

A Fresh Start Decluttering Checklist

Decluttering doesn't have to happen all at once. Starting small — one space at a time — can make your home feel lighter, more organized, and easier to manage. This practical checklist is designed to help you move at your own pace, whether you're simplifying everyday life or planning ahead for a future move. Each step you take brings you closer to a calmer, more intentional living space.



Start Small (Quick Wins)

Begin your decluttering journey with simple, achievable tasks that deliver immediate results. These quick wins build momentum and motivation without overwhelming you. Focus on visible surfaces first — the changes you can see right away will inspire you to keep going.

1

Clear One Flat Surface

Choose a kitchen counter, entry table, or desk. Remove everything, wipe it down, and return only what truly belongs there. A clear surface creates visual calm.

2

Handle Old Paperwork

Recycle or shred old mail, outdated documents, and papers you no longer need. Set up a simple system to prevent future paper pile-up.

3

Toss the Expired

Let go of expired coupons, old manuals for items you no longer own, and outdated lists. These items serve no purpose and take up valuable space.

4

Return Misplaced Items

Walk through each room and return items that migrated from their proper homes. This simple habit prevents clutter from accumulating over time.

Closets & Storage

Your closet should contain only items you actively wear and love. When clothing becomes clutter, getting dressed becomes stressful. Take time to honestly assess what serves your current lifestyle and let go of the rest.

- Remove clothes you haven't worn in the past year
- Donate items that no longer fit or suit your lifestyle
- Let go of worn-out shoes, coats, or accessories
- Organize what remains so everything has a place

A streamlined closet saves you time every morning and helps you rediscover pieces you'd forgotten you owned. Quality over quantity creates a wardrobe that truly works for you.





Kitchen & Pantry

The kitchen is the heart of your home, and a cluttered kitchen makes meal preparation frustrating. Start with expired items — they're easy decisions that create immediate space. Then tackle the extras: duplicate tools, gadgets you never use, and containers without lids.



Check Expiration Dates

Discard expired food, spices, and condiments. Donate unopened, non-expired items you know you won't use.



Simplify Tools

Remove duplicate utensils or single-use gadgets collecting dust. Keep only what you actually use regularly.



Match Containers

Clear out mismatched containers and orphaned lids. Invest in a simple, stackable system that works for your space.

Bathrooms & Laundry Areas

Bathrooms accumulate products quickly, but most of us use the same few items daily. It's time to pare down to what you actually need and love. These smaller spaces are perfect for quick decluttering sessions that deliver satisfying results.

01

Dispose of Expired Items

Get rid of expired medications, vitamins, and personal care products. Check dates on sunscreen, makeup, and lotions — they lose effectiveness over time.

03

Refresh Linens

Donate worn or excess towels and linens. You don't need 15 towels for a household of two. Keep what's in good condition and actually gets used.

02

Simplify Beauty Products

Toss old makeup, dried-out nail polish, and hair products you never use. Keep only current favorites that make you feel good.

04

Organize Storage Spaces

Simplify under-sink storage with small bins or organizers. When everything has a designated spot, maintaining order becomes effortless.

Living Areas



Your living spaces should feel restful and inviting, not crowded. Every item on display competes for your visual attention. By editing what you keep, you create room for the things that truly matter.

"Create open space instead of filling every surface. Less visual clutter means more mental clarity."

- Remove decorative items that no longer feel meaningful
- Donate books, magazines, or DVDs you no longer use
- Let go of extra throw pillows or blankets
- Embrace negative space as a design element

Paper & Digital Clutter

In today's world, clutter isn't just physical — it's digital too. Both types drain your energy and make it harder to find what you need. Tackling paper and digital clutter together creates systems that work seamlessly.



Physical Papers

Shred old bills and statements you no longer need. Organize important documents in one clearly labeled place. Create a simple filing system that's easy to maintain.

Digital Inbox

Unsubscribe from emails you never read. Create folders for what you need to keep. Delete or archive old messages to reach inbox zero.

Digital Files

Delete duplicate photos and files you no longer need. Organize what remains into logical folders. Back up important files to cloud storage for peace of mind.

Sentimental Items (Go Gently)

Sentimental items are the hardest to declutter, and that's completely normal. These objects hold memories, connections, and emotions. The goal isn't to eliminate sentimentality — it's to curate what you keep so you can truly honor and enjoy those memories.



- **Set Loving Limits**

Choose a specific box or bin for keepsakes. This container becomes your boundary — keep what fits and truly matters.

- **Be Selective**

You don't need to keep everything to honor a memory. Choose the most meaningful pieces that spark the strongest connections.

- **Photograph First**

Consider photographing items before letting them go. You preserve the memory without the physical storage burden.

- **Permission to Pause**

Give yourself permission to take breaks. Emotional decisions require energy. There's no rush to sort through everything at once.

 **Helpful Tip:** If you're unsure about an item, box it up with a date. If you haven't opened the box in six months, you probably don't need what's inside.

Final Thought

"Decluttering is a process, not a deadline. Every small step adds up."

Whether you're creating breathing room in your current home or planning ahead for a future transition, starting early gives you options — and peace of mind. Each item you release makes space for what truly matters in your life right now.

Remember that progress isn't perfection. Some days you'll clear out an entire closet. Other days you'll manage one drawer. Both count. Both matter. The key is consistent, gentle forward movement at a pace that works for you.

When you declutter with intention rather than urgency, the process becomes less about loss and more about gaining clarity, space, and freedom. You're not just organizing your belongings — you're creating a home environment that supports the life you want to live.



🏡 MOVE WITH MICHELLE

Ready When You Are

If you ever have questions about preparing your home for a future move, downsizing, or simply planning ahead, I'm always happy to help. Transitions tend to go more smoothly when you start with a clear, organized space.

Michelle Clemons, REALTOR®

Your Trusted Real Estate Guide in Joplin and Nearby Communities

📞 **Call or Text:** 417-438-5018

🏢 **Charles Burt Realtors:** 417-782-1234

✉️ **Email:** michelle@michelleclemons.com

🌐 **Website:** michelleclemonsrealtor.com