

Decluttering: Why Less is More

Decluttering is a trend that is sweeping the nation, and for good reason.

Clutter can be the source of stress, memory problems, and can make you less safe in your own home. Decluttering an entire home may seem like a daunting task, but benefits are absolutely worth the effort.

Why Declutter?

Safety. Whether you're downsizing to a smaller space or planning to age in place, home safety should be a top priority. Reducing clutter can help decrease your risk of dangerous falls and accidents that could lead to loss of mobility and independence. Clearing away the clutter is especially important for older adults who rely on a walker, or other mobility device. Decluttering will allow for easier movement around your living space.

Organization. If you feel like you spend a lot of time searching for misplaced items, you're not alone. House keys, reading glasses and the TV remote control are among the items people tend to misplace. Removing clutter from your home will make it easier to find the items you need when you need them, especially if you commit to putting things in their proper place (and only in their proper place) each time you use them.

Mental health. Clutter can leave you feeling stressed, anxious and even depressed. Studies have also shown that a messy or disorganized environment can make it difficult to process information. Reducing clutter will create a more open, spacious environment that will benefit you both physically and mentally.

Now that you know why decluttering is so important, here are

three tips to help you get started:

- 1. Sort your stuff.** It doesn't matter where you begin, whether it's one whole room, one small cabinet or one pile of paperwork. Decide what space you want to tackle, and then put those belongings in one of these categories: keep, donate or trash. If an item is important and useful to you, keep it. If an item does not "spark joy" - a term coined by organization expert Marie Kondo - then it may be time to let it go. Kondo suggests you "thank the item for its service" and then decide whether it belongs in the trash or donation pile.
- 2. Set a time limit.** Set aside an hour or two each day and do as much as you can for that amount of time. Rather than wearing yourself out or becoming overwhelmed, you can stop when the time is up and then readily return to the task the next day.
- 3. Ask someone to help you.** Whether it is a close friend or a family member, having another person there with you can keep you and focused through the process - and can even help make it a little fun. Some items may spark a happy memory you want to share. Your "declutter buddy" can provide positive reinforcement when you're choosing whether to keep or toss an item. Those decisions are often the hardest part of decluttering.

If you need more than a little help from a friend, it may be time to call in some experts. Local decluttering services include:



A Changing Season started in 2007 to fulfill the needs of seniors and families transitioning from one stage of life to another in Denton, Tarrant, Collin and Dallas counties. www.achanging-season.com/services.html

What To Do With Your Unwanted Items

Remember the old saying “one man’s trash is another man’s treasure.” This continues to be true! The items you no longer want or need can be:

- **Donated to a local charity** (be sure to get a receipt for income tax purposes).
- **Sold at a yard sale.** If you aren’t up for organizing your own sale, talk to your neighbors about doing a group sale (if your neighborhood permits it).

- **Try Give Back Box.** When you order an item from an online retailer, such as Amazon, you can use the same box to fill with your unwanted items. Visit givebackbox.com to print out a pre-paid shipping label and ship the box as usual.

Whichever option you choose, you’ll feel good knowing your unwanted clothing or household goods are going to make a difference in the life of another person.