

# Annual cleanup: A great way to celebrate year's end



Have your 2017 bills, mail and papers all become one big pile? Do you have a year's worth of old stuff to sort — and no time or energy to do it? Here's a great way to celebrate the end of one year and the beginning of a new one: Clear away the clutter.

## Why clutter happens

Maybe you're a "saver." Or you're just too busy to sort each new item as it comes in. So you add it to the pile.

But consider this: A chaotic workspace or home slows you down. It can make you feel unmotivated and depressed. It might even hinder clear thinking.

## Organize as a gift to yourself

Give yourself the gift of a calm, orderly space. Try these tips to start:

- **Be reasonable.** Your "stuff" didn't build up in one day. And it won't disappear overnight. Take on too much at once and you may get discouraged and give up.
- **Be strategic.** Begin your project with just one room or area. Finish that before moving on.
- **Be ready.** This is not a clutter-moving party: It's decision time. So have lots of trash bags on hand. Toss or give away things you don't use or really need.
- **Be logical.** Everything you keep should "live" somewhere. You can even label drawers, shelves and files for bills, receipts, mail that needs attention and so forth. Having a system makes it fast and simple to put things away each day.
- **Be kind.** Reward yourself as you make progress. Take a walk, have a cup of coffee or call a friend. Then... back to work.

Believe it or not, once you make a dent in this project, it gets easier. Your reward is a better place to live and work. And you deserve it!

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