

DE-CLUTTERING YOUR HOME

prepared for BAIP by Kenneth Weinberg, March 24, 2011

- set long-term and short-term attainable goals
- a place for everything and everything.... logical spots are close to where things are needed
- less frequently-used items can be stored in less accessible spots
- most regularly used items should/can stay out
- declutter one room at a time
- declutter one area of a room at a time
- declutter in set, small increments of time every day(15 minutes, using an egg timer) - OR-
- set aside an entire morning or afternoon every week
- have boxes ready, marked: keep, sell, donate/freecycle, toss.
- don't agonize!
- “how many do I need?”
- When did I last use vs. how does this make me feel?
- Be wary of the word “later” as in “I'll read these magazines later.”
- “too much stuff” vs. “not enough good storage space” vs. messiness
- ask for help if you need it
- reward yourself

TIPS ON KEEPING YOUR HOME DE-CLUTTERED

- “60-second rule”: if it will take you 60 seconds or less to put something away in its proper place, do so rather than just “ dropping it anywhere.”
- “neat” is not the same thing as “organized” or “decluttered”set aside regular time each week to put things in their designated places
- keep a box handy for collecting items you will discard
- set up a simple filing system for papers and maintain it!
- in/out box to help maintain current paperwork
- use chairs and tables for their intended purpose, not for additional storage
- make room for new: keep 10% of all storage spaces open for new item(closets, cabinets, drawers, file cabinets)
- before bringing a new item into your home, know where you will keep it and if it duplicates something you already have, discard the original
- read websites, blogs, books, magazines to get new ideas about organization
- re-evaluate your organizational needs as circumstances change in your life

A GUIDELINE: HOW LONG TO KEEP PAPERS

IMPORTANT NOTE: I collected this information from various sources and while to the best of my ability, I find this info to be accurate, I urge everyone to **first check with your accountant or tax preparer before discarding any financial or tax-related paperwork**; there may be very real reasons why your financial expert may suggest that YOU keep certain paperwork for a longer period of time.

- tax returns and supporting docs- 7 years
- investment statements – as long as you own the securities + 7 years (capital gains/losses)
- dividend receipts- until you receive your annual statement and then keep just annual statement
- bank statements- 1 month if you have online access; otherwise until you receive your year-end statement which you can keep 1 year
- retirement plan statements – 1 year.
- ROTH IRA statements – until you retire
- paychecks – until you receive your W2 and have reconciled these
- w2's- until you retire
- bills – 1 year for taxes
- credit card statements – either until you receive year end summary or if you have online access, then shred after checking
- insurance policies – life of the policy + up to 7 years in case of late claims
- apartment improvement receipts – until property is sold + 7 years if tax-related
- sales receipts – for life of warranty

Keep forever:

- vital docs (birth, death, marriage, adoption, military, etc)
- wills, powers of attorney, medical directives
- medical history docs
- retirement and pension records
- educational records

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