

WANT TO SELL YOUR HOME FASTER?

A yard sale and a trash bag just might do the trick...

Here's how to bust your clutter and clear the path to closing!

1. **Start with a list!** Your mission is to go from one room to the next and decide what to keep, store, or trash. But not so fast! While attacking the very first pile of clutter you see may seem like a good idea, it's better to take a step back and create your plan of attack for the whole house *first*.
2. **Think like a stellar seller.** Remember that just because you want to keep an item, doesn't mean that it has to be on display for the open house. Being a home seller is a unique circumstance. We can probably agree that your old baseball collection is a "long-term storage" item, but your large collection of family photo frames or the stack of books that you've read can also be packed away for *short term* storage until you move into your new place. Being without them for a little while will be well worth it in the end!
3. **Work room by room.** Go from one room to the next remembering your mantra: *keep, store, or trash*. Try not to get absorbed into the particular items you are working through, and remind yourself of the task at hand. Consider setting a watch or an oven timer to limit your time in each area—you can quickly get derailed by a stack of bills or nostalgic memorabilia, so the timer will help keep you on track.
4. **When in doubt, hand it out.** Only keep or store items that you truly want and need. Get rid of anything that you are storing that has already served its purpose for your family. Like, perhaps, if you are done with the baby stage for good, but still have onesies and baby gadgets taking up precious storage space. Today is the perfect time to pass those items along to people who can put them to better use, like family, friends or the needy.
5. **Hold a yard sale.** Any items that aren't tossed, stored or donated can be sold. Start by getting a permit, if required, and advertising in the local paper. Remember that your goal is to purge clutter, not strike it rich. So keep things simple and price to sell. Most items will bring about 10% of their current market value. That means that a \$200 gently used coat will sell for about \$20, children's clothing will go for about \$1-



\$3/ea., and a full set of china (12 settings, excellent condition and no missing pieces) might go for around \$100. For smaller items, stick to only a few price points. Get a sheet of colored circle stickers and make a poster identifying the corresponding price for each color. Then just affix the appropriate sticker to each item. And don't forget your *largest* item of all, your home. Be sure it's looking great, and have your agent's cards on hand.

6. **Think on your toes!** Everyone has "stuff" that can't be stored away, but that isn't exactly attractive either. Keep a bin, tote, or a laundry basket someplace handy. Before a showing, grab it, and toss in any messy items from counters or floors. A pretty basket always looks better than clutter. Take it one step further and bring the basket with you as you leave—voilà!—the mess disappears, right out the front door!
7. **Consider off-site storage options.** A storage unit can help move currently unused items out of sight. This doesn't mean that you have to rent one *forever*, but it's a great place to store bulky furniture that might be making your rooms look smaller, or anything that you don't need for the next few months. Label everything and

make a master list of what's at the unit. Remember that you will have access to your stuff—so even if it's not quite as convenient as your own closet, it's not the end of the world if you end up needing something that you stored away. Ultimately, it's better to fully utilize the space that you've rented and move as much clutter off-site as you can.

8. **Go for the drawers.** Utilize drawers to quickly eliminate clutter from counters and floors. Keep in mind that buyers love to open them, especially in the kitchen and laundry room, but they usually only open the *top* drawer. So if you have to stash something in a hurry, go for the bottom one, keeping the top drawer neat and tidy—which sends a great message about how you care for your home.
9. **Make it a daily routine.** As busy as you are, try not to leave clutter busting to a once-a-week activity. It leaves way too much time for messes to accumulate, and you won't be able to clean them up in time, especially if you get a last minute call. Instead, set aside a specific amount of time for straightening up each day. As a result, tidying up will become a more manageable task overall.