

Clearing the clutter

Do you ever wish your house had more space and less clutter? More order and less chaos? Many people let their belongings take over their home and it's not until it comes time to prepare it for sale that they take action and clear the clutter.

CLEANSING your home of old, damaged and unwanted items can be a satisfying experience and it also maximises space to bring out the true potential in your property. But while it may sound simple, just knowing where to start, and deciding what stays or goes, can be daunting. Here are some practical tips to achieving a roomier home.

Be organised

Decluttering your home can be a sizeable task but by being prepared and planning ahead, you can quickly get on top of the job at hand. Sort belongings into four categories: keep, donate, sell and dispose. Use charity collections to cull items still in good condition and council pick-ups for hard-rubbish removal.

Be patient

Start with one room, attack it, and complete it before moving onto the next. Set yourself small, achievable goals – clear one benchtop, declutter one shelf or bring order to a single drawer – to avoid being overwhelmed by the

task. Each room in the home should have a vision and the items within should reflect this. A spare room can easily become a wasteland of homeless belongings if it does not serve a specific purpose.

Be pragmatic

Out with the old to make space for the new. Go through each drawer and cupboard in your home with boxes labelled "donate" and "dispose" beside you. Bathroom cabinets, laundry cupboards and the kitchen pantry can become a jungle of half-used, out-of-date packets and bottles. Throw away items past their use-by date. Clothing you have not worn in over a year will most likely never be worn again and can be donated. Pack away and store each season of clothing to create more space in your wardrobe.

Be ruthless

Ask yourself the tough questions. Do I need this? Will I use that? Don't hold onto sentimental items you never look at – take photos to preserve the memory without the clutter. Try and get rid of as much as you can. If you have two of one item, question whether you need the second. If you get stuck, introduce a "maybe" pile to return to later.

Be clever

Storage solutions have become a sizeable product category, with a variety of tubs, boxes, drawer dividers and other cost-effective ways to group and store your favourite things. Store pantry staples in clear, well-labelled containers that stack. Use shelving and wall hooks in the garage to organise items and save space. Plastic tubs, which can sit on shelves or slide

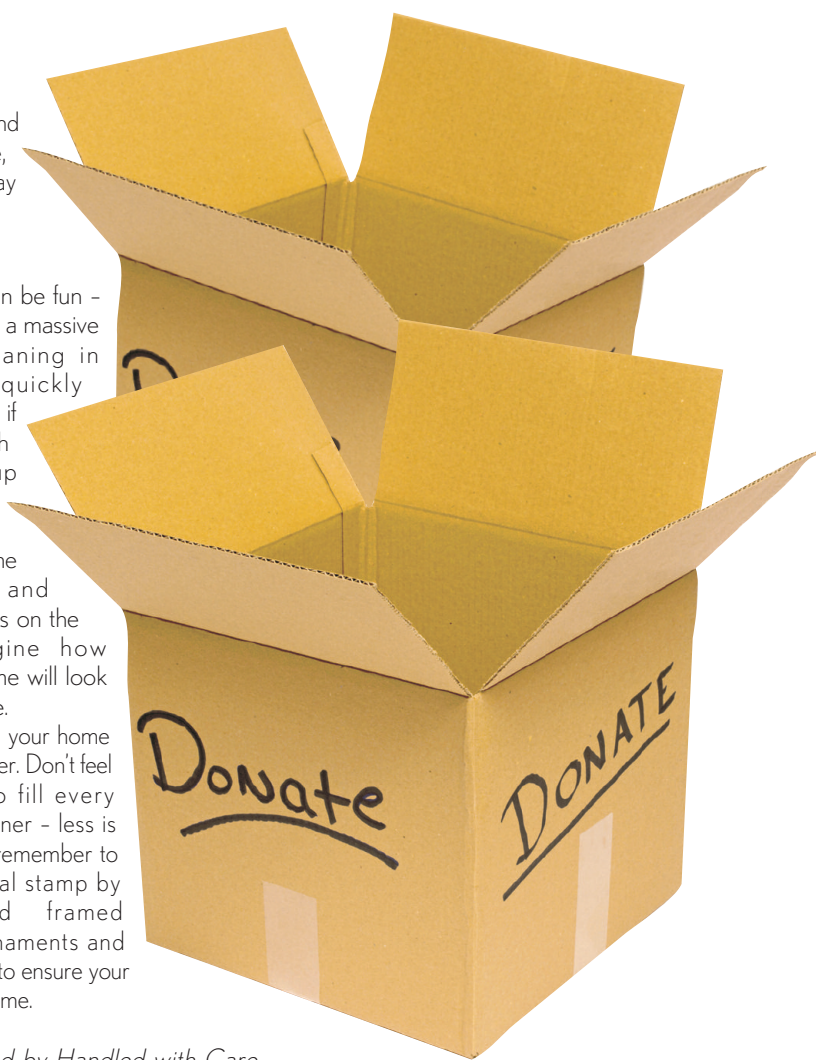
into storage units and are easily portable, provide a great way to house toys.

Be happy

Decluttering can be fun – what may look like a massive exercise of cleaning in disguise can quickly become enjoyable if you tackle it with someone. Turn up the music and sing while you work. If you become overwhelmed and disheartened, focus on the outcome. Imagine how amazing your home will look when you are done.

Create space in your home by clearing the clutter. Don't feel like you need to fill every cupboard and corner – less is more. But always remember to add your personal stamp by dotting around framed photographs, ornaments and other special items to ensure your house feels like a home.

◆ Article supplied by *Handled with Care*, which specialises in the co-ordination of retirement and aged-care relocations as well as deceased estates. Visit www.handledwithcare.com.au or call 1300 185 866.



Go through each drawer and cupboard in your home with boxes labelled "donate" and "dispose" beside you.

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