

# Clutter Clean Up

Andi Hoover, WVU Extension Agent – Greenbrier County

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Have you ever asked yourself, “Where did all this stuff come from?” Over the years it is easy to collect things, keep sentimental items, buy things because they’re on sale or keep those clothes that you just might fit into again. In doing this, we tend to build mounds of things we don’t need.



The idea of decluttering your home can be overwhelming with feelings of sadness, anxiety and guilt. The thought of tackling a large job such as downsizing, moving or cleaning an estate can be daunting. When you feel overwhelmed, try to focus on taking one small step at a time. Set action steps you can take each day. Commit to the process and keep working on it as you’re able, and you will be amazed at the progress you can make!

## How do we get started?

Write down your decluttering goals. What do you want your house to look like? What would make it function better? Why are you starting this journey? Understand the reason why you are doing this. Remember to make your goals specific and realistic and give yourself a deadline. For example, “I will clean one drawer or shelf for 15 minutes three times this week.”

Make a list of a few household items such as bed sheets, towels, coffee cups, soap, etc. Ask yourself, how many of these should a person have? This information will allow you to make the decision of how many to keep. Then make a list of where household goods can be donated or sold. For example, you can donate to a local thrift store or sell items on eBay or Facebook marketplace. You can also opt to “freecycle” your items, which means giving them away for free to someone who wants them.

Start with a small area that does not hold much sentimental value. Choose a room, then an area within the room to work on. Stay there until you have decluttered every inch. Give yourself time, but a deadline is imperative in

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reaching your goal. If you begin to lose motivation, go back to your reason why you want/need to declutter your home.

## Emotions and Decluttering

Asking yourself “Why am I doing this?” can bring up many different feelings. It could be as simple as spring cleaning, or it could be the bigger tasks of moving to a new home or cleaning a home after the death of a loved one. When dealing with these emotions, ask yourself why this item is causing you sadness, anxiety or guilt. Am I keeping this just because of these feelings? If so, what steps can I take to let these items go? When you decide to let go of the “stuff,” you can also let go of the emotion.

## What to do With the Clutter

When you begin decluttering, looking at your goals and having a room-by-room plan with a timeline helps you move forward. But what do we do with the stuff? Find an area that can hold three piles.

1. Trash/Recycle pile
2. Maybe pile
3. Legacy pile

**Trash/Recycle Pile** – Throw away old papers, magazines, broken and worn-out items and things you are not emotionally attached to. You will be amazed at the amount of trash you collect. Take these bags directly outside to the trash bin so they don’t become clutter too! Put donations or recycling in your car and drop them off the next day.

**Maybe Pile** – These will be the items that you really may not need, but don’t want to get rid of.



**Legacy Pile** – These are items that you will use daily and those that will be passed down to others. Besides the day-to-day items we need to function, ask yourself “what am I passing down to others?”

Organize your legacy pile into categories. In each category, you will see how many of the same things you are keeping. It may be time to take things from the legacy pile and place them in the trash/recycle pile.

Begin daily decluttering habits such as throwing junk mail away immediately and putting mail in a designated spot. Change your shopping habits by limiting what comes into your home. Think, do you really need it and where will you store it?

Collecting all your things took years, therefore decluttering will take time as well. Make a plan and stick to it for a successful declutter!

Websites for free printable decluttering checklist:

<https://www.mollymaid.com/cleaning-tips/schedules-charts-and-checklists/declutter-house-checklist/>

<https://mailchi.mp/fcbeec476400/tidying-checklist>

<https://www.sunnydayfamily.com/2017/02/declutter-checklist.html>