

Controlling Clutter Part 2: Removal

You have simplified and reduced the amount of clutter in your home. Now what do you do with all the stuff you don't want? Here are three suggestions:

1. **Throw away and recycle.** There will inevitably be some items that cannot be used - by you or anyone else. They are either broken beyond repair or so severely outdated that they are useless (i.e. typewriter ribbon). You will most likely have some items that need to be thrown away but try to recycle as much as possible.
 - a. Contact your local recycling center to see if they will accept your items.
 - b. See if your electronic items can be swapped for credit toward an updated item. Ink cartridges can be refilled or exchanged for store credit at office supply stores such as Staples.
 - c. Visit earth911.com for a very detailed list of recyclable items and local recycling solutions.

2. **Donate.** Chances are the majority of your unwanted items will fall into this category. The good news is that these are the easiest to items to remove from your house. Almost anything that is in good working condition can be donated - clothing, home decor, kitchen appliances/utensils, furniture, baby items, etc.
 - a. Thrift stores such as Goodwill, Salvation Army or other local thrift shops will usually take most items. If you have something large or unusual, call first.
 - b. Old cell phones can be donated to The Wireless Foundation's Call to Protect program which uses "one hundred percent of the net proceeds generated by the sale of the refurbished phones to make grants to national organizations working to end family violence". Visit their website to learn more: wirelessfoundation.com
 - c. Consider giving special items to someone you know would benefit from it. Baby items are sometimes the most difficult things to give away because of the sentimental value we attach to them. But if you give the items to a relative or family friend who is expecting they might be easier to part with since you know they will be used and loved by another baby. Fancy dresses can be given to a girl headed to prom. Children's clothes can be given to a younger friend. Etc.

3. **Sell.** We're all guilty of making impulse purchases on items that we love for about 3.5 days. These items sit around in our closets - unused. There are several options for selling these items and recouping some of your cash.
 - a. Selling one item at a time online. You can sell items on Ebay or Craigslist for a minimal fee and minimal hassle.
 - b. Use social media (Facebook, Twitter) to promote your items for sale to your friends and family.
 - c. Host a Yard Sale. If you have a lot of unwanted clutter, a yard sale may be the easiest way to remove the bulk of it from your home. Here are some tips for a successful yard sale:
 - Prepare your items by making sure they are clean and priced. (Know ahead of time what your minimum sale prices are for big ticket items.)
 - Advertise in the local newspaper. Make sure you list the times and location of your sale and any big ticket items. Consider putting an ad on Craigslist as well.
 - Gather supplies: change (ones, fives, etc. based on the amount of items for sale), cash box, extra bags and tissue paper/newspaper for packing purchases, extension cords or batteries for "try before you buy" items.
 - Put up signs along your road/neighborhood.
 - Set up as much as possible the night before your sale. Place like/complementary items next to each other. Make sure all items are visible.
 - Consider traffic flow through your tables. Make sure shoppers can walk freely around all items.
 - Make arrangements for a local charity to pick up leftover items or plan to load up your car and donate them yourself.
 - Ask your friends to join you. Yard sales are hard work and typically not the most fun things to do. Having a multi-family sale with friends or neighbors can make the day of work much easier. You can cover for each other during breaks/lunch. Plus it's just a lot more fun to hang out with your friends while people buy your stuff.
 - Most importantly - be willing to negotiate your prices. Keep in mind that there is value attached to the space in your home. It is better to sell an item for a bit less and have it out of your house than to have to continue storing it and not make any money at all.