

HOME SUITE HOME TRANSITIONS

# ULTIMATE GUIDE TO RE-HOMING BELONGINGS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS





We often hear from people who are looking for ways to declutter their homes and apartments. The reality is that it is not a simple job to scale down personal belongings. It becomes even more difficult as people age – not just because of the years of collecting and living life but because of health and stamina. Simply stated, the older we get, the more difficult it becomes.

Often times, friends and family are recruited allies to help with physical tasks and decision making. If that is an option then it's a good one to leverage however it can sometimes seem like an unsuccessful venture if a proper plan isn't put in place to guide you.

This Guide will help set out a plan and provide resources for making decisions about what to scale down, how to decide and what to do with all the stuff once you've decided.

### **Before you even start**

Before you get into the heart of the matter, there are a few steps to think about:

1. What is driving you to declutter? Knowing why you want to declutter will help guide your decisions. It also helps you visualize what success looks like for you. For example:

Do you need more space? Perhaps you're moving and have too much stuff to fit into a new place.

Do you want to sell possessions for cash-in-hand? What is it you're looking to generate the funds for?

Are you decluttering to make your home safer to live in? Sometimes our stuff can be difficult to maneuver around or be rickety and become a trip/fall hazard.

Sometimes too much physical clutter can lead to mental clutter and you just don't want the stress of managing it all.

Any or all of these reasons could be why you want to declutter.

Or you may have your own alternative reasons. Regardless of your personal 'why', knowing it is the first critical step in being able to actually deal with it.

2. Evaluate the quality of the items you are getting rid of. Be as impartial as you can – removing sentimental value from the equation.

The main categories for items are:

Excellent/like new

Lightly used and originally very expensive

Lightly used everyday/common items

Well used, well loved but antique or unique items

Well used- stained, damaged, worn, marked/imperfect

How you handle items you're parting with is going to vary depending on the item itself, the condition of that item and its potential market demand. Segregating poor quality items may make them easier to part with. But by discerning the quality of the items will aid in your decision as to whether or not to part with the items. I do not think this should be an important factor. Most people have the best quality items they can manage – and they may want to keep it all if it is based on quality

It may not be necessary to keep five blankets but a worn but quality wool blanket might be more effective than 2 lightweight fleece blankets. On the other hand, its wool makes you

itch... then let it go.

Items that are well used and damaged or stained may be more difficult to rehome since no one really wants these. Generally, there are too many options available to need to “settle” for damaged items. One exception is lightly stained or worn blankets and towels can be used at animal shelters for bedding and bathing.

3. Once you get started to remind yourself of your goal and stick to the plan (point 1).

When decision making gets difficult and you're deep in clutter as you go through the process remember why you began. It took you years to accumulate what you have and it is impossible to think you can sift through everything in a day or week or month even. Go at a pace that you can manage but don't lose sight of why you started in the first place.

4. Ease of Donating.

Having an idea of where your belongings will go will help you with your sorting and making sure that items actually leave. If you're planning on donating items to organizations consider reaching out to them to make sure you understand their pickup and removal processes and what they will (and won't) accept. Some donation sites will pick up items that have been bagged, marked and left at the front door. Do not assume they will come into the house to remove items (such as from a basement). Some companies have a “do not enter the home” policy. It is better to ask and confirm.

5. It always gets worse before it gets better.

Decluttering is a process that through its' very nature you're going to have to make a mess before you can reap the rewards. Accept that the mess is just part of the process and keep working through it. Before you know it you will be finished with more space and well on your way to achieving your goal! Reward yourself!

## Now Let's Get Started

### The SSSSecret to SSSSuccess when DeCluttering (4Ss)

1. **Stage** Work Area near area to be decluttered.
2. **Sort** all items from entire work area, collect like items together.
3. **Segregate** with Destination for sorted items:
  - a. Keep; Out; Trash.
  - b. Out will be further divided into Sell, Donate, Family
  - c. Trash will be further divided into recycle, trash.
  - d. Recycle can be further divided into metal, paper, plastics, cardboard
4. **Send** items to their designated destination.

## Hard Truths

Deciding whether or not to part with items is usually the biggest challenge for most people. Here are some questions to ask yourself as you wrestle with the decisions.

- Does it make my life BETTER?
- Will I use it again (honestly!)? If YES, can you use something else instead if necessary. (eg. Can one or two multipurpose tools work instead of specialized tools)
- Do I own this item or does it own me! – feel guilty to get rid of it? why are you attached to it? Never did like it “but it was expensive!” Is it costing you to keep it even now – cost in space, happiness! Let it go!
- Will this be a good use in the limited space you have?
- Broken/Needs repair/alteration – but will it ever get fixed ???
- Clothing, missing buttons (can you manage buttons–or prefer elastic waist? Do you like the style? Will you wear it often?)
- Shoes: leather is dried out and no longer comfortable to wear? Heel is too high? Unsafe?
- Does it fit ... comfortably.... Currently?
- Keeping for the wrong reasons (i.e. out of Guilt). Likely have other items from important people – let the ones GO that make you feel negative such as guilty, sad, or belittled.

## Groups that direct items to people in need:

Many communities have numerous charitable organizations that accept donated items to help people in the community. Check your local listings for these types of organizations.

Organization	What they take
Settlement/New Canadian Centres	Primarily furniture but only when they have specific needs due to a lack of storage.
Community Dining Centres	Mugs, Cutlery, Toiletries, Spices, Coffee/Tea, Non-expired dry and canned goods.
Men's Shelters and John Howard Society	Gently used men's clothing and shoes/boots, new socks, Coffee/Tea, Toiletries, Mugs
Youth Shelters	Home essentials
YWCA and Elizabeth Fry Society	Only accepts new and unused items but they sometimes have thrift shops for used items.
Local Food Banks	Non-perishable food that has not expired
Pet Food Banks	Non-perishable pet food that has not expired

## Groups that use items within their programs:

Consider donating your items to some of these groups to use in their day-to-day programming.

Item	Group
Craft Items and Supplies	Schools, Day Care Centres & Adult Day Care Centres
Projects to ship items to third world countries	Local Church Groups
Cotton Fabrics	Quilting Chapters
Towels, Pet Supplies	Animal Shelters

## Places to sell items:

You will no doubt have items that are still of value that you want to sell. A word of caution, selling directly to people can pose a risk to the seller.

We don't encourage that you allow people to come to your home to purchase an item. If possible, you can meet in a public place such as a busy parking lot or even the local police station (check first). If it is not possible to either ship or meet a person with an item to sell, consider only selling to known collectors and dealers. These are usually businesses who will buy and sell on your behalf. You may not get top dollar but it is safe and secure.

Some online facilitators include:

- Home Suite Home Transitions - can facilitate online auctions, call 705-761-0018
- Kijijii.com: private sales of items by geographic location
- eBay.com: private sales of items: may require shipping
- buysellstuff.net
- Facebook Buy and Sell Groups
- Freecycle
- Canadian Vintage Collections, "city" Ontario
- Bargains and Buys

- Do you have multiples/duplicates: Remember when you were younger and you had to be adapt or improvise—and you would!? Stored away (“I forgot all about that!”)?
- Doesn’t belong to you? Storing for your kids – if they really want it, they should be able to find a place for it.

### ... and if you’re still unsure

- Stay determined and LET ITEMS GO (remember your ‘why’) or;
- If it means that much to you – find a place to:
  - ✓ display it,
  - ✓ use it (now),
  - ✓ wear it and most importantly,
  - ✓ keep only what you Love.

Most people find downsizing can be quite draining. Change is often hard. Try not to dwell on the process but remind yourself of the desired outcome and visualize how much better your space, and your life can be! Don’t expect to get the job done in one day (if it is a big job or it is your first time). You may feel emotionally drained after half a day. Pace yourself and work through it, keeping in mind your goal.

Your physical and emotional expense will pay off if you are honest with yourself and only keep what you love.

### Places that take your unwanted items:

As you begin to eliminate clutter you will quickly find that there are a number of your belongings that don’t need to end up in landfill. Having a plan of where you will take your unwanted items to rehome, sell or recycle will help ensure they don’t end up back in your home or stuck in a pile ‘to go’.... ‘someday’.

You’ve done the hard work to sift, sort and weed through items, it’s only fair to yourself that you actually let go of them.

Here are some Canadian organizations that will take your items. A word of caution, it is best to contact them in advance to make sure that they are currently accepting donations and note the condition of the items they will accept. Most of these organizations have an area office that you can contact.

### Stores that Resell Items to raise funds:

Organization	What they take	Contact
Habitat for Humanity	Focus is on building supplies, household items, small appliances (even when not working as they can often fix them)	<a href="http://www.habitat.ca">www.habitat.ca</a> (click on “Find A ReStore”)
St. Vincent DePaul	Will accept everything and will arrange pick up, or drop off.  Will not accept hazardous	<a href="http://ssvp.on.ca/en/donations.php">http://ssvp.on.ca/en/donations.php</a>
Scrapyards	will pay cash for metal products	Metal can be recycled for cash at wreckers or dropped off at municipal recycle centers.
Canadian Diabetes Association	Accepts a wide variety of items except hazardous/dangerous goods. Will Pick up from doorstep.	1-800-505-5525