

The Art of DE-CLUTTERING



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Tina Carter

Licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia

First Choice Realty, Inc



The De-Clutter Game

The art of de-cluttering can be a highly demanding task. It takes a good amount of time and energy to get your household up to your desired standard of cleanliness and organization. But it doesn't have to be entirely dreadful. In order to make the process of de-cluttering enjoyable, you have to adjust your attitude. Don't look at it as a tiresome chore, but as an opportunity to make your life more efficient and productive. If you're planning to sell your house, it's also a chance to raise its value.

The most effective way to de-clutter is to think of it as a game. This mentality allows you to both challenge and reward yourself. Start by creating a list of short-term and long-term goals. Short-term goals may consist of immediate changes that you hope to see around your home. For example, you may wish to clean out the cupboards in your kitchen, or get rid of all the clothes in your closet that you no longer wear. Long-term goals are more personal and cover a larger scope. These are the changes you hope to see in other aspects of your life as a result of getting your home organized. For example, your long-term goals may include spending more time with your kids, or getting your house sold for your asking price.

Don't be afraid to be ambitious with your long-term goals. If you're determined to accomplish certain objectives in your life, there's nothing stopping you except your own willingness to make a commitment to your goals. You'll be amazed how much of a difference an organized home can make in all aspects of your life. Once you have your goals written down, post them somewhere visible. They'll serve as a reminder of the improvements you want to make and the benefits they will reap.

The next step to the de-cluttering game is tackling your short-term goals. List these goals according to priority and tackle the most important ones first to get them out of the way. Rewarding yourself is usually the best incentive for getting a job done. For each task on your list of goals, designate a reward you will get once you've completed it. This may include taking a trip to the movies, going out for ice cream, or buying a new item of clothing. Small rewards can provide you with the motivation you need to stop procrastinating and finally get started.

Just like any other kind of game, you need a challenge to make de-cluttering more fun. You can easily do this by setting a time limit for each task. Before you begin each task on your list, break it up into various steps. Give yourself a time limit to complete each step. This is much easier to do if you have a timer. For example, if you're cleaning out the kitchen cupboards, give yourself 10 minutes to empty out the shelves entirely. Take a two-minute break, and then give yourself another 10 minutes to throw out everything you no longer

use. Take another two-minute break, and then complete the next step. This is a great way to pace yourself and avoid getting distracted.

The hardest part about de-cluttering is getting started. The first and most important step is changing your attitude. De-cluttering isn't just about organizing your home; it's about getting the rest of your life in order.

De-cluttering by Room

Every room in your home is unique and serves its own purpose. Over time, however, the function of each room tends to become blurred. Everyone has such busy schedules that it becomes very easy to simply leave things lying around in random places rather than putting them back where they belong. In order to successfully keep your household de-cluttered, it's essential that you break this habit. Every room in your home has a function, and every item within it has its rightful place. If you can't figure out where something belongs, perhaps you should ask yourself whether or not you really need it.

The following is a detailed guide for de-cluttering the various rooms in your home. Whether you're planning to sell your house or simply want to get it organized, this guide will help you define the function of each room and streamline which items belong in it.

Kitchen

The kitchen is one of the most important rooms in the home. It's the place where food is prepared and meals are served. Due to the inherently messy nature of this function, it doesn't take long for a kitchen to become disorganized. Countertops gather crumbs and stains, while cabinets and fridges become crowded with expired food and rarely used ingredients.

Because it's used so frequently, potential homebuyers tend to place a lot of emphasis on the kitchen. They want to make sure that there is plenty of storage space, and that all the appliances are in good working order. Having too much clutter in the kitchen can give buyers the impression that the room is too small to meet their needs. So, if you're selling your home, make sure you spend enough time decluttering this area.

Bathrooms

The bathroom is one of the most important rooms in the home; unfortunately, it's also one of the area's most prone to clutter. Ideally, it should function as a spa like environment—a place where we go to refresh and revitalize ourselves. If you're selling your home, it's especially important to keep the bathroom clean and clutter free. There's nothing less appealing to a homebuyer than a bathroom that looks like it will require a huge effort to bring it back to a functional state.

With every household member using the bathroom so frequently, it's easy for everyone's belongings to become carelessly strewn about instead of having a permanent place. Drawers, cabinets, and countertops have a tendency to collect a wide array of junk. As challenging as it may be to de-clutter these areas, it's certainly not impossible. There are a number of ways to keep them organized.

Bedrooms

For most people, the bedroom is the most personal and intimate space in their home. It's your sanctuary from the world, the place to which you turn when you need to relax and get away from it all. It's also the place where most of your days will end and begin. A neat and organized bedroom can help your life run more smoothly. On the other hand, a chaotic bedroom will slow you down every day and prevent you from making the most of your time and energy.

Living Room

Whereas the bedroom is a personal and intimate space, the living room is quite the opposite—it's a place shared by every member of the household, and also the area where guests are commonly entertained. The condition of your living room can make a powerful statement about the way your house is run. Keeping your living room organized and clutter-free gives guests and homebuyers a good impression of your home.

Office

Everyone has his or her own unique method for getting work done. Some people like to keep their files in alphabetical order, while others prefer to keep them chronologically. No matter what type of system you design, there are two questions you need to ask yourself to determine if it's working:

- 1) Are you able to find things when you need it?
- 2) Do you get things done before they're due? If you answered no to either one of these questions, then your system needs to be improved. The best way to start is by de-cluttering your work area and getting rid of anything that doesn't belong there.

Tips on Cleaning

Let's face it: cleaning the house is a dirty job. Dusting your furniture and scrubbing the floors is far from a glamorous way to spend a Saturday evening. But the bottom line is, cleaning is a task that has to be done whether we like it or not. If left neglected, our homes would deteriorate into filthy and unlivable spaces.

On the bright side, however, having a clean home will leave you with a satisfied and organized feeling that will allow you to be more productive. It can also raise the retail value of your home by a significant amount. Cleaning is one of the most important steps to take if you wish to make your house more inviting to potential buyers.

Preventing Clutter

The best way to cure clutter is to stop it at the source. By preventing clutter from building in the first place, you are saving yourself a considerable amount of time and energy in the future. De-cluttering shouldn't be a quick fix that you perform when the mood strikes you; it should be a constant effort that you make to keep your home organized. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- **Make it part of your routine.** De-cluttering is only time consuming if you let it build up. Try to spend between 15 minutes to half an hour each day putting things back where they belong and throwing away what you no longer need.
- **Everything has a home.** Break the habit of simply putting things down wherever it's most convenient at the time. Every item in your home should have a permanent spot. Rather than just putting something down, put it away where it belongs.
- **Don't procrastinate.** Getting started is usually the hardest part. Once you get yourself on a roll, you'll discover that de-cluttering isn't really as frustrating as it seems. Do whatever you can to get motivated—play energetic music, get the family involved, and offer everyone a reward once they get the job done.

If you can manage to apply these three guidelines to your life on a daily basis, decluttering will become a much easier task. A clean and junk-free home makes for a more relaxed and productive environment. It can also work wonders to raise the market value of your house. Although it may not be your favorite thing to do, de-cluttering is a very rewarding activity that will inevitably lead to an improved standard of living.

Tina Carter

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