

How to Declutter Towards Downsizing

Why declutter before downsizing

If you've decided it's time to downsize, great! You've made the decision, well done. You may have found your new home, or maybe it's still a concept at this point in time, either way, you're probably aware you will need to start letting go of things that won't be needed in your new life.

But then you may be feeling a bit overwhelmed - where on earth do I start? If you've lived in the same home for a long time, inevitably, it will be full of "stuff". You will need to consider the size of the place you are moving to – will it all fit? If, after a good reality check, you realise it won't, then it's time to declutter.

How to start

One thing you can do is look around at all your furniture. If you are in a 4 bedroom home moving to a 2 bedroom, then you will probably need to get rid of a couple of beds at least. Ask your family and friends if they, or anyone they know need a bed and you may be able to move them on that way.

Take a photo on your phone of any other furniture that you would like to rehome and send it out to all your family and friends (ask a young one to do it for you if you don't know how!). If there are any family heirloom pieces that have been in the family for years – make sure you give every family member the option to have it before either selling or donating it.

If you decide to sell your furniture, depending on what it is, you could sell it at auction through various auction houses or online. If it's not to be sold, then you can donate it to a charity such as the Salvo's. Some of them will pick up from you depending on where you live. Some areas don't have this service. There are some great Facebook pages where you can give furniture away for free which means people come and pick it up from you. I utilise these all the time.



Recycle



Donate



Trash

Linen cupboard

Now you've dealt with the furniture, it's time to delve into the cupboards! The linen cupboard is a fairly straightforward one to start with. Get yourself a garbage bag and start with one shelf at a time. Take all the contents of one shelf and plonk it on your bed. Pick up one item, have a good, long hard look at it – if it's faded, pilled, torn or stained, put it in the garbage bag. If you want to keep it, fold it and put it aside. If you want to give it to someone, create a separate pile. If you're giving away a single bed, then maybe give the single bed sheets along with it. Once you've finished that shelf, put back the items you are keeping and move onto the next shelf. Before you know it, it's done!

Now, the bag of old sheets and towels you've gathered – did you know you can recycle these rather than throw them into landfill? Here in Bowral we have a Sheridan Outlet store and they take sheets and towels of any brand and recycle them. Brilliant! Vets will take old towels and blankets and some mechanics will take old sheets for rags.

Wardrobe

Ok, let's be honest here, how many of you have spread out from the wardrobe in your bedroom into the spare bedroom? Or even the 2nd and 3rd?? I have! (Shhh, don't tell anyone!). If you aren't going to have the luxury of 4 wardrobes to spread your clothes through in your next home, then maybe it's time for a cull.

Take the easy path, start with the smallest wardrobe first. Get 2 garbage bags this time – different colours if possible – eg: black for donating, blue for recycling. Pick up the first item of clothing, have a good, hard, long look at it and decide: Do I still wear this? Does it still fit? Is it in need of repair? If you answered no, no and yes, then it goes in the blue bag. If you still wear and love it, then leave it in the wardrobe. If an item is in immaculate condition and you no longer want it, then pop it in the black bag to donate. Please do not donate clothing that is in need of repair, pilled or stained.

Once you have filled your bags, pop the black donate bags in the clothing bins near your charity shop. The old clothing in the blue bags can be recycled as opposed to landfill. H&M clothing shops will take this clothing and recycle it. As does our tip at Moss Vale – there are special recycled clothing bins now, a great initiative.



Declutter Regularly

Bathroom

Bathroom cupboards can get out of control so quickly. When you're downsizing it's a good opportunity for a big cull and clean-up, it will make you feel all tidy and organised again. Get yourself a chair and a bin. Open one drawer and start throwing! Old makeup, gone! Out of date tablets tossed! Any products that haven't been opened (all those well intentioned Xmas presents that you've never used – more talcum powder anyone?!) can be donated, so put them into a box for charity. In no time this cupboard will be cleared out and tidy again – it will feel great!



Bathroom

Kitchen cupboards

Who has an annoying, deep corner cupboard that seems to go back for miles? I bet you've got things buried back there that haven't seen the light of day in years! Time to get down on your hands and knees (or if you can't, ask someone with working knees to help) and dive right in! Bring it all out and pop it on a bench. If you have large platters that you used to use when hosting dinner parties for 12, or special fish serving dishes and utensils, or 10 casseroles – time to move it all on! Chances are your lifestyle has changed and you won't be needing things like this anymore. Just make sure they are clean and dust free before donating them to charity. Be ruthless!

If you have 20+ mugs time to cull them. Get rid of all the mugs with chips or broken handles you keep meaning to glue back on but never do. Same with plates and bowls, you don't need to eat off a plate with a crack in it, let it go. Old saucepans that are scratched or rusty could go too. You can recycle these for free at the tip, or Myers have a saucepan recycling section too. Tupperware containers that are missing lids can go in the recycling bin (if they have the recycling triangle on them). Charities don't tend to want Tupperware either – there's way too much of it apparently so try and pass on any excess to people you know.

Once you've done a really good cull, give yourself a pat on the back and think how nice will it be in your new kitchen to have just the things you love and use regularly?



*Declutter
Regularly*

Pantry

If you have been blessed with a big walk in pantry, chances are it's full to overflowing. I bet there are things on the top shelf you haven't seen in 10 years! I don't recommend you get on a ladder to pull things down, please ask someone young to do it, or, if you are able to get up a ladder, only do it when someone else is there with you.

I would suggest starting at the top and work your way down, go shelf by shelf. You could do one a day if needs be. It will give you a feeling of achievement each time you finish a shelf. If you find still in date non-perishable food that hasn't been opened and you don't want it, there are food pantries you could donate it to rather than throwing it away. Ask your local charities or churches.

Books and music.

I love books. I don't think you can ever have too many of them. However, only if you have the proper storage space for them, not in piles on the floor. If you decide to cull your books and want to donate some, please note that charities only take fiction in immaculate condition. If the pages are yellow, brown or the cover slightly torn, they won't take them. Pop them in your recycling bin. Charities won't take Readers Digest, but some people collect them for the look of them – Facebook is a good place to get rid of these. With non-fiction, charities will take autobiographies, cook books and certain non-fiction, but not specific topics like Biology or French etc.

With music, if you have a collection of vinyl records from the 60's, 70's and 80's you could be sitting on a gold mine! These are very collectable at the moment. Nobody wants classical records - sadly they will go in the red bin. I heard recently that cassette tapes are making a comeback so if you know who is buying and you have good stuff, you may be able to sell these too. CD's can be donated to some charities, a lot won't take them though, just depends who's on the door on the day!

Spare bedroom (AKA The Room of Doom!)

If you have a spare bedroom that has become a dumping ground, this could be full of all sorts of things. This is probably the one | room you cannot, will not and don't want to tackle! In which case, call in a professional like me! We love a challenge!



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