## INTOTIME (COMMANTIME)



## 7 Steps to a De-Cluttered Home

For many people, having an abundance of personal items serves as a security blanket. For others, it's a sign of prestige: The more stuff I have, the better I am. The trouble is, too many belongings can quickly turn an orderly home into one overrun with clutter.

1. Getting started: The hardest part about clearing out clutter is getting up the gumption to start. The entire process can be less overwhelming if you tackle one small project at a time: for example, one closet, drawer or cabinet. As you build up expertise and momentum, you can move on to bigger and better de-clutter-

Choose an area that needs attention and assess the situation. Set a reasonable timeframe to complete the task — say, a few hours. Now it's time to get your sup-

2. Supplies: Those home-organizing shows on TV are a great source of ideas. Most instruct homeowners to form three separate piles: trash, keep and donate/sell. A radio tuned to your favorite music can help keep you in an upbeat spirit and moving along on your task.

can be used to hold the belongings you will be keeping. There are plenty of options at neighborhood stores or specialty shops.

You may also want to arm yourself with a vacuum, duster, broom and bug spray. You never know what you might uncover! 3. Limit distractions: Plan your de-cluttering session for a time when you can devote your undivided attention to the task at hand. Don't plan it close to an appointment, mealtime or when the kids can get in the way (unless you're recruiting them to help). To limit distractions, turn off the ringers of your phones and crank that music so you won't hear the doorbell

4. Full swing ahead: Start by emptying everything out of the cleaning space so you can see just what is lurking inside. Once all items have once again seen the light of day, begin the sorting process. Any items that are visibly beyond repair should be immediately trashed. If you haven't worn or used something in a year or two, you can also throw it out or put it in the donate pile. Keep only the items

Stock up on organizational containers that that you will truly use, and be extremely reasonable about deciding which items are keepers. Hoarding too much stuff is what got you in this situation to begin with, so there's no point in just putting everything back without removing a chunk of stuff.

5. Remove the trash and donations: Pack up the items that will be leaving the house. Put the trash at the curb and place the items for donation in your car. Anything that can be sold at a garage sale should be marked as such. Plan to host a garage sale as soon as possible to rid yourself of the remaining items.

6. Clean the keepers: Anything that is being kept should be cleaned (if necessary) and put back in an orderly fashion. Group like items together (such as vases with vases, bowls with bowls) and put them back into your closet or cabinet.

7. Plan your next project: Now that you've successfully de-cluttered one area of the home, set goals for others. Remember, if the items are collecting dust or socked away in a closet, they should be thrown away, sold or donated. If you haven't used them, you don't need them.



