

The Declutter Checklist

a guide to getting rid of stuff so you can have a more functional space.



KC DAVIS struggle care

DECLUTTER CHECKLIST

Before you start, identify places you can sell or donate the items you no longer need and set some goals for how quickly you would like to progress through the list. Use the project idea box to jot down any ideas you have while decluttering so you can come back to them and not get distracted from decluttering.

PLACES TO DONATE/SELL

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

PROJECT IDEAS

GOALS

DECLUTTER CHECKLIST

Before you start, identify places you can sell or donate the items you no longer need and set some goals for how quickly you would like to progress through the list. Use the project idea box to jot down any ideas you have while decluttering so you can come back to them and not get distracted from decluttering.

PLACES TO DONATE/SELL

- facebook marketplace
- buy nothing/sell nothing fb groups
- goodwill drop off
- junk hauling company (for big things)
- salvation army donation pickup
- foster family groups (for toys)
- salvation army donation pickup
- second hand clothing stores
- half priced books (to sell books)

PROJECT IDEAS

- organize downstairs closet
- put up shelves in bedroom
- create a sewing caddy

GOALS

- Do one category a day
- To make my home feel less overwhelming and easier to tidy
- Make wardrobe less overwhelming

MAKING DECISIONS

As you go through the categories, pick a wide open space to bring everything in that category out so you can see it all. This will help you decide what you really need.

There is no right or wrong way to go about deciding what to get rid of and everyone's goals are different. You may be going full minimalist or you may just want to get rid of a little bit of clutter. Remember that any amount of excess you can declutter will make your life more functional--so aim for progress rather than perfection.

Often it's easier to decide what to keep rather than what to get rid of. Here are some guidelines that may help you.

When looking at a category:

1. An easy first step is to remove anything broken, expired, or missing pieces that make it unusable. (You don't need 9 contact cases if you only have caps for three of them.)
2. Then pick out the items that are currently serving a functional role in your life. This means things that get used at least once a month. Decide how many of those items you need (for example, I use my spatula daily so I like having 2-3 of them in case one is dirty. I also use my beauty blender everyday, but I really only need one).
3. Then pick out items that are seasonally used. So in the kitchen this may be your turkey roasting pan or, in the medicine cabinet, your flu medicine. For me, I set aside my cat carriers at this step bc they are used infrequently but I do need them about once a year for vet visits.
4. Next, we are going to take a nod from Ms Kondo and pick out anything in the pile that makes you really happy.
5. Your pile now contains things you almost never use and things you don't want. This is where lots of people have trouble because there are things you *might* use and feel anxious getting rid of and things you don't really want but *feel guilty getting rid of*.
 - a. For things you might use, I like to ask myself a few questions:
 - i. Can this thing be replaced in 20 mins or 20 dollars? I heard an organizer say this once and I find it very helpful. If the answer is yes I get rid of it.
 - ii. When it comes to this item, what will be the bigger benefit to me: the freedom of having it gone or the security of knowing it's there. Put another way, is the frustration of having this item contributing to clutter all the time better than the frustration I may experience once if I need it and don't have it? You are really just picking which inconvenience is more functional for you mentally.
 - b. For things you don't want but feel guilty getting rid of, like gifts, I ask myself:
 - i. Will this person know I have gotten rid of this? or is this purely a discomfort within myself I am struggling with?
 - ii. If I get rid of this, will I feel guilty momentarily or for a long time?
 - iii. Is the guilt I will feel getting rid of this heavier than the weight I feel having it around contributing to clutter?

YOUR CLOTHES

Tips for decluttering clothes

1. Remove clothes that are torn, stained, or unwearable.
2. Remove clothes that do not fit. You may experience weight fluctuations that go up and down and legitimately need a couple of sizes on hand. But we all know when we are holding onto something for aspirational purposes. You deserve to have a closet that dresses the body you have, not the body you wish you had.
3. Remove clothes that are not your style, but set them aside. This is where we are removing gifts, styles we have outgrown, and most importantly, anything you bought to cover your body because you did not believe you deserved to look trendy or sexy or handsome because of the size or shape of your body. (this is the step where I finally pitched all the oversized matronly shirts I was using to hide my belly).
4. Now look at your closet and decide how many clothes you would like to have. You may decide you want to pair things way down so you aren't as overwhelmed with laundry or paralyzed by decisions when it comes to getting ready in the morning. Or you may decide you love to have tons of options and that a big wardrobe is functional for you.
5. When you have a sense of how big of a wardrobe you want. First, pair down any duplicates as needed. For example, if you have seven pairs of jeans you may decide that since you only really wear three of them regularly you can get rid of four of them. You may also decide that having three blue sweaters is not necessary. (However, you may also decide that jeans and blue sweaters are your favorite comfort outfit and decide instead to get rid of some other clothes you rarely wear and keep your jeans and blue sweaters.)
6. If you find that after steps 1-3, you don't have enough clothes for a functional wardrobe (and you don't have the budget to invest in more clothes), now you can add back in some of the clothes that fit but aren't necessarily your style.



PERMISSIONS

Honor your emotional context

If you experience resources scarcity in your life, you are just not going to feel as comfortable with getting rid of tons of things as someone else. That's okay. minimalism is not morally superior to functional maximalism. As long as your home is functioning, keeping extra stuff around because it helps you feel less anxious is totally fine. If you feel too anxious to get rid of anything and your home isn't functional because of it, you may need to reach out to a mental health provider for extra support before decluttering.

If you have really been struggling to create a functional home, give yourself permission to skip the selling and donating and throw things away or give them away for free. Pick whatever avenue gets you decluttered the fastest. There isn't any point in decluttering only for bags and boxes of things to stay around for six months because you can't get around to donating or selling them. If you'd like, you can give yourself a timeframe, saying you have a week to donate them and if you can't get it done it goes to the trash.

If you are simply not ready to get rid of an item, then keep it. There is no "should" here and nothing to feel guilty about. Any progress in making your home less overwhelming to live in, to clean, and to function in, is progress.

A tip for getting rid of sentimental items

I'm a big fan of keeping sentimental items out of joy but not out of guilt. Keep the things that make you happy! However, sometimes we do want to get rid of a formerly sentimental item and realize its not the living without it that is hard, but the actual act of disposing of it. Let's say you have 100 love letters that your grandparents wrote each other. Perhaps you decide to keep a select few and frame them or keep them in a scrapbook. You know you don't need or want the other 88 but throwing them in the trash just doesn't feel honoring. So what do you do?

I ran into this issue when getting rid of some items and letters I still had from my first boyfriend as a teenager. The relationship still had a special place in my heart, but I no longer felt the need for it to have a special place in my house. Yet I could not bring myself to put these items in the trash. So I set up a time with a good friend and asked her if I could tell her about all the items and the letters and the story of this relationship. I spent a good amount of time telling her all of the rich memories and tragedies that this relationship held and what an impact it had on my younger self. When I was finished, I gave her the box. She took it with her and left and while I do know intellectually that she put it in the trash, it just felt right with my spirit that I was not the one to do so.

PAPERS TO KEEP

- Bills that need to be paid
- Active insurance policies
- Family: Adoption papers, birth, marriage, and death certificates
- Tax forms (ex W-2 or 1099) from past three years
- Tax returns from all years
- Major legal documents: filings, wills, or inheritances etc.
- Sentimental documents
- Professional & business: licenses, certificates, continuing ed etc.
- This year's paycheck stubs
- Receipts or bills needed for the self-employed to use for tax deductions
- Active warranty information
- Current passport and social security card
- Vehicle titles and loan documents
- House deeds and mortgage documents
- Current rental agreements
- Retirement plan statements

PAPERS TO DITCH

- Bills that have been paid
- Inactive insurance or warranty policies
- Tax forms (ex W-2 or 1099) from more three ago
- Instruction manuals (you can find these all online now)

Shredding or using a special black out marker to de-identify information is best when throwing out anything with sensitive information

DECLUTTER CHECKLIST

1

MEDICINE

Prescriptions, supplements, over the counter, medical supplies (thermometer, bandaids, etc)

2

CUPS

Glasses, coffee mugs, travel mugs, kids cups, empty jars

3

SILVERWARE

Silverware, serving utensils, small kitchen gadgets (egg strainer, whisks, wine opener etc.)

4

DISHES

Plates, bowls, serving dishes

5

BAKING

Mixing bowls, strainers, baking dishes

6

POTS & PANS

Pots, pans, oven mitts, dish towels, aprons

7

TUPPERWARE

Tupperware and kitchen food storage containers

8

COFFEE BAR

Coffee makers, teas, cocoa, frothers, coffee supplies

9

PANTRY

Throw out expired food, donate or get rid of things you won't use,

10

GAMES

Games, cards, sports supplies

11

BABY ITEMS

Donate, sell, or pack away for next baby all baby items not being used

12

KIDS CLOTHES

Kid and baby clothing (keep one or two things that feel sentimental if you want)

13

TOYS

Toys

14

HOUSE SUPPLIES

Batteries, tools, extension cords, home reno or improvement supplies

15

**SEASONAL
SUPPLIES**

Sunscreens, bug sprays, fans, beach toys,
picnic stuff, sleds, swim toys, blow up
pools, etc.

16

**HOLIDAY
DECORATIONS**

Holiday decorations, wrapping paper &
bags

17

**OFFICE
SUPPLIES**

Pens, notebooks, binders, printers, etc.

18

BOOKS

Books, cookbooks

19

**CLEANING
SUPPLIES**

Cleaning chemicals, vacuums, brooms,
laundry detergents,

20

LINENS

Sheets, towels, pillows, hand towels,
wash cloths

21

HYGIENE

Makeup, skin care, shampoos, body
washes, deoderants, perfumes, etc

22

SEASONAL CLOTHES

Coats, gloves, swimwear, etc.

23

SHOES

Shoes

24

PAPERS

All paper except sentimental items

25

ART & PHOTOS

Wall art, posters, photographs, portfolios

26

DECORATIVE ITEMS

Small decorative items, knick-knacks, decorative signs, vases, (non-sentimental)

27

CRAFT & HOBBY

Craft supplies, hobby supplies, puzzles, sewing, art supplies, etc.

28

ELECTRONICS

Tvs, radios, headphones, CD players, CDs, DVDs, ipods, phones, computers, etc.

29

BAGS

Luggage, backpacks, totes, packing cubes, makeup bags, purses

30

COLLECTIONS

Pair down, sample, donate, or store collections.

31

OUTDOOR

Outdoor toys, outdoor furniture, grill & grilling supplies, gardening items, pots, birdfeeders, etc.

32

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Check expiration dates & organize emergency supplies

33

CLOTHING

The rest of the clothes

33

SENTIMENTAL ITEMS

Diaries, gifts, art, jewelry, etc.

ROOM CHECKLIST

After you have decluttered each category, go through each room and see if there is anything else that needs to be downsized.



LIVINGROOM



BATHROOMS



PLAYROOM



BEDROOMS



LAUNDRY
ROOM



CLOSETS



OFFICE



OUTDOOR

WOW!
you did it!