



## **Shred the Clutter**

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**The opinions expressed in this ebook by the authors are their own. This ebook should be used for the suggestions and tips that might begin your own journey to de-clutter your life.**

# Table of Contents

- 1. Retirees and Clutter - Some Thoughts - Page #3**
- 2. Conquer Clutter to Work More Efficiently - Page #6**
- 3. 10 Clutter Solutions - Page #8**
- 4. Simple Ideas to Clean the Clutter in Homes - Page #10**
- 5. Understanding Clutter - Frequently Asked Questions - Page #12**



## **Retirees and Clutter - Some Thoughts**

### **By Cynthia Barnett**

I never cease to be amazed by some of the unique characteristics of clutter. For some reason, clutter is often associated with the homes and workplaces of retirees or "seniors." We have all heard stories and read accounts of elderly people who live in tumble-down houses filled with unbelievable amounts of clutter. This is not, however, a universal characteristic of retirees.

So what are the essential characteristics of clutter? Here are a few that come to mind at the moment:

- Clutter takes many shapes and is composed of many items
- Clutter has the inherent property of expanding to fill all available space
- Clutter is generally collective - it builds up over time
- Clutter is generally composed of items we believe we must continue to keep
- Clutter is composed of items we believe to be important for some reason
- Clutter is generally composed of items we have not used in years
- Clutter is often composed of items we cannot find
- Clutter is often made up of things we actually don't need
- Clutter can be dangerous for retirees
- Clutter is hard to remove

Let's face it. At some point in time, everything that makes up clutter was important to us. What we do with it and how long we keep it is often directly proportional to the sentimental or emotional value we attach to it. For example, some of us keep every memento of every activity shared with a loved one. Others keep some souvenir of meaningful travel destinations. Some keep newspapers or magazines. And some of us are collectors gone wild.

We all know clutter in our homes can be dangerous - it can pose a fire hazard or a tripping or stumbling hazard, especially as it expands to mega-proportions. We hear so many stories of retirees who are victims of home fires, who fall and break fragile bones or who fall and get a serious head injury. For these reasons alone, de-cluttering is a really smart move for retirees.

Clutter can also be emotional, mental or psychological. This kind of clutter can often be most difficult to clean out of our lives. This kind of clutter distracts us or re-enforces negative self-images or continues to reopen old wounds. This kind of clutter makes us feel unhappy, stressed out, angry, or even guilty.

While the physical clutter around us might be more noticeable to others, it is easier to remove. It just takes determination and a realistic appraisal of the value of things. Clearing out old animosities, guilt, sorrow and pain, however, is even more important if we really want to enjoy the second stage of our lives.

My advice to all retirees who want to experience a feeling of a new freedom and a fresh outlook on life is: DE-CLUTTER. Start with the "stuff" that is cluttering your environment. If something has real value, but you don't need to keep it, give it to someone who will appreciate its value.

Remind yourself that if you haven't used or read something in over a year, you don't need it. A first step is to get rid of anything you have been saving to which you have access on the internet. This, for example, is a great way to get rid of stacks or boxes of newspapers, magazines, and the like. A little de-cluttering will give you a great sense of freedom and space. It's a wonderful feeling.

Start de-cluttering your psyche. Deal with unresolved guilt: make apologies, make peace. Put old animosities and anger to rest - recognize it, ask yourself if it really matters any longer, move beyond it. Deal with old sorrows and pain. Make the decision to put them to rest.

Finally, you can start the fun part of de-cluttering your mind. Make a list of all the ideas and activities you have stored up to do someday. Prioritize your list. Discard those things that just are not that important any longer. And make a plan to do the things you still want to do.

De-cluttering will give you a new sense of freedom, focus and direction. Your home will also be much safer.

Dr. Cynthia Barnett is an author, teacher, life coach and a leading authority on how to "re-fire" and reinvent by making the rest of your life the best of

your life. For more articles and tips on how to rejuvenate yourself in retirement, visit <http://www.doctoreynthiabarnett.com>

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## **Conquer Clutter to Work More Efficiently**

### **By Christina Jorgenson**

A disorderly work space is often difficult to de-clutter. Nevertheless, it's extremely important to conquer clutter in offices (at home or elsewhere) because working in an organized environment can save you precious time and help you to be more productive. The good news is that it can be easy to reduce clutter that has accumulated in your office - if you follow the advice below.

The first thing to do is to conquer clutter on your desk top or work surface. Move all items from the desk to a table. Next, begin to return them, one by one. The first clutter organization trick is to only put back things that you use every day. If you have a computer, clean the clutter on your desk by getting rid of redundant objects like calendars or calculators. Are you really using all the different pencils and pens that were sitting on your desk every day? Reduce clutter further by keeping just the ones you use daily on your desk and placing the rest on a table within reach. Return only the items you use regularly on the desk top, keeping everything else in a place that is out of sight but accessible.

Arrange your incoming and outgoing mail trays on the table near the desk. Also make sure you have designated places for files, bills, and other papers. To reduce clutter created by paperwork, devote a few minutes in the morning and a few minutes at the end of the day to get your documents organized. All it takes is ten minutes or so every morning and evening to de-clutter, organize and tidy up all the papers in your office or work area. I always advice people who need to conquer clutter, whether in their homes or work places, to make a list of the clutter organization tasks they need to complete each day. Cross off the tasks you have completed every morning and make a new list of what you need to do that evening. Seeing the progress you have done (in black and white on paper) will encourage you to continue to reduce clutter in your office.

Every office really should have bookcases or shelves in it. Shelves are very practical when you need to reduce clutter on your desk top; you can keep many of the articles presently cramping your desk on a shelf where they will always be accessible. You may already have a shelf or a bookcase in your office. In fact, you may be looking at it right now, shaking your head at the

mess of items it is holding. If this is the case, you obviously need to conquer clutter in that part of your office as well. Remove all books you no longer have a need for or that you don't use regularly and arrange them in a box or container to be stores away. Remember to makes a list of the contents of each box for the next time you need to use one of the books. After about a year if you have not needed to refer to them, start thinking about giving (or selling) the books to someone who can use them.

When you are cleaning an office, you should not ignore all the tangled wires behind or under your desk. You must conquer clutter in this space because it will make any repairs or services you need much faster, saving you time you can use to be productive. One way to de-clutter, organize and clean up all the tangled electric wires is to use various colors of little round stickers. Pick a separate color for each appliance. Stick one sticker at each end of the corresponding wire (the end going into the wall socket and the end plugged into the appliance) and a few of the same-color stickers all along the wire. The next time you need to service (or move) your computer, you won't have to spend time on all fours trying in exasperation to locate the right wire. You can clean the clutter of electric wires over several days if need be.

If you are persistent and devote a few minutes each day to your clutter organization chores, you can easily conquer clutter that has accumulated in your office. It's amazing how a de-cluttered office can increase efficiency. When you walk into a clean, organized office space you will be filled with a sense of determination that you didn't have before. At the end of the day, rather than hastily fleeing the clutter and mess as you now do, you may actually enjoy spending a couple of extra minutes relaxing in the orderly work environment you have created.

Christina Jorgenson is a married housewife with 3 children. After years of living with a messy and unorganized family, she decided to change their lives by clearing out all of the clutter. During this process, Christina developed a system for organizing and de-cluttering that she has shared in her book, *Reduce Clutter Information*.

For more information please visit: <http://www.ReduceClutterInfo.com> [<http://www.ReduceClutterInfo.com>].

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## **10 Clutter Solutions**

### **By Linda Samuels**

Clutter can infiltrate all areas of our lives or just a corner. We can be comfortable with our clutter or completely overwhelmed by it. Are you looking to make some changes? Below are some of the most common areas that clutter collects and some simple strategies to manage them.

1. Paper Clutter - Be honest. Do you have to keep as many papers? If released, could you easily replace them IF you needed to? Statistics show that we only retrieve 20% of the papers we file.
2. Clothing Clutter - Be ruthless. Clothing clutter management begins with asking good questions. Does it fit? Do I feel fabulous wearing it? Does it look good on me? When was the last time I wore it? Can it be donated, consigned or given to a friend?
3. Toy Clutter - Less is easier. How many trucks, dolls, super heroes, balls or magic wands are enough? Less toys means easier maintenance, better organization, and less overwhelm for you and the kids.
4. Electronic Clutter - Establish boundaries. With 24/7 potential access and availability, setting limits about how much electronic noise you allow during the day is essential. Protect yourself and your time by turning off beeps, taking "tech-less" hours, and minimizing the sources of digital input.
5. Mind Clutter - Release thoughts. Our minds can feel as cluttered as our spaces. Too much activity "upstairs" can make us lose focus and feel frazzled. Try a brain download by transferring thoughts onto paper, computer or voice recorder.
6. Calendar Clutter - Evaluate schedule. The "too busy" syndrome is often a function of saying, "yes" without considering how that affects our stress level. If you're overwhelmed by overscheduled days, consider these questions: What is on my "yes" list that I can convert to a "no?" What can be delegated? How much downtime do I need or want in a day?
7. Gift Clutter - Move on. Receiving gifts that we don't like, want, or have room for is another source of clutter. You do not have to keep them. Let go.

Remove the guilt and the clutter by permitting those gifts to move on. Exchange, donate, or re-gift.

8. Handbag Clutter - Quick sort. An assortment of things collects in our handbags from empty wrappers to expired ticket stubs to receipts that need to be filed. Take 5 minutes at night to do a quick clutter check. Remove all items that are expired, no longer useful, or belong elsewhere.

9. Space Clutter - Reclaim control. Excess clutter can cause stress. It's no fun to hunt for hidden items, trip over paper stacks, or negotiate through overflowing closets. Pick one area to begin organizing and de-cluttering. Determine use for that area. Re-route items elsewhere that don't belong. Be ruthless about remaining contents. Release what isn't useful, you no longer want, or has overstayed its welcome.

10. Someday Clutter - Don't postpone. Keeping things because you "might" need them someday are a source of clutter accumulation. When you hear yourself uttering the "someday" phrase, ask these questions: Is it worth the space? Is it worth the mental energy? Is it likely I'll actually need or use it? Is my focus on "someday" preventing me from fully living and enjoying now?

Taking action and working on just one of the cluttered areas can greatly reduce your stress and restore some balance. What area is calling your attention? What is your next step?

Compassionate, enthusiastic professional organizer and coach, Linda Samuels, CPO-CD invites you to visit <http://www.ohsoorganized.com> to sign up for your free monthly e-newsletter with bonus "Organizing Tip 101" series.

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## **Simple Ideas to Clean the Clutter in Homes**

### **By Christina Jorgenson**

If you can barely control the disorganization in your home and you have no idea how to conquer clutter building up around your house, this article is for you. You will learn some simple ideas to help you clean the clutter that is robbing you of the peace and quiet you need. You'll find that it's actually easy to un-clutter your home, regardless of how large your family is or how much clutter they produce. All you need are patience and time.

You should understand that the longer people wait to start on clutter organization, the more difficult it is to de-clutter homes, so please do not procrastinate! The easiest and most effective method to clean the clutter and organize your home once and for all is to do it one room at a time. Select a room to start with. For the purposes of this article, we'll assume it is a bedroom. To de-clutter bedrooms, you'll have to deal with three main issues: clothes and bedding thrown any which way on the floor and furniture surfaces, de-cluttering and organizing closets and dressers and conquering clutter hidden away under the bed. Do you feel like backing out already? Hang on - cleaning the clutter in bedrooms is not hard to do. You can do it all in about one hour!

Just spend ten minutes a day for six days (that's one hour) on the task, and you will be rewarded with the clean, organized peaceful bedroom of your dreams. First start to reduce clutter than you are tripping all over (clothes piled high on the floor). Why are they there? Because there is no convenient place to put them; you need a laundry basket or two. How many of us hang up the clothes we try on, but decide against? How many of us traipse back and forth between our bedrooms and laundry rooms each time we need to dispose of dirty clothing? Buying a couple of small hampers to place under your bed (one on each side) is a simple clutter organization solution. Pull them out every evening so they'll be will available to toss your clothes into when you get ready for bed. Shove them back under the bed in the morning. Putting a third hamper in the closet will also help to de-clutter bedrooms. There, you've already solved one of a main bedroom organization problem (clothes on the floor)!

It's time to de-clutter closet space. Again, spend just ten minutes every day to clean the clutter in closets. Take all out-of-season clothes out and put

them away in bins or boxes to store under your bed. Now there is more room in the closet and it will be easier to de-clutter, organize and clean. Empty your closet and re-arrange clothing in separate compartments (assign one area for shirts, another for sweaters etc.). To de-clutter closets properly, consider specialized shoes storage (shoes bags or racks). This will conquer clutter on closet floors - and save you from looking for the other shoe when you are already late for an appointment. If you have been persistent and organized, you'll be proud and pleased with your clean, organized closet.

Dresser drawers are notorious for all the useless clutter they can hold. To reduce clutter in dressers, throw away things like old socks and underwear that are no longer fit to wear. Get rid of clothing that you haven't come near in years, regardless of its condition and resolve not to keep items you don't want simply because you feel guilty getting rid of them. You won't be using any of this stuff, but others might. So why not pack them up and donate them to charity? Or make yourself some money selling them at a rummage sale?

Now, put on some music and thoroughly clean the uncluttered room. You'll be surprised at how quickly you can clean an area that is organized. If you don't enjoy cleaning, promise to reward yourself once you're done (a small shopping spree, a relaxing bath...). Make sure that anyone sharing the room understands that they must keep it tidy. I can promise you that after you clean the clutter successfully in one or two rooms, you'll be eager to un-clutter every nook and cranny in your house.

Christina Jorgenson is a married housewife with 3 children. After years of living with a collector/hoarder husband and 3 messy and unorganized children, she decided to change their lives by clearing out all of the clutter from their home and start a new clutter free life. During this transformation, Christina developed a passion for an organized and uncluttered life and has written a book based on her experiences and the knowledge she gained, *Reduce Clutter Information*, that has helped many others to organize their homes, offices, and lives. Visit my site or more articles on reducing clutter in your home [<http://www.reduceclutterinfo.com/category/reduce-clutter-articles/>].

For more information please visit: [<http://www.ReduceClutterInfo.com>].

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## **Understanding Clutter - Frequently Asked Questions**

### **By Amanda E. Johnson**

Do you have questions about clutter? Are you looking for information to reduce clutter in your life? If so you have come to the right place. By gaining a better understanding of clutter, you will have taken the first step toward de-cluttering your life.

#### 1. What is clutter?

The dictionary describes clutter as:

- "things scattered in disorder"
- "to litter with things in a disorderly way"

Although the dictionary officially defines clutter, to me clutter is anything we do not need, want, or use that takes up space and creates disorder in our life. Clutter is not limited to a category. It can range from clothes to magazines, books, newspapers, toys, trinkets or even furniture. These are just a few of the items that can clutter up one's life. Almost anything you own can become clutter if you let it get out of control.

#### 2. How is a Clutterer defined?

A clutterer is a person that becomes overwhelmed by their stuff. A clutterer is emotionally attached to their belongings, but is not so emotionally attached that they are unable to part with items if they really need to. Many clutterers are people that are disorganized and fail to find the time to declutter; therefore, things just pile up.

#### 3. What is a Hoarder?

Hoarding is the excessive accumulation of items. Hoarders become so emotionally attached to everything they are unable to differentiate trash from items of real value. Hoarding can be a psychological disorder that creates health and safety issues in the life of the hoarder and those around them.

#### 4. Difference between a Clutterer and a Hoarder.

Being a clutterer does not mean you are a hoarder. Clutter results from the inability to keep up with household chores. Unlike the hoarder, the clutterer knows the value of items and has the ability to let go of items if they only found the time to de-clutter. Hoarders lose the ability to distinguish between items of value and junk. To the hoarder everything has value and the hoarder

is unable to throw anything away. Hoarding is a psychological problem that may require professional treatment.

#### 5. What are the negative aspects of Clutter?

At times do you begin to feel claustrophobic, frustrated and that your life is starting to spin out of control. If this is the case it is quite possible to trace those feelings back to clutter. Clutter creates tension and tension leads to frustration and a loss of control. Clutter affects all aspects of your life; this includes your emotions, your professional life and your view of the future. Eliminating clutter clears the negative forces out of your life that keeps you from reaching your peak performance.

#### 6. How to begin de-cluttering.

De-clutter is no different from any of the other tasks we face on a daily basis. The hardest part of any task is getting started. Once we get started we find the rest of the task becomes easier to conquer. The following are a few simple steps you can take to begin de-cluttering.

- First and foremost you must want to de-clutter and bring order to your life. If you are not mentally ready to begin de-cluttering there is no reason to start the process.
- Second you must be emotionally ready to part with items that no longer have value for you. The de-cluttering process involves parting with items you no longer need or use. Be prepared to break the emotional ties you have with belongings you will be throwing out.
- Third is to visualize what you want your uncluttered space to look like. Get a picture in your mind and work toward that goal. Keeping your mind focused on the outcome will bring it into your reality.

Now that you have yourself mentally prepared to declutter the easiest way to begin de-cluttering a room is to get three boxes.

- Label Box #1 - Give-a-way
- Label Box #2 - Throw-a-way (Line with garbage bag for an easier way to throw out your trash)
- Label Box #3 - Put-a-way

Pick a room and pick a starting point within the room to begin your cleaning. My suggestion is to start at the entrance. From your starting point begin to systematically work your way around the room in a clockwise direction. Do

not skip any areas. Every item within the room should be looked at. It may belong where it is, if so leave it. If not, place it in one of your three boxes. It won't be long before your give-a-way box fills up and you will have to decide what to do with these items. Here are two options for you to consider.

- You can donate your items by taking them to the Goodwill or your local thrift store.
- Another option would be to list your items for sale on eBay or Craigslist and make yourself extra cash.

As you go through this process you will begin to realize how many items are out of place. Once Box #3 (put-a-way box) is full stop decluttering and put those items where they belong. Continue this process until you have removed all the clutter within the room. You will find this a very easy and systematic way of removing clutter.

## 7. Benefits of removing clutter from your life.

There are a number of benefits that come from removing clutter from your life. The following are a few examples of how reducing clutter will improve your life.

- Improve efficiency and free up time  
By living in a clutter free environment you will find you have more free time in your life. Knowing where items are located means you will not be spending hours trying to locate something you are looking for.
- Peace of mind and emotional calmness  
Have you ever heard the saying "Clutter on the outside leads to Clutter on the inside?" When you live surrounded by clutter, tension builds inside you. Clearing away the clutter around you, will relieve much of the stress and tension you are feeling within.
- Increase the space you live in  
A de-cluttered space gives you a feeling of openness and freedom. Did you know that organized items take up much less space than disorganized items. By organizing and de-cluttering you will give yourself more space in which to live and work.
- Save money

The question you may be asking is how can de-cluttering save money? For many people, their items are so disorganized that when they need something they are unable to find it. Instead of spending hours looking for an item, it becomes more convenient to go out and buy a new one. Knowing what you have and where it is stored will save you money by not buying duplicate items.

- Locate items you forgot you had

As your de-cluttering process begins you will find items that you forgot you owned. Some of these items will be useful and you will want to incorporate them into your everyday life. Other items will have no value to you and it is time to throw them out or give them away. Getting rid of items you no longer need will free up valuable storage space.

- Feel better about your home and your life.

Organizing and de-cluttering will give you renewed pride in your home and how you live your life. You will no longer be embarrassed or ashamed to invite guests over because your house is a cluttered mess. Not only can you take pride in your de-cluttering accomplishments, your spirit will be renewed and you will have gained a greater level of self esteem.

Amanda Johnson is a Clutter Free Enthusiast who enjoys helping others live a clutter free life. To learn more about Clutter Free Living and the benefits it will bring to your life, check out Amanda's website here

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**The opinions expressed in this ebook by the authors are their own. This ebook should be used for the suggestions and tips that might begin your own journey to de-clutter your life.**