

turn clutter *into* **CASH**

Getting rid of stuff you no longer need is a great feeling, but turning it into hard cash feels even better.

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ave you ever considered that half of what you have stashed away in your cupboards, in your garage, under your bed, or standing right there in front of you

in your lounge, is stuff you don't like, hardly use, would in fact be happier without – and that could earn you some decent cash?

William Morris, a founder of the Arts and Craft Movement, said: 'Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.'

Possessions possess you

When you consider the amount of energy you put into acquiring things, storing, cleaning, repairing and insuring them, it's quite easy to see how having too much stuff can be a burden. Most of us own too much and often get caught in the cycle of accumulating more. 'By losing the



attachment to material possessions, you free yourself up to enjoy them and let them go when you don't enjoy them any longer,' says professional organiser, Judith Penny.

Home is meant to be a tranquil retreat from the chaos of the outside world. It isn't meant to be a place of stress, where the arrival of an unexpected guest causes anxiety as you are too embarrassed to let people see the mess you live in. After helping to declutter hundreds of homes, Penny says many of her clients go on to declutter other aspects of their lives. 'Getting rid of clutter is a powerful therapeutic tool, which brings clarity and order and enhances your sense of wellbeing. After a clear-out, people feel energised and often go on to sort out other areas of their lives which are disorganised and overloaded. It is a simple way to ignite meaningful change in your life.'

Not what we have, but what we enjoy, constitutes our abundance

John Petit-Senn, poet

Ready? Set? Go!

• **Have an action plan:** Whether you dedicate a weekend to it, or chip away for an hour a week, don't underestimate the amount of time it's going to take. If you've got only one hour, tackle just the hanging stuff, or your drawers. You don't want piles moving round from one cupboard to the next only to find them stashed away a year later. The trick to decluttering is to get it out of the house.

• **Be systematic:** Start with what you can see first, sorting things from top to bottom, and left to right. Then open up a cupboard. Tackle one area at a time; clear it and then move on to the next.

• **Create a temporary clutter zone:** Decide on a space in your house – the closer to the front door, the better! Place containers like bags, boxes or baskets marked into the following categories: 'sell', 'charity', 'toss', 'maybe'. Go through each room shelf by shelf, and examine every item with a critical eye. Ask yourself, 'Is this either beautiful or useful? Do I really need it? When last did I use this? Is there any good reason I'm holding on to it?'

• **Invite two friends to pop around for tea and ruthless honesty.** Allow them to give your home a once-over in case there is something obvious that you have overlooked, like your dusty old childhood pram that has been sitting on the top shelf of your pantry for the last 15 years. Add it to the sell pile.

Cash for your clobber

Decide which items are worth selling, and how. Here are some options:

• **Flog it on www.gumtree.co.za.** It's free, super easy to use, localised and up-to-date. All you need to do is log in, enter details of what you're selling, attach photos if you have a digital camera and hit 'post ad'. People viewing your stuff will send you an email via

the Gumtree site, so your email details will always remain undisclosed. It's up to you to give them your details. Also try www.ebay.co.za, www.bidorbuy.co.za or www.junkmail.co.za.

• **Have a jumble sale,** take a stand at a local second-hand market or car-boot sale (check your local paper for details) and spend the day in the sun flogging your junk. Pack a picnic; do it with a friend who's also on a declutter mission, and you may find yourself having an entertaining day.

Tip: Don't expect to get what you paid for it. You're there to get rid of stuff.

• **For your great-aunt's ball-and-claw drinks cabinet,** pop an email to one of the local auction houses. There are smarter ones like Sotheby's for more valuable heirlooms, and dozens of auctioneers around the country (check the Yellow Pages) for your general household clobber.

• **If you spot a second-hand shop,** email them pictures of what you've got to sell. They might even collect.

• **For electrical goods and day-to-day items,** try pawn shops and Cash Converters or Cash Crusaders stores.

Pass it on

Whatever is left over, give to charity. Your junk might be someone else's treasure. For things you feel no charity would want, drop them off at your local municipality dump at no charge. ✦

Get some help

Useful books: *Organise Now!* by Jennifer Ford Berry (Struik Lifestyle) or *New Leaf, New Life* by Dawna Walter (Quadrille)

Contact the Professional Organiser Association Africa (POAA) for a consultant in your area: Visit www.poaa.co.za or email info@poaa.co.za

Visit www.allsorted.za.net; www.beorganised.co.za.

TOP TIPS FOR A CLUTTER-FREE LIFE

(FROM PROFESSIONAL ORGANISER JUDITH PENNY)

1 Don't put it down, put it away.

2 A place for everything, and everything in its place.

3 Think twice before you buy. Bring something home, let something go.

4 If in doubt, throw it out (donate, recycle, toss).

5 Choose quality over quantity.

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