whatever it is that you love to do. Write it on your Action Sheet.
3. **SET A DEADLINE**. Set a specific Dumping Completion Deadline for this one room. Write it on your Action Sheet. Example: DUMPING DEADLINE: APRIL 30
4. **SCHEDULE TIME TO DUMP**. Schedule 3 specific dumping dates (one hour for each). Hopefully this will be enough to complete the dumping portion of the job. Write it on your Action Sheet. Then, post the Action Sheet in a prominent place where you are certain to see it every day, like your bathroom mirror. It will serve as a reminder of your goal, deadline and pending reward. Example: DUMPING DATES: APRIL 18 from 8–9A, APRIL 21 from 8–9A, APRIL 24 from 8–9A
5. **KEEP YOUR APPOINTMENT**. When the 1st dumping day arrives, keep that appointment, just as you would any other important appointment. Bring a bunch of large garbage bags. Play your favorite music in the background.

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6. **TIME IT.** Set a timer for 1 Hour --- one that sounds off when the hour is up.
7. **SORT THROUGH IT.** Pick up one item at a time, and start dumping. (If you come across items you want to give to charity, designate a special bag for those items) Whatever you are going to keep, just put to one side of the room.
8. **DO IT UNTIL THE TIME IS UP.** Continue doing this until the timer goes off. If you prefer to continue, keep going. Otherwise, stop and follow the same procedures for your next two scheduled dates. Don't let the garbage bags sit there. Make sure they are thrown out now (or donated), or on Garbage Day at the latest.
9. **CELEBRATE.** Once you've managed to dump everything you don't want or need in that one room, it's time to celebrate. Take advantage of that reward you designated.
10. **KEEPING IT ORGANIZED.** Now that everything in that room that you wanted dumped is gone, you're ready to begin putting everything you are keeping back in an organized manner. Be very careful not to put anything else in this room that you don't want.
11. **REPEAT.** Repeat this process for each of the other rooms in your house.

by Maria Gracia – Get Organized Now!

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Maria Gracia, owner of www.getorganizednow.com and author of the book, 'Finally Organized, Finally Free' can help you organize your home, your office and your life. Visit her Web site at:

Declutter Your Home- Just Rubbish Disposal Or A Feel-good Technique?

By Marcus Brooks

I've recently heard more and more people mention the word "declutter" and wondered what all the fuss was about. Is this a fad, a load of rubbish, a reaction to our modern excesses or a necessary remedy to make our lives more livable? Being interested in doing a bit of "decluttering" myself, I decided to conduct a little research and found there is a ground-swell of anti-clutter thinking building up across the country. In the UK there is even a trade body called the Association of Professional Declutterers and Organisers!

So what is all the fuss about? It seems that we all have huge amounts of disposable income and a distinct lack of time. The end result of these two factors is that we buy loads of unnecessary stuff and have no time to either use it or throw it away. Another factor is our innate tendency to hoard things. Our reluctance to throw things away, even if we never use them, results in a build up of rubbish that slowly but surely consumes our living space until we reach that breaking point when the declutter urge begins

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to nag! Everyone has a different declutter urge threshold, with some people unable to cope with even a small pile of old newspapers, whereas others will reach the point where they can hardly move from room-to-room before the urge to take action kicks in.

It seems that there are various locations that merit a bout of decluttering and there are a range of drivers that spur the declutterer into action. Let's deal with the locations first of all.

The normal location is the family home. Kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms and garages are the usual culprits. For bedrooms, clothing is the main clutter contributor. For those of use who can't resist a little retail therapy, there can easily be a rapid build-up of unworn clothing, but garments are one of the easiest items to clear out. Whatever you do, unless your old clothes are worn-out, damaged or dirty, don't throw them away. You have a perfect opportunity to donate your clothes to charity during your decluttering. Many people recommend using the "one year" rule - if you haven't worn an item of clothing during the last 12 months then you are highly unlikely to wear it again - just clear it out! If you have children, then toys can also start to take over a room if not kept under control. If you don't keep your toy-count in check, your children will soon have too many toys to be able to find their own favourites. Another opportunity to recycle beckons, so whatever you do don't just throw them away. Donate them to friends with younger children, sell them at a car-boot sale or even on Ebay. In the kitchen, old utensils can be thrown away for hygiene reasons and in the garage, throw out all those old tins of paint and rubbish that you moved out from the house last year.

If you have mountains of rubbish, it may be worthwhile hiring a skip to make the job easier.

Another location that really benefits from a good clear-out is the office - either your desk at work or your home-office. You'll be amazed at how much paperwork people can accumulate over a short period of time. I've known companies that have had periodic office reorganisations, purely to make people have a regular clear out of their work space.

So what are the benefits of all this decluttering? If you have tried it even once you'll know exactly what I mean by the sense of satisfaction and achievement that can be attained from all of this. If you haven't ever set aside time for a spot of decluttering, then I can only suggest that you try a small test run. Plan to spend just one hour, in one room and see how far you get - and see how good you feel!

Another favourite technique is the 15-3 sprint. Take a rubbish bag and for the next 3 minutes, try to fill it with 5 items to throw away each every minute. If you reach 15 in the allotted time you've done well and just see how good that feels. You may even be tempted to repeat the exercise every day.

You may have a few guilty feelings about being wasteful and disposing of perfectly good things, but these will be more than compensated for by your sense of achievement, your satisfaction in being able to let go and the cleaner, lighter space you have created. You'll feel more relaxed in your home, you'll be able to find things more easily and you'll know exactly what you have. In fact the fewer things you have, the more you will cherish and use them. Go on, have a good old clear out today.

Marcus Brooks writes on a variety of property and home improvement subjects for the UK skip hire company

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