

# TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR CLUTTER

Whether you are enthusiastically tackling a household organization project or are a little anxious about the process, knowing where to start can be a challenge for anyone. Here are some ideas on how to take the first steps towards organizing your home.

## Focus on Keeping Items You Value and Need

Decide to keep items needed for your current lifestyle or what you value and have use for. All the other items will be donated, thrown out or relocated. When you work from this positive perspective, it ensures you are making the 'to keep' decision for all the right reasons, and not out of obligation, guilt or a 'what-if' mentality.

## Work With Four Boxes

The first time you touch an item, decide if you're going to keep, donate, throw away or relocate it. Have a rubber bin for each of these answers so you actively make this decision for each item. Plus, it makes for quick and easy tidying up during the project.

## Remove What Does Not Belong

Maybe you don't have the time for a decluttering session now, but you can still get started by reclaiming a space for its intended use - a bedroom for rest or a dining room for eating. Relocate the items that don't belong to a designated area for culling at a soon-but-later date. You will have immediately transformed the space into its intended use, and you'll be motivated to continue removing items going forward.

## Declutter in Categories

Collect all items in a specific category so you will know all your options when deciding what to keep. For instance when culling clothes, collect them from all closets and cupboards in the home so you know which of all your garments are the best ones to keep.

## Designate a Landing Spot

This is the spot for items needed each time you leave the house – keys, glasses, wallet, security pass, etc. When you return them to the same spot at the end of each day, they'll be there in the morning for a quick and easy departure.

## Manage Papers Quickly

Designate a kitchen shelf and insert four file holders for: Do Now, To Do, Information, and File. As papers come into the home, sort them once and make a quick decision if it's rubbish or important. Commit to using this system and get rid of counter piles, lost files and missed deadlines.

## Collect Tomorrow's To-Do's at the Front Door

Use something that is visually appealing to hold items for your errands – library books, returns, dry cleaning, empty grocery bags. You can better assess what your day will look like while decreasing the chances of forgetting something crucial to the day.

## Organize the Bathroom for Maximum Efficiency

How simply you move in this space can set the stage for the rest of your day. For maximum efficiency, group items according to frequency of use; every day items go in the top drawer (face cleansers, lotions, deodorant, oral care); occasional items belong in lower drawers and seldomly used items should be relocated under the sink or to the closet (first aid, medicine, nail care, oral care, etc.).

## Organize the Kitchen by Function

This hub of the family network needs to function perfectly. Kitchens are made up of zones based on function (food storage, preparation, presentation and cleaning) that align with a major appliance. Organize your plates, gadgets and such in these zones so when you are performing that function, everything is close by.

## Allow Yourself a Junk Drawer

It's inevitable we'll have an assortment of odd little things, so pick a drawer (ideally in the kitchen) to collect them. Once a month, throw out the rubbish, return items to their rightful place or designate a spot for new items that are now a proper category.

## Ask Your Clothes Two Questions

First, would I buy you from a store today? Second, do you give the first impression of me that I want? If you still can't decide for some items, put them in a bin and set aside. If in one year you haven't pulled anything out, you have essentially decided not to keep them.

## Make Your Bed Every Day

A large portion of your bedroom is filled by your bed. When it's nicely made, the untidy areas of the room stand out and you'll feel that gentle nudge to tidy up the rest of the space.

## Go to Bed With an Empty Sink and Clean Kitchen Counters

You will start the day with a clean slate and are prepared for whatever happens that morning.

Information Courtesy of Robyn Israel from [www.initsplace.ca](http://www.initsplace.ca)



# WHERE TO SEND YOUR DONATIONS

## Canadian Diabetes Association

You can donate clothing, footwear, blankets, pillows, sleeping bags, toys, books, sports equipment, small household items, cell phones and computers. To arrange a free pick up, call or visit their website.

[www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)



## Children's Book Bank

The Children's Book Bank gives away about 300 books a day to youngsters in low-income neighbourhoods. You can donate gently used children's books for newborns to twelve year olds.

[www.childrensbookbank.com](http://www.childrensbookbank.com)



## Dress For Success

An organization committed to helping people entering into or already in the workforce to look and feel their best. They accept donations of lightly used clothing and accessories that go directly to people who are in need of office appropriate attire.

[www.dressforsuccess.org](http://www.dressforsuccess.org)



## Furniture Bank

You can donate most types of furniture, small appliances, televisions with screens 37 inches or less, bed frames, and unstained mattresses. Items must be in decent condition, Furniture Bank does not steam clean them. The pick up fee varies, usually starting at around \$70. Items can also be dropped off at Furniture Bank in Etobicoke. Tax receipts are issued for furniture.

[www.furniturebank.org](http://www.furniturebank.org)



## Habitat for Humanity

You can donate windows, doors, large working appliances such as fridges and stoves, kitchen cabinets, sinks, toilets, bathroom vanities, and light fixtures. Contact the closest Habitat for Humanity ReStore for more information.

[www.habitat.ca](http://www.habitat.ca)



## Jessie's The June Callwood Centre for Young Women

Jessie's offers services to women aged 18 or younger who are pregnant or have children. You can donate car seats less than five years old, foldable strollers and high chairs, maternity clothes, gently used toys and clothing for kids up to age ten.

[www.jessiescentre.org](http://www.jessiescentre.org)



## KidSport Ontario

Donate your used sporting equipment here and they will source it to children in need. This is a great way to clear out the garage and get the equipment that is sitting around collecting dust into the hands of children.

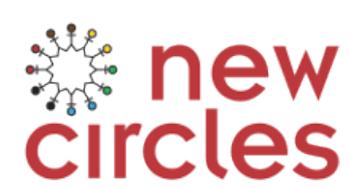
[www.kidsportcanada.ca](http://www.kidsportcanada.ca)



## New Circles

Offers new and gently used clothing to Toronto's low-income families and new immigrants. You can donate clothing, shoes, children's books, sheets and towels, small toys, prom dresses, jewelry and new makeup. No pick up. Please visit their website or call for dropping off donations at the office.

[www.newcircles.ca](http://www.newcircles.ca)



## Oasis Clothing Bank

You can donate clothing, shoes and linens which can be dropped off at Oasis boxes around the city. Bicycles, books, computers, exercise equipment, small appliances, furniture, sporting goods, stereos, toys and tools can be picked up at your home.

[www.clothingbank.ca](http://www.clothingbank.ca)



## Red Door Family Shelter

You can donate table and chair sets, sideboards, dressers, night tables, desks, shelving units and coffee/end tables. Gently used clothing and household items such as dishes or pots and pans may also be needed. There is a pick up fee of \$25 to \$45 depending on location.

[www.reddoorshelter.ca/moving-program](http://www.reddoorshelter.ca/moving-program)

