



Employee NEWSLETTER

Employee Assistance Program
April 2017

Reclaim Your Home and Send the Clutter Packing

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Last month we addressed paperwork clutter and how to organize and manage it. Now we'll turn our attention to the home front with ideas to empower you to take control of your living space.

Consider these tips to get you started:

Love it or Let it Go—Organizing expert, Marie Kondo, suggests that all you need to get and stay organized are these two steps: (1) strategically discard, and (2) decide where to store the rest. In her book, “The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up,” Kondo’s underlying message is to *only keep what you really love*. She recommends separating your belongings into two piles: one for what you love and one for everything else. Take a marathon-style approach to organize and de-clutter your house in one day. If you de-clutter on a daily or weekly basis, you’ll be “tidying forever.” This can seem like a huge project, especially if you have a large home, so do as much as you can in one day and then finish the project as soon as you can. Besides lightening your load and improving your living space, you could be sitting on extra money. Your used or unwanted things may help fund your daughter’s dance lessons, a dinner out or weekend get-away, or might even pay off a credit card debt. Now that’s inspiring! Let Craigslist, eBay, or an old-school garage sale help you sell your stuff. Alternatively, check out <https://goo.gl/nrSU8o> for ideas on how to help someone else while ridding your home of excess. For example, your old cell phone could offer a lifeline to family for a soldier through the *Cell Phones for Soldiers* program.

Make it social—Instead of thinking about organizing as punishment, why not make it a social event and ask a friend for help? Offer to reciprocate and then share a pizza or movie after the work is done. Also, with a friend’s help you’ll have a better chance at putting those favorite old shoes you haven’t worn in years in the donate pile vs. if you de-clutter alone. Share stories about items in your donate pile, laugh along the way, and then let them go.

Give It a Home—Now that you’ve sorted your belongings into keep and give away piles, find a place for everything. When you shop, ask yourself if there’s a spot for this “*must have item*” at home. If not, even if it’s on sale, don’t buy it. Hide those once a year holiday decorations or summer clothes in a plastic bin under your bed, the back of your closet, or boxed in a cupboard. If you absolutely love all your clothes, look for vacuum seal bags that let you store many pieces of clothing together in a flat package to save space in your closet for other things. Most big box stores have them. Be creative. Not much kitchen space? Use a wall-mounted rack for pots and pans and put appliances or pantry items where the pots usually go.

Enjoy the Process—Begin to imagine how you’d like your living space to ultimately look and function. Search online for examples of well-organized spaces that catch your eye. Visit a home organizing store to check out strategies for managing your belongings—would any of their ideas suit your situation? Ask your friends and family for their organizing tips. As you gather ideas, you’ll be inspired to put your own space in order.

Now that you know what to do, why not focus your energy this spring on lightening your load?

You may also experience other rewards. As author Marie Kondo puts it, “*When you put your house in order, you put your affairs and your past in order too... A dramatic reorganization of the home causes dramatic changes in lifestyle... it is life transforming.*”

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