

# Smart Ways to Declutter and Stress Less!

Overwhelmed by stuff? Cut down your clutter with these easy tips, designed to help you streamline your storage, get organized, and de-stress!



## Closet Conquerors

### Closet Clean-Out

Each spring and fall, do CPR on your closet: Categorize, Purge, and Rearrange. Carefully consider each item. If it doesn't make you feel wonderful or look fabulous, it's a no. Put it in the "to donate" box, and put that box in your car.



## Closet Conquerors

### Declutter and Donate

Keep a donation hamper in your closet (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/closet-and-storage/closet.htm>). Every two weeks select an item of clothing you haven't worn in the past six months and throw it in. When the hamper is full, take it to a local charitable organization.

-- Peter Walsh, organizing expert and author of *Enough Already!*

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## Closet Conquerors

### Save Your Linen Closet

Is your linen closet (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/closet-and-storage/closet.htm>) overflowing? Pare down your stock to three towels and washcloths per persons, two sets of sheets per bed, plus a set of each for guests.

-- Laura Wittmann, author of *Clutter Rehab*

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## Declutter Your Paper Piles

### On-the-Go Filing

Invest in a tabbed wallet for receipts and coupons. It will make your purse into a mini filing cabinet (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/cabinetry/cabinetry.htm>) that puts everything you need for shopping at your fingertips. Label the tabs how you like -- by store, by date, or by category.



## Declutter Your Paper Piles

### Organized Mail

Create an indoor mailbox in a central location. Set a time to go through the box once a week. Open everything, pay bills, file important correspondence, and recycle (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/arts-and-crafts/recycling.htm>) junk mail.

-- Niecy Nash, host of *Clean House on the Style* (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/decor/style.htm>) Network



## Declutter Your Paper Piles

### Recipe for Organization

Have a pile of cookbooks gathering dust? Scan and print the one or two recipes (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/food-and-recipes/recipes.htm>) you use the most often, then donate the book. Same goes for recipes in magazines. Tear out the relevant pages, then recycle (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/arts-and-crafts/recycling.htm>) the rest. Put the pages into clear plastic pockets in a three-ring binder. You've just made yourself a customized cookbook with plenty of room to grow.

-- Lorie Marrero, author of *Clutter Diet*



## Declutter Your Paper Piles

### Centralized Filing

Give frequently accessed papers (takeout menus, sports schedules, phone directories) a dedicated spot rather than leaving them in a pile on the counter or stuck to the fridge (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/appliances/refrigerator/refrigerator.htm>). Three-hole punch all that paper, then store it in a pretty binder with labeled tabs.

-- Aby Garvey, *simplify101.com*

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### Storage Smarts

#### Declutter on a Dime

Shop dollar stores for storage (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/closet-and-storage/storage.htm>) bins and baskets, then buy a bunch in the same color. Displayed in multiples, inexpensive plastic or cloth bins look calm and organized -- and they offer tons of storage space.

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## Storage Smarts

### Extra Storage Space

Use the backs of doors (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/doors/doors.htm>) and cupboards for bonus storage (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/closet-and-storage/storage.htm>) space. Shallow shelves (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/decor/shelves.htm>), hooks, and over-the-door organizers make convenient spots for items that are chronically homeless.



## Storage Smarts

### Kitchen Zones

Create zones for kitchen (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/kitchen/kitchen.htm>) tasks you do on a regular basis, such as making lunches or baking (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/food-and-recipes/baking.htm>). Designate a shelf (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/decor/shelves.htm>) for everything you need for the job, including nonperishable foods and special tools or utensils.

-- Kathi Burns, author of *How to Master Your Muck*

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## Storage Smarts

### An Orderly Nightstand

Designate your nightstand (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/decor/furniture/bedside-table.htm>) as a clutter-free zone that's a pleasure to wake up to. Limit yourself to a reasonable number of books. Set out a tray to hold change and jewelry. Park a basket below for blankets or magazines.

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## Tame Your Junk Drawer

### Well-Ordered Drawers

The next time you sit down to watch TV (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/electrical/home-entertainment/tv.htm>), pull out a drawer, any drawer. During commercials, sort the contents into four piles: keep, toss, donate or sell, and items to relocate. Then put back only the keepers, using expandable organizers to keep them tidy.

-- Donna Smallin, author of *The One-Minute Organizer: A to Z Storage Solutions*

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## Tame Your Junk Drawer

### Junk Drawer Strategy

Tackle your junk drawer (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/cabinetry/drawers.htm>) first. Remove anything you don't use at least monthly, then sort what's left into compartments of an organizer that completely fills the drawer. You won't have room to stash things that don't belong there.

-- Jana Lufkin, stylist

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## Clutter-Busting Habits

### Efficient Cleaning



Streamline your cleaning products into five basics: all-purpose cleaner, glass cleaner, wood polish, abrasive cleaner for bathroom (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/bathroom.htm>) and kitchen (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/kitchen/kitchen.htm>), and floor cleaner.

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## Clutter-Busting Habits

### Organizational Layaway

Practice organizational layaway. Keep a box for things you're thinking about getting rid of but aren't sure you can part with. When the box is full, write the date on it and store it. After one year, if you haven't needed or missed anything in the box, it's time to toss or donate.

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## Clutter-Busting Habits

### Perfect Placement

Don't get stuck at the grocery store without your reusable grocery bags again. As soon as you unload groceries, put the bags back in your car or on a designated hook by the door (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/doors/doors.htm>).



## Clutter-Busting Habits

### Family Effort

Every three months or so, reserve one Saturday morning for a family cleanout. Set a timer for 30 minutes and have each person find things in his or her space to donate or throw away. Box up donations and drop them off right away, then reward yourselves with lunch (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/food-and-recipes/lunch.htm>) out.

-- Meredith Schwartz, [penelopeloveslists.com](http://penelopeloveslists.com)



## Clutter-Busting Habits

### Ask Questions

When you're trying to decide whether to keep something, ask yourself three questions: Do I love it? Do I use it? Could someone else use it?

-- Claire Kurtz, *thewellorganizedwoman.com*

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## Clutter-Busting Habits

### Tailored to You

A system that's a natural extension of your habits is easier to stick with than one that forces dramatic change. So set up solutions right where clutter collects, such as a labeled pail for each family member's shoes and other equipment in a bookshelf (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/decor/shelves.htm>) right by the door (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/doors/doors.htm>).

Print these free storage labels. (<http://www.bhg.com/bhg/slideshow.jsp?slideid=/templatedata/bhg/slideshow/data/1301933468181.xml&page=3>)

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## Clutter-Busting Habits

### Play a Game

Make clutter-busting a family game. Write tasks on Ping-Pong balls. Each person chooses a ball, completes the task, then chooses another one. After 30 minutes, whoever has the most balls gets a prize -- like a no-chores day or control of the TV (<http://www.bhg.com/topics/home-improvement/electrical/home-entertainment/tv.htm>) remote.

-- Alicia Rockmore and Sarah Welch, authors of *Pretty Neat: Get Organized and Let Go of Perfection*



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