

Too Much Stuff? Start Here

One small step can make the whole project feel more possible.

START SMALL

This is not a plan to clear the whole house today. You do not need to decide whether to move before starting. Choose one manageable action. Progress matters more than speed, and sentimental or difficult decisions can wait until you have more energy, information or support.

1. Choose an easy starting point

Choose one small, low-emotion area. Select all possibilities; choose one to begin.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ One kitchen drawer | ☐ Duplicate kitchen items |
| ☐ One bathroom cupboard | ☐ Expired household products - proper disposal |
| ☐ One shelf | ☐ A small storage-room section |
| ☐ One box of obvious donations | ☐ One coat-closet category |
| ☐ Old towels or linens | |

LEAVE DIFFICULT CATEGORIES FOR LATER

Do not begin with photographs, important documents, heirlooms, jewellery, collections, grief-related belongings, an entire basement or garage, or anything creating immediate family conflict.

2. Set a stopping point

Choose one. Stopping at the planned limit is acceptable.

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ 10 minutes | ☐ 15 minutes |
| ☐ One drawer | ☐ One shelf |
| ☐ One box | ☐ Five items |

3. Sort into simple categories

Choose one destination for each item.

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| → Keep here | → Sell |
| → Keep for the next home | → Recycle |
| → Give to family or friends | → Dispose of properly |
| → Donate | → Decide later |

Limit Decide later to one labelled container or defined area. Before choosing Sell, ask whether the likely return is worth the time, listing, messages, pickups and storage. Ask a qualified appraiser about specialized items.

4. Ask four questions

Use these prompts when a decision is not obvious.

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|---|--|
| 1 Do I use it? | 2 Would I bring it to my next home? |
| 3 Does it have a clear purpose or meaningful connection? | 4 Is keeping it worth the space, care or moving effort? |

5. Protect important and private items

Set aside identification, legal documents, tax and financial records, medication, photographs, digital devices, keys, valuables and items that may require appraisal.

- Use secure storage for private documents, valuables and keys.
- Use appropriate shredding for paper with personal information.
- Remove personal data properly before a device leaves your control; get qualified help when unsure.
- Ask a qualified appraiser about specialized or potentially valuable items.
- Use official municipal or regional guidance for hazardous or restricted materials.

DO NOT GUESS

This worksheet does not set record-retention periods, values or disposal rules. Ask the appropriate professional and use current official local guidance.

6. A seven-step starter path

Follow these in order or spread them over more than one week.

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|--|---|
| 1 Day 1: Choose one small area → | 2 Day 2: Remove five obvious items → |
| 3 Day 3: Fill one donation bag or box → | 4 Day 4: Flag one item for family input → |
| 5 Day 5: Gather labels or boxes → | 6 Day 6: Spend 15 minutes on another easy area → |
| 7 Day 7: Review progress and choose the next step | |

7. When help may save time

Select all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Decisions repeatedly stall | ☐ Physical work is difficult or unsafe |
| ☐ Family members disagree | ☐ There are hazardous materials |
| ☐ There is a firm deadline | ☐ Disposal or donation is unclear |
| ☐ There are large quantities | ☐ Packing and moving need coordination |
| ☐ Items may be valuable or specialized | ☐ An impartial person would help |

Possible help: professional organizer; move manager; mover or packer; auction or estate-sale professional; appraiser; donation pickup; recycling, disposal or junk-removal service; secure shredding; qualified tradesperson. Confirm services, fees, insurance and suitability directly.

8. My first action

Starting area

Time limit

First category

Person who may help

Planned date

When I finish

COMPLETING ONE AREA IS PROGRESS

Use the Downsizing Decision and Planning Guide to explore whether moving makes sense. Use the Completion and Moving Guide once a move is proceeding. Rob helps with real estate planning and service categories; specialized questions belong with the appropriate professional.