



📌 Home Focus

Less Mess, Less Stress

Souvenirs, old magazines and receipts — it's easy for stuff to pile up. While some clutter is unavoidable, an overabundance of things can negatively impact our mental well-being and how we feel about our home, according to a 2016 study published in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*.

Here are some simple tips to help you purge items that may be weighing you down:

- ▶ **Block off time.** Schedule “decluttering” sessions into your calendar to stay committed to the task. Break it up over several mini sessions to make the process less overwhelming.
- ▶ **Team up.** Enlist a partner, family member or friend to help. He or she can keep you motivated and offer another perspective on sentimental items.
- ▶ **Make three simple piles: keep, toss and donate.** This prevents the temptation to make mounds of “maybe” items.
- ▶ **Ask questions.** As you go through your items, ask yourself: Why do I have this? Does it still provide a purpose for me? Could someone else benefit from it more?
- ▶ **Save your faves.** For things such as birthday cards, mementos and gifts from family, pick your favorites and toss or donate the rest. If you feel guilty, remember: It's the relationships and memories that matter — not the objects that represent them.



How to Declutter: A Room-by-Room Checklist

Tips for tackling major areas of your home.

Kitchen

- Toss out expired food and condiments in the refrigerator, pantry and cabinets.
- Recycle or donate old (or unused) appliances, food storage containers and dishes.
- Declutter the outside of the refrigerator — move photos, menus, etc. to binders or storage.
- Organize your recipe cards and cookbooks. Recycle or give away any that you don't use anymore.

Bathroom

- Throw away old and expired toiletries.
- Use caddies or cups to group similar items together, such as hair clips.
- Check expiration dates on medicine and safely discard old prescriptions. Contact your city or visit [takebackday.dea.gov](https://www.takebackday.dea.gov) to find a collection site near you. Tip: Remove your name from the bottle's label but keep the name of the drug itself. And for safety, install a childproof lockbox in your medicine cabinet if young kids visit.

Bedroom Closet

- Toss out or donate unwanted jewelry, clothes, formalwear and accessories.
- Put off-season clothes and shoes in storage.

Home Office

- File, recycle or shred unneeded paperwork.
- Recycle or donate old magazines and books. Tip: Remove the name and address label from magazines prior to getting rid of them.
- Organize or group loose cords with twist ties.