

# De-Cluttering and Organizing Your Home: Tips and Strategies

## *How to get started with downsizing possessions*

1. Make a list of all the de-cluttering projects you want or need to address. Keep each project specific, such as “Sort linen closet outside primary bedroom” or “Sort books on desk – discard old manuals.” Avoid broad projects like “Sort basement” or “Sort all books.” Each project should be something you could accomplish in a few hours.
2. Rank your list from easiest to hardest.
3. Make a 2 or 3-hour appointment in your calendar.
4. At the appointed time, start sorting the items in the easiest category on your list. Avoid distractions while you work. Turn off your phone, if possible.
5. Ask yourself hard questions: When was the last time I used this? Why do I even have this? Does this make me happy?
6. Physically separate items you will NOT keep. Bag up clothes, pile books for donation. Physically move these items away from the items you will keep. The items you decide to keep can stay right where you found them.

7. Have a maybe pile for hard to decide items. Quickly move such items into the maybe pile. Do not let a tough decision derail the entire process.
8. Reward yourself at the end of the session! Have a cookie, watch something fun on Netflix, or call a friend and brag about all that you accomplished.

**What to when one person in the family wants to downsize and another doesn't?**

- First, remember that this is a sensitive topic and we all respond differently to how much stuff we think we should own. Patience is critical when you are navigating an issue this sensitive with your partner.
- We recommend starting with easy areas first – maybe the basement or the back of a closet that neither of you has been into in a few years. Instead of asking your spouse or partner to “just get rid of everything” try starting with small conversations, like, “Could you commit to sorting through the basement with me on Saturday afternoon?”
- De-cluttering is not something we are all naturally skilled at but, like many other skills, it just requires a little effort to start to get good at it and make some progress.

## *Options for selling things*

The re-sale market is dismal right now. If you know anybody who has gotten married in the past 15 years or so, you may have noticed that they probably didn't register for silver or china. These things which our families cherished, and some of you have cherished, are – sadly – not sought after by younger generations. So, as a result, the price you can get for them has plummeted.

If you have jewelry, sterling silver, fine art (art that is by an artist who has auction records), or mid-century modern furniture, you may have something to sell. You can send photos to Katie Hustead ([katie@papermoonmoves.com](mailto:katie@papermoonmoves.com)) and she will share them with Sheri Mason, the appraiser who has presented at GNPS events. Sheri can take a very quick look and let you know if you have something worth trying to sell. Most people do not have things worth making a large effort to sell.

## **What about trying to sell things on your own? EBay, Craigslist, Chairish, etc.?**

These are all options available to you, but it takes a lot of time to sell things on these sites and it also takes a certain amount of expertise – for example, deciding how to price things.

- PLEASE: do not invite anybody you don't know into your home to buy things from you. This is the perfect opportunity for them to look around and see the nice silver you have in the cupboard, and get tempted. We mostly work with elderly clients and many of our clients live alone so we never allow any strangers into our clients' homes for this very reason.

- Other options: have a group yard sale – invite a handful of friends to bring things over to your stoop one nice weekend in the spring and spread out everything you all have to sell.
- See if the flea market in front of PS 321 will rent GNPS a booth one Saturday. Then you can all bring things to sell and make a fun day of it. (I don't know how easy this would be to accomplish, but it's worth looking into!)

### *Options for Donating Things*

It is a lot harder to donate things than it should be. This is frustrating because when we have nice things to donate, we all feel that it should be easy to give them to someone who could really use them. As you prepare to make donations, keep in mind that all the organizations accepting donations are non-profits with limited staff and resources. And with COVID, places have not always kept consistent hours. It is always a good idea to confirm a place is accepting donations before bringing things to them.

If you call to arrange a donation pickup, be sure to confirm that they will be able to come into your home (some places will ask that you bring things to the street for them). Also please note you will almost always need to pack things yourself. Most donation sites do not have the resources to pack. You should ask about how you can get a donation receipt, if you need one.

If you are planning to bring things to a donation site, it is always a good idea to call first and make sure they are accepting the things you have to donate and to confirm the hours you can bring things.

## **Places that offer donation pickups:**

### **Big Reuse**

[www.bigreuse.org](http://www.bigreuse.org)

ONE 12TH St., Brooklyn, NY, 11215

Ph: 718-725-8925

#### **They will generally take:**

- Clothing, appliances in working order, architectural/home details (wood, etc), furniture, hardware, garden furniture, home goods, tools, etc.
- If you have a lot to donate, they will pick up

### **City Opera**

222 E 23rd St, New York, NY 10010

Ph: 212-684-5344

Pack all clothing items in large garbage bags, hard items in boxes, and furniture should be empty and ready to move.

#### **They will generally take:**

- Clothing in good condition (no children's clothing), wooden and upholstered furniture (no beds or sleeper sofas, no exercise equipment), dinner plates, bowls, and drinking glasses (no utensils, pots/pans, or appliances); books in good condition (no textbooks, encyclopedias, or magazines)

### **St. Mary's**

Ph: [\(718\) 529-6070](tel:7185296070)

Website: [stmarysclothingdrive.com](http://stmarysclothingdrive.com)

St. Mary's will come take bags of clothing right from your front stoop. Call or visit their website to schedule a pickup.

#### **They will generally take:**

- Clothing (men's, women's and children), shoes, towels, linens

### **Hour Children**

Ph: 347-632-8293 ext. 320.

Website: [www.hourchildren.org](http://www.hourchildren.org)

12-10 36<sup>th</sup> Ave Long Island City

#### **They will generally take:**

- Clothing in good condition; Furniture in good condition (no bookcases, beds, sleeper sofas, recliners, or exercise equipment); kitchen and house wares; new toys (no stuffed animals or used toys); newish electronics (no large appliances like washer/dryers or refrigerators); Hour Children does not accept books currently.

## Places to drop off clothes:

### Housing Works

<https://www.housingworks.org/donate>

Ph: 1-888-493-6628

- The location on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the corner of Garfield Place is open and generally accepting drop offs. Call (718) 636-2271 for hours and to discuss what you will be bringing.
- Housing Works says they offer pickups, but we find them difficult to arrange.

### Salvation Army\*

<https://satruck.org/>

Ph: 1-800-728-7825

- The location on Atlantic Avenue between Nevins and Bond is open but last time we went there they sent us to another location 10 minutes away in Gowanus, so – if you bring things to them, be prepared to drive to the second location, if necessary.

## Where to Donate Art Supplies

### Materials for the Arts

33-00 Northern Blvd, Long Island City, Queens

Ph: 718-729-2007

#### **They will generally take:**

- Art books—only creative and performing arts related (no magazines or auction catalogs)
- Art supplies—paint (1-gallon cans or less), brushes, glue, tape, glitter, crayons, markers, etc. (no spoiled or dry paint, no rusty cans)
- Paper— drawing pads, reams of copy paper, foam core, matte board, seamless backdrop rolls (no newspapers, cardboard boxes, scrap paper)
- Picture frames, stretcher bars, canvas, easels
- Beads & jewelry, trim & sewing notions
- Fabric—rolls and large pieces (no scrap, no clothing)
- Audio & Video equipment, digital cameras & tripods (no darkroom equipment)
- Theatrical lighting & clip lamps (no fluorescent light bulbs)

- Computers (nothing over 4 years old) and Flat Screen TVs (no tube TVs)
- Musical Instruments
- Folding tables and Chairs—especially rolling office chairs & folding chairs (No beds or sofas)
- Office supplies & desktop printers (no toner cartridges)
- Ladders and power tools (no scrap wood, wood with nails and screw in it, sheets of glass, marble slabs, or sample books)

## **Other resources that might be useful**

### **Junk haulers:**

- The Junk Luggers – call to describe what you have and they will send a truck out to give you an onsite estimate of how much it will cost to remove it all. (212) 982-1284
- Panorama Galleries – Alex Panora, (347) 219-4046. Alex will come provide an estimate to remove things from your home.

## ***How to prepare for a move***

1. Only use movers who are recommended by someone you trust. Ask a friend or neighbor who has moved recently or reach out to Paper Moon Moves for our recommendations.
2. Only use a mover who is willing to come to your home to see what you will be moving and give you a free estimate. Your mover needs to see your home so they will know where they can park, what your building rules are, and other details like this. During COVID, some movers are opting to do a FaceTime or other virtual assessment. If you do this, be sure to show the mover the entrance to your home/building and any stairs they will need to use.

3. Review the estimates with someone you trust. Make sure you understand all the charges: packing materials, hourly charges, and additional expenses you may be assessed.
4. Have a friend with you on moving day. It will be a stressful day. You will have a group of movers all over your home, asking you lots of questions about what to pack and what to leave. Don't attempt this alone.
5. If you have valuable and or breakable items, make sure your insurance policy will cover any damages during a move. If not, ask your mover to sell you additional insurance (often called Valuation Coverage).

Thank you for joining our Zoom Session! Don't hesitate to reach out to me with specific questions:

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(917) 374-1525

Operating for over a decade, **Paper Moon Moves** has managed and overseen hundreds of moves for New York City seniors.