

How to Declutter

by Marla Cilley - The FlyLady

Taking 15 minutes each day to declutter an area, using the 27-Fling Boogie, and clearing your hotspots are among some of the most powerful tools you can use to create a more peaceful home. Remember: You cannot organize clutter - you can only organize the things you love!

I've included my tips on how to declutter. Put your home on a diet. If this is difficult for you, try reading one of my favorite books, "Clear Your Clutter with Feng Shui" by Karen Kingston.

- 1. When to Declutter:** Decide how often you are going to declutter a zone. Do a little every day - use a timer. But be warned - this can become compulsive! Once you get started you will want to clean like a banshee! Don't burn yourself out! Only do small amount at a time. The house did not get dirty overnight and it will not get clean overnight. When you set the timer you can only do two sessions at a time. This goal may seem unattainable right now, but you can do it in little pieces. In a couple of months, the whole house will be decluttered.
- 2. Decluttering Equipment:** You will need garbage bags, boxes, magic markers, and a dust rag. Label the boxes "Give Away", "Throw Away", and "Put Away". Line the "Throw Away" box with a plastic garbage bag.
- 3. Set your timer:** for 1 hour (or 30, 15, or 10 minutes - it doesn't matter how long). Just do the job as fast as you can and do not pull out more stuff than you can put away in that length of time. This means just one drawer, one closet (or even one shelf in one closet), one magazine rack, or digging under just the furniture in the zone. Not all of them at once!
- 4. Start at the entrance to the room:** Then, work your way around the room clockwise. Do not skip a spot. Whatever happens to be next, just do it.
- 5. Declutter Away!** With boxes at your feet and dust rag in your waistband, start off by cleaning out and getting rid of the things that do not belong in this room. Put garbage in the "Throw Away" box, donations in the "Give Away" box, and stuff that goes somewhere else in the "Put Away" box. Don't worry that you do not have a place for everything right now. By the time you finish you will. That's a promise from FlyLady!

6. **What to declutter?** Things to ask yourself as you get rid of your clutter:

- * Do I love this item?
- * Have I used it in the past year?
- * Is it really garbage?
- * Do I have another one that is better?
- * Should I really keep two?
- * Does it have sentimental value that causes me to love it?
- * Or does it give me guilt and make me sad when I see the item?

Cleanse this room of everything that does not make you SMILE.

7. **Sing this song:** "Please release me, let me go" as sung from the stuff's point of view. It needs to be loved by someone and if you don't love it - GET RID OF IT!

8. **Get rid of the garbage!** When the "Throw Away" box gets full, pull out the garbage bag, close it, and put it in the trash can, the pickup truck, or wherever you keep your garbage. Put a new garbage bag in the "Throw Away" box and keep on Flying until the timer goes off.

9. **Donations:** When the "Give Away" box gets full, seal it off, and put it in your car. The next time you are out, you can donate to the area thrift shop. Do not save your clutter for a yard or garage sale, you will be blessed by giving it away. The value can be deducted on your income tax. Remember you are trying to get rid of clutter - not relocate it somewhere else in your home. Now, grab another box, label it "Give Away", and get back to work.

10. **"Put Away" Stuff:** When the "Put Away" box gets full, take the box in your arms and run around the house (good thing you have shoes on - right?) and put the items in the room where they belong. If they have a place, put them there, if not put them in the room where they logically belong. By the time you have finished you will have a place for everything and everything will be in its place.

11. **Timer Goes Off:** When the timer goes off, you have to put away all the boxes, but first you have to empty them all. Go as fast as you can.