

A still life scene on a light-colored wooden surface. In the foreground, a clipboard with a brass clip holds a checklist with five empty checkboxes and horizontal lines. A white pen with gold accents lies on the clipboard. To the left, a wicker basket contains folded white linens and a small white vase with greenery. To the right, a lit candle in a glass holder sits on a book, next to a small bowl of beads and a pair of round glasses. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white fabric.

Room-by-Room Decluttering and Optimization *Checklists*

A Companion to
The Joyful Art of Swedish Death Cleaning

Start with a Moment of Mindfulness



A Gentle Reset Before A Begin

✓	Before I Touch a Single Item...
	I pause before starting.
	I close my eyes.
	I take three slow, deep breaths.
	I feel the air fill my lungs fully.
	I release the breath slowly and completely.
	I repeat until my body feels calmer.

✓	I Ground Myself in the Present
	I notice where I am.
	I feel my feet on the floor.
	I soften my shoulders.
	I remind myself: I am safe. I am not in a rush.

✓	As I Sort Through Items...
	I pause briefly before making a decision.
	I acknowledge the role this item played in my life.
	I appreciate its service before letting it go.
	I allow gratitude to replace guilt.
	I release items gently, without self-criticism.

✓	When Emotions Surface...
	I notice what I am feeling (nostalgia, guilt, relief, sadness).
	I allow the feeling without judging it.
	I remind myself that emotions are temporary.
	I breathe through discomfort instead of rushing the decision.
	I permit myself to take a short break when I need.

✓	Observing Without Attachment
	I observe my thoughts without becoming overwhelmed.
	I remind myself: A memory does not require the object.
	I trust that clarity grows with patience.

✓	Before I End This Session
	I take one final deep breath.
	I acknowledge the progress I made today.
	I thank myself for showing up.

Room-By-Room Checklists



Attic: Honor Your Family History

✓	Attic Decluttering Checklist
	Define the purpose of the attic (e.g., seasonal storage, archive, overflow space).
	Identify essential items to remain in the attic.
	Separate items into categories: seasonal, permanent, sentimental, discard.
	Create zones for different storage types within the attic layout.
	Collect necessary supplies:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear storage bins with lids
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Label stickers and permanent marker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Archival-quality boxes and UV-protective sleeves
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleaning supplies (broom, vacuum, duster)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gloves and dust mask
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Step ladder or attic-safe platform
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Camera or phone for photographing items
	Sort through all stored items.
	Use criteria for discarding: not useful, not beautiful, no significant value.
	Remove unnecessary or broken items from the attic.
	Clean the attic space thoroughly (sweep, dust, check for pests or damage).
	Use clear bins or containers with lids for general storage.
	Label all containers clearly with contents and category.
	Store seasonal items in accessible locations.
	Place infrequently used items in harder-to-reach areas.
	Use archival-quality materials (acid-free boxes, UV sleeves) for heirlooms.
	Photograph and catalog each heirloom item.
	Document item details: name, date, significance, origin.
	Create and store a digital inventory of heirlooms and important items.
	Ensure proper environmental conditions (ventilation, temperature, moisture control).
	Schedule a maintenance review of attic contents every 6–12 months.

Basement: Craft a Functional Storage

✓	Basement Decluttering and Optimization Checklist
	Define the intended use of the space (e.g., storage, workspace, utility).
	Sketch a basic layout with designated zones for different item types.
	Inspect for water damage, dampness, or mold.
	Set up ventilation or install a dehumidifier if needed.
	Collect necessary supplies:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear plastic storage bins with lids
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heavy-duty shelving units
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permanent marker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Label stickers or tags
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gloves and dust mask
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contractor-grade trash bags
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleaning supplies (disinfectant, rags, broom, mop)
	Clear all walkways and entry points.
	Sort items into four categories: Keep, Donate, Discard, Recycle.
	Group kept items by type (e.g., tools, decorations, documents).
	Place grouped items into clear bins.
	Label each bin clearly with contents.
	Install shelving units.
	Place heavy items on lower shelves, lighter items higher.
	Store rarely used or seasonal items in less accessible areas.
	Use vertical and overhead space efficiently.
	Remove all trash and donation items from the premises.
	Clean thoroughly.
	Schedule a recurring maintenance check every 3–6 months.

Kitchen: Streamline Everyday Essentials

✓	Kitchen Decluttering and Optimization Checklist
	Assess the overall functionality of the kitchen layout.
	Identify and list essential tools and appliances used regularly.
	Remove rarely used or redundant appliances.
	Sort utensils and tools; remove duplicates and unnecessary items.
	Review mugs, cups, and dishware; reduce to a practical number.
	Collect necessary supplies:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donation boxes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawer dividers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet organizers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label maker or labels and marker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning supplies (microfiber cloths, spray, sponge)
	Check pantry for expired food; discard accordingly.
	Group pantry items by category (e.g., grains, canned goods, spices).
	Implement “first-in, first-out” system in the pantry.
	Apply the one-touch rule during decluttering (decide: keep, donate, discard).
	Empty each drawer and cabinet; sort and reorganize contents.
	Use dividers and organizers to define drawer and cabinet spaces.
	Establish activity zones (e.g., baking, cooking, prep, cleaning).
	Store items based on activity zones to improve workflow.
	Ensure each item has a designated location.
	Clean all surfaces, drawers, and shelves during reorganization.
	Remove all discarded and donated items from the home.
	Schedule periodic reviews (1-3 months) to maintain organization.

Living Room: a Place to Connect and Have Fun

✓	Living Room Decluttering and Optimization Checklist
	Assess current furniture for functionality and space efficiency.
	Remove any item that is rarely used, broken, or redundant.
	Identify opportunities for multi-purpose furniture.
	Collect necessary supplies:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage bins or baskets for loose items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cable management tools (clips, sleeves, box organizers)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label maker or adhesive labels
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning supplies (vacuum, dusters, microfiber cloths)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trash bags and donation boxes
	Remove clutter from all surfaces (tables, shelves, entertainment centers).
	Evaluate decorative items for aesthetic, functional, or personal value.
	Group similar items and remove duplicates.
	Set a schedule for rotating seasonal decor (e.g., quarterly or biannually).
	Label and store off-season decor in a designated area (attic or basement).
	Organize books, magazines, and miscellaneous items.
	Designate zones for common activities (reading, entertainment, games, hobbies).
	Rearrange furniture as needed to support clear movement paths and zone separation.
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	Implement cable management:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bundle wires together
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mount power strips or routers behind furniture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use covers or clips to conceal cords
	Ensure every item in the room has a designated, logical location.
	Deep clean surfaces, floors, window sills, and behind furniture.
	Remove all unwanted or donation items from the home.
	Schedule a maintenance review every 3–6 months to reassess layout and items.

Bedroom: Create Your Sanctuary of Calm

✓	Bedroom Decluttering and Optimization Checklist
	Assess overall bedroom layout for comfort, accessibility, and visual clutter.
	Collect necessary supplies:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage bins (under-bed and closet)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawer dividers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacuum-seal bags
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hangers (matching or space-saving)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-the-door organizers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning tools (duster, vacuum, microfiber cloths)
	Sort all clothing; remove items that do not fit, are damaged, or unworn.
	Apply capsule wardrobe principles: keep versatile, well-fitting, high-use items.
	Remove clothing kept for aspirational or past reasons (e.g., wrong size or outdated).
	Implement the “one-in, one-out” rule for all future clothing purchases.
	Donate or discard items not worn in the past 12 months.
	Organize dresser drawers using dividers for categories.
	Use over-the-door organizers for shoes, belts, scarves, or accessories.
	Use under-bed storage containers for out-of-season clothes or extra bedding.
	Store items in vacuum-sealed bags if space is limited.
	Install wall-mounted shelves or hooks to reduce floor clutter.
	Designate specific areas for items (e.g., laundry, accessories, reading materials).
	Clean all surfaces, vacuum under furniture, and dust light fixtures.
	Remove all discarded and donation items from the room.
	Introduce calming color palette, updating textiles, replacing or adding soft, dimmable lighting.
	Schedule seasonal wardrobe and room maintenance every 6 months.

Bathroom: Your Personal Spa Oasis

✓	Bathroom Decluttering and Optimization Checklist
	Evaluate all cabinets, drawers, and open surfaces for unused or excess items.
	Check expiration dates on all toiletries, medications, skincare, and cosmetics.
	Remove expired or unused products from the bathroom.
	Sort duplicate items; keep only necessary backups, consolidate where possible.
	Safely dispose of expired medications through local collection programs.
	Recycle or repurpose empty product containers.
	Collect necessary supplies:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Storage bins or drawer organizers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Labels and permanent marker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small waste bin for expired items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleaning supplies (disinfectant, microfiber cloths, gloves)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refill containers or pump bottles for decanting products
	Clean all drawers, cabinets, and surfaces thoroughly before reorganizing.
	Use drawer dividers or small containers to group similar items (e.g., skincare, dental, haircare).
	Limit countertop items to daily-use essentials only.
	Replace worn or mismatched towels with high-quality, uniform sets.
	Upgrade bath mat if worn or stained; select one with good absorbency and texture.
	Replace plastic shower curtain with a fabric or natural fiber option.
	Introduce soft or indirect lighting (e.g., dimmable bulbs, small lamps).
	Add spa-style elements (e.g., candles, diffuser, bath tray).
	Incorporate a humidity-tolerant plant (e.g., pothos, fern, bamboo) if space allows.
	Review and reduce personal care product inventory to essentials used regularly.
	Replace conventional cleaning and hygiene products with eco-conscious alternatives.
	Designate a storage area for backups and bulk items, keeping them out of daily-use zones.
	Ensure all items have a defined storage location.
	Remove all discarded and donated items from the space immediately.
	Schedule quarterly reviews to reassess inventory and maintain organization.

Kids' and Teens' Rooms: a Space That Grows With Them

✓	Kids' and Teens' Room Decluttering and Optimization Checklist
	Involve the child or teen in the process to support ownership and independence.
	Review the entire room for unused, broken, or outgrown items.
	Sort items into categories: Keep, Donate, Recycle, Trash.
	Remove toys, clothes, or gear that are no longer age-appropriate or relevant.
	Designate functional zones: sleep, study, storage, play, relax.
	Collect organizing tools and supplies:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage bins and baskets
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawer organizers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelf dividers or vertical storage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-bed storage containers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hooks or wall-mounted organizers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label maker or picture labels for younger children
	Use accessible storage systems tailored to age and ability.
	Organize school supplies in one area (desk, cart, or shelf).
	Add task lighting for homework or hobbies; soft lighting for rest.
	Curate clothing: remove items that no longer fit or are not worn.
	Add a laundry system that's easy to use and maintain.
	Limit surface clutter—clear desks, nightstands, and dressers.
	Display only meaningful or current decorations.
	Clean all surfaces, vacuum or mop floors, and wipe down furniture.
	Store sentimental or seasonal items in labeled containers.
	Assign a permanent home for every item to encourage tidiness.
	Remove all discarded and donated items promptly.
	Schedule a trip to a local charity to donate these items together with your kids.
	Schedule seasonal or quarterly room reviews to keep up with growth and change.

Garage: From Chaos to Functionality

✓ Garage Decluttering and Optimization Checklist

Identify the primary use of the garage (e.g., parking, storage, workshop, or combination).

Clear the garage space to allow for full access and visibility of contents.

Categorize all items by type and frequency of use (e.g., tools, seasonal items, sports gear).

Remove items that do not align with the garage's intended purpose.

Conduct an inventory of all tools and equipment.

Group similar items together (e.g., hand tools, garden tools, automotive supplies).

Identify duplicates or non-functional items and remove or donate them.

Collect necessary supplies:

- Sturdy shelving units
- Pegboards with hooks and baskets
- Wall-mounted bins or tool racks
- Ceiling-mounted racks or pulley systems
- Labeling materials (tags, tape, marker)
- Safety storage containers for hazardous materials
- Cleaning supplies (broom, vacuum, degreaser)

Install wall-mounted shelving to keep items off the floor and improve accessibility.

Mount pegboards for storing small tools and equipment visibly and efficiently.

Use ceiling-mounted racks for large or infrequently used items (e.g., bikes, ladders).

Place wall-mounted bins or cabinets for organizing hardware and small supplies.

Store frequently used items at eye level or within easy reach.

Store seasonal or rarely used items higher up or in clearly labeled containers.

Assign a designated, labeled location for each category of item.

Store hazardous materials in clearly labeled, sealed containers in a ventilated area.

Keep all hazardous items out of reach of children and away from heat or direct sunlight.

Clean all surfaces and floors before and after reorganizing.

Ensure the garage floor is clear for safe movement or vehicle access.

Remove all discarded, broken, or unnecessary items from the garage immediately.

Schedule biannual reviews to maintain order and update inventory.

