



Decluttering For Your Best Life: Frequently Asked Questions

PROJECT
XYZ

WorkWell
NYC
Healthy Workforce. Healthy City.

Getting Started

- **How and where do you even begin when you're overwhelmed?** Start small and build. Even if you get rid of only one thing daily or spend 5 minutes a day organizing, consistently spending a small amount of time decluttering will garner results. Decluttering for 10 minutes a day becomes 70 minutes a week, which becomes more than 60 hours in a year! You can also try getting friends and family on board so you can keep each other motivated.
- **How do I get rid of things that I just LIKE?** As yourself the questions we went over in the webinar:
 - Why do I have this?
 - Do I need this?
 - When was the last time I used this?
 - Would I buy this again today?
 - Would I keep this if I were to move tomorrow?
 - If it's broken or damaged is it worth fixing?
- **How do you recommend what sort of storage you need?** There is no one-size-fits-all approach. However, wait until after you have decluttered to buy or rent storage containers or spaces – you will have a better sense of what you need.

Decluttering Your Time

- **How can I make more time during the week?** During the webinar, we talked about breaking down the activities in our week as things that deplete us – red time – or things that restore us – green time. Go through each day and try to find ways to reduce your red time or transform it into green time.
- **What was the book you mentioned in the webinar?** The red time/green time exercise was adapted from the book “Be Happy” by Dr. Rebecca Ray.

Decluttering Papers

- **How do you declutter old paper photographs?** You can store your photos digitally by scanning and saving them on your computer. You can also incorporate your photos into your home by framing them or use them to make photo collages, or by creating a photo album. There are companies that take your paper photos and create albums or art for you. You may also want to declutter by giving these photos with family or friends who would enjoy them.
- **How do you declutter papers at home while still keeping important documents handy?** Important papers like bank statements and tax documents can be scanned and kept in files on a computer or external hard-drive. You could also buy an accordion file and keep important documents there – you may want to keep it organized by keeping certain document types together or sorting by year. This [list](#) can help you decide what to keep and what to toss, and this [resource](#) can help you determine how long to keep key documents.
- **I have a lot of papers from undergrad and grad school. Is it okay to just throw them all away since they are all on floppy disk and flash drives?** Yes, you have the right idea. However, do you still have a computer that utilizes floppy discs? If not, it might be worth scanning the papers and storing them online “in the cloud”. There are many websites that offer free online storage accounts.

Decluttering Digitally

- **Do you have any suggestions to declutter my email?** Take a look at your inbox – you may be getting 500 emails a day! There are digital un-subscribe tools out there that can help you see what email lists you are subscribed to and help you streamline your inbox. You may also want to set aside a dedicated time for reading, responding to, and deleting emails each day, so it doesn't distract from other tasks.

Decluttering At Work

- **How can I get my colleagues on board with decluttering?** Start by sharing this presentation with them! Then, you may want to get everyone involved by organizing an office decluttering challenge. Send your team's before and after pics to [WorkWell NYC](#) for a chance to win a prize!
- **What do you do with old notebooks at work?** Keep your notes handy until a project incomplete or until you no longer need them. You may want to use a full notebook as a reminder to outline your recent responsibilities and accomplishments and add them to your resume. Then, you may want to file them away in a drawer or recycle them. Make sure to abide by any agency-specific policies for keeping important documents.

Decluttering with Others

- **My time is spent cleaning up after my partner. How can I get him or her to get with the program?** Share this presentation with your partner and the benefits that come with decluttering. Ask your partner to declutter with you – you may even want to make it into a competition to see who can toss the most!
- **Any tips for helping an elderly relative declutter?** The elderly can sometimes be socially isolated and may enjoy spending time with younger family. Make a regular decluttering date and try to make it social and fun. You can try listening to music while decluttering, sharing stories or even having food or a drink during or after. Keeping it upbeat can make decluttering something your relative looks forward to instead of something dreadful.

Decluttering Your Clothes

- **How would you suggest storing out-of-season clothing?** The change of seasons is a great time to inventory and declutter your wardrobe. Move out-of-season clothing to the back of your closet or to found spaces like under the bed.
- **Is it okay to wear just 6 things for the season?** Many people create a “capsule” wardrobe of a few things that can be worn frequently and in multiple ways.
- **What is the hanger trick?** Take everything out of your closet and rehang everything with the hangers facing backwards. When you re-hang an item after wearing it, turn the hanger back to its normal position. This gives you a birds-eye view of what you actually wear and what you might not need to hold on to.

Decluttering Responsibly

- **What items can I donate? Are there organizations that pick up donations?** Visit nyc.gov/donatenyc to find out what you can donate and where. There is a searchable directory where you can identify organizations that will pick up or accept donations in your area.

Useful Links

- **Donate NYC:** nyc.gov/donatenyc
- **DSNY Guide for Safe Handling & Disposal of Harmful Products (printable):** <https://materials.bwpronline.org/system/tdf/harmful-products-brochure-06310-f.pdf>
- **“The Unbearable Heaviness of Clutter” – New York Times:** www.nytimes.com/2019/01/03/well/mind/clutter-stress-procrastination-psychology.html