

Reflections

February 2024

Decluttering: The Best Tips to Make Downsizing Easier

Maybe you're decluttering for retirement. Or maybe your goal is to declutter and downsize. Either way, one thing's for sure, the task isn't always easy.

If you're feeling sad, nervous, or overwhelmed by the idea of decluttering your home, don't worry! While the idea might be a little intimidating, many of us can benefit from decluttering our homes, and you might be surprised to see just how beneficial it can be.

Sometimes, it can be hard to say goodbye to the physical things we own. After all, most of that stuff holds some kind of meaning. There may be gifts you were given by friends and family members. There might be stuff you really worked hard and saved up to purchase—investments that you were proud to make at the time.



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The thought of decluttering your home might be overwhelming, but when it's done, it can be such a relief. Decluttering is a gift to yourself and to your family as well.

Some of our physical belongings hold sentimental memories, taking us back to critical moments in our lives—weddings, birthdays, new jobs, big moves. It can be difficult to get rid of those things and doing so may bring out emotions you didn't expect.

My best advice? Be easy on yourself as you declutter your house. Take the time you need to say goodbye to the stuff you've been holding onto for years but keep your goal of decluttering your home in mind and stay focused on the task at hand.

The following steps may make the process easier:

1| **Create your goals and remember why you're decluttering.**

Setting a clear, achievable goal for yourself is a great way to stay focused and motivated while you're decluttering. You may get to a point where you're ready to throw in the towel and settle on keeping all your stuff to deal with some other day. But by setting a clear goal for what you're hoping to achieve and keeping the reason why you're decluttering in mind, you'll have a much easier time staying on track and making progress toward decluttering your home.

You don't have to get rid of everything. Focusing on the items most important to you and thinking about what you want to keep can make downsizing easier.

2| **Tackle small areas at a time to avoid overwhelm.**

Don't try to tackle everything at once. Not only is that simply not possible, but you'll find yourself in an even more chaotic place than where you first started. Instead, try to focus on a small, specific area of your home first. Maybe it's a certain room. It could even be as small as a closet, a cabinet, or a particular shelf. Whatever your target, finish that area completely before moving on to the next one.

3| **Go at your own pace.**

Decluttering isn't a race. It's a marathon. If you try to move too quickly while you declutter, you're going to get tired quickly, and you might even give up. Unless you're trying to meet a hard deadline such as a move, you should feel free to take your time.

4| **Ask for help if you need it.**

Decluttering your home can be a challenge. If you need help, especially when it comes to physical tasks like moving large objects or furniture, don't hesitate to call for help. Bring in a friend, a family member, or someone else who can handle the heavy lifting.

You don't have to call in help only when things get heavy, though. If you've got a friend willing to help you, take advantage of the company! Having someone help you can make the time pass more quickly and make the task a lot more fun.

5| **It's OK to keep some things.**

You don't have to get rid of everything. There are going to be some things that you want to keep because they're expensive, sentimental, or otherwise special. And that's totally fine! However, when it comes to keeping nostalgic items, you can quickly find yourself on a slippery slope. Once you start walking down memory lane, it can be tough to part with anything that's part of your history.

The easiest solution? Set a limit upfront for the number of nostalgic things you're willing to keep. It can be a specific number, or enough stuff to fit in a particular bin, closet, or shelf. Focusing on the items most important to you and thinking about what you want to keep can make downsizing easier. One method, called reverse decluttering, is to ask yourself what you would most want to save if your house was on fire. This tactic helps you prioritize your belongings.

6| **Don't hold onto stuff for others.**

As you sort items in your home, you may find things you think your kids might want to keep. This can quickly derail your decluttering plan

if you justify keeping all that stuff around for them.

Instead, work with your kids to determine what they want and what they don't. Let them know when you're decluttering and see if they'd like to come by to help. Or you can set aside the stuff you think they'll like for a specific time and let them know they are welcome to stop by and grab whatever they want to keep. Setting a deadline lets them know they only have a set amount of time to come get it before it gets donated.

7 | Celebrate your wins along the way

Don't wait until your project is complete to celebrate your progress. Recognize your

accomplishments and feel good about the progress that you're making along the way. Taking those moments to celebrate can help you stay motivated to reach your goals.

The thought of decluttering might be overwhelming, but when it's done, it can be such a relief. Decluttering is a gift to yourself and to your family as well.

Many people don't realize just how much stress their cluttered environment is causing until the stuff is gone and they can finally relax. You'll be less stressed. You will have less to clean and organize. You'll be able to move more freely through your space and won't struggle to find the things you need in your clean, clutter-free home. ■

SHARP Corner

(Supplemental Healthcare Adventist Retirement Plan)

A Heartfelt Message

February is American Heart Month. If you look it up online, you'll find all sorts of articles on keeping your heart healthy, etc. The first Monday of February is National Wear Red Day—who knew?

The Bible is full of verses about our hearts—guarding your heart (Proverbs 4:23), a pure heart (Psalms 51:10), the desires of our heart (Ps. 20:4), where your treasure is (Matt. 6:21), and a cheerful heart (Proverbs 17:22).

The Core Values of Adventist Retirement/SHARP are listed on our website here: <https://www.adventistretirement.org/about/>. As I read through them again this afternoon, it is a daunting task to take in! “Honest . . . accurate . . . consistent . . . genuine . . . honorable . . . friendly . . . dependable . . . respectful . . . attentive.”

Are any of us all those things at all times? Probably not. However, when we allow God

to give us “a new heart” (Ezekiel 36:26), we can certainly get closer to the mark.

This team has a heart of service. Know that we appreciate the sacrifices and years of service each retiree represents. We will continue to strive in providing you the best service we can as we all pray for God to clean our hearts and prepare us for His kingdom. ■

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