

7 Decluttering Habits to Steal from People Who Are Moving

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(Image credit: [Lumina/Stocksy](#))

Ever watched in awe as a friend set aside endless bags of clothing to donate in preparation for a crosstown move? You don't have to wait until the stressful days before a big move to feel that same freedom. Here, seven ways to emulate the decluttering ways of movers, without having to book a moving truck:



(Image credit: [Joe Lingeman | Apartment Therapy](#))

1. Start with the small stuff.

Items like takeout containers, sauce packets, old magazines, expired toiletries and plastic/reusable bags are taking up a lot of space and are—most likely—giving you very little satisfaction. So why not start your purge here? "These items aren't typically laden with sentimental weight and toss-out decisions come more easily," Annie Draddy, co-founder of [Henry & Higby](#), a professional organizing and styling company in New York City, says. "And when it is time to move out won't you be happier not having to sort through items like this?"

2. Be brutally honest.

Go through your belongings as if you really were moving. Jennifer Jung, an organizer and home stager at [Lemonade Bungalow Interiors](#) suggests asking yourself a couple questions for each item: Would you buy it again? Do you totally love it? Do you use it often to justify using the space it takes up? If you say yes to at least one of these questions, keep. Everything else you won't miss.



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3. Graduate to the bigger items taking up space.

Once you've cleared out the little things, you've got the hand of the move-out-but-not-really-move-out declutter game. Take linens, for example. "You really only need one extra set of linens per bed so clear out your linen closet of any extra sets or single pieces whether they are fitted sheets, top sheets or pillowcases," Draddy says. Another example is cords and chargers. Take a hard look at what you actually use in your home, and get rid of the stray cords and older pieces. Some local charities might accept the donated cords that are still useful, too.

4. All hail the labelmaker.

If you do decide to keep certain things that you just can't part with—but don't use every day—pack boxes as if you're going to be moving. "Use the top and sides of boxes to write down what's inside each box and from what room the belongings came from," Jung says. Keep the ones you still want at the front of your storage unit, basement, or wherever you have space—you'll know right where an item is if you suddenly need it.

5. Appreciate the power of the empty-out.

When you move, you empty closets so why not try it when you're not even considering leaving your current home? Turns out, by completely emptying everything out of a particularly packed closet and sorting items by color and type, you'll make some incredible discoveries. "You'll probably find you have multiple black or white blouses due to the fact that some were buried," Jacquie Denny, the co-founder of [Everything But the House \(EBTH\)](#), an online marketplace for secondhand goods, says. "Choose one or two of each and put the others into a donate or sell pile." Also base the number of basics you actually need on how frequently you do laundry: If it's every five to seven days or so, then that's the number of jeans or everyday pants you really need. Keep your five to seven favorites, give the rest a hard look, and donate or sell what you can live without.

(Image credit: [Lauren Kolyn](#))

6. Dedicate an area as the "declutter zone."

Find an area of your home or a corner of a room to stash any items that you will be getting rid of can be moved to. Each item should be categorized as either "donate," "sell" or "trash." Rachel Rosenthal, an organizing expert at [Rachel and Company](#) suggests putting the items in each category into a large, durable bag. "Once the bag is full, make sure to close it so that you are not tempted to go back through and second-guess your decision," she says. "Remember: You decided to get rid of the item for a reason."

7. Set deadlines.

Now that you've organized your castoffs, set a "donation date" every month so that you're guaranteed to get unwanted items out. "Always schedule a donation pick-up appointment or carve time out of your schedule so you're sure to drop off items at a local donation center," Rosenthal says. After all, you may not be moving anytime soon, but that's no reason to hop off that clear path to decluttering!

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