Cut the Clutter/Spring Cleaning

Is Clutter a Problem for You?
Do you say, “This house is a mess” more than three times a week?
Do you . . .
• move something every time you want to sit down?
• have piles of paper all over the house?
• spend lots of time looking for things?
Do you frequently hear family member say, “I can’t find it”?
Do you tire of being the family’s chief picker-upper?

Does this sound like you?
If so, it is time to take control of the clutter at your house.

Start with a positive attitude.
Cleaning is a chore, but taking a positive approach will encourage family members to become involved.

Clutter is a family affair.
Choose a convenient time for everyone to discuss plans for clutter control. It is unfair to expect one person to restore order. All family members share the responsibility for picking up after themselves.

Make Time
Set aside several Saturday mornings to work as a family on big cleanups. In each room, start at one spot and work clockwise around the room until you reach your starting point. Use the box approach to sort the clutter. Sort items into boxes labeled Keep, Store, Give Away/Sell, Throw Away and, if you are indecisive, you can use a fifth box labeled Maybe.

The Keep Box
* Return items to their proper places.
* Sort like items together.
* Create “centers” for work, such as cleaning, desk/office, cooking, baking, makeup, tools, studying, hobbies and games, etc.

The Storage Box
Store these items for use at another time.

The Give Away/Sale Box
These boxes could be the beginning of your next yard sale or be taken to a consignment shop to earn some money from your unwanted items. You could also give these items to a secondhand store or charity.

The Throw Away Box
Throw away anything that is broken, ripped, worn or stained. This box could also be a trash can or trash bag. A trip to the recycling center or landfill may also be in order.

The Maybe Box
Go through this box one more time and sort items into the other boxes.

Make a Chart
Here is a sample chart to use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten things to get rid of NOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anything with a stain, hole or tear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing or accessories you like, but look funny on you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purses you no longer use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdated clothing or accessories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratty weekend clothes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing that does not fit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worn shoes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anything of a lower quality than your regular wardrobe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead lingerie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The good coat that will not fit over your other clothes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of Clutter | When to Sort | Who is Responsible |
-------------------|--------------|--------------------|
Newspapers,        | weekly       | John               |
magazines          |              |                    |
Mail, bills, books,| daily        | Jane               |
papers             |              |                    |
Toys and games     | daily        | Susie & Tom        |
Hobby materials    | weekly       | Jane               |
Cleaning supplies   | Daily, Weekly,| Jane, Susie & Tom  |
and laundry        | monthly, and |                    |
                   | annually     |                    |
Tools & Hardware   | Weekly       | John & Tom         |
Clothing           | Every 3 months| Everyone          |
Outerwear          | daily        | Everyone           |

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