

REVOLVE INTERIOR DESIGNS'

Guide to Decluttering

As professional home stagers, one of our primary responsibilities is to facilitate the editing or “decluttering” of a property as we prepare it for sale. As an objective third party, it’s relatively easy for us to step into a client’s home, recognize and point out the various clutter points to homeowners, and then offer several options and resources to facilitate clearing said clutter. It is however, quite another thing to have to “walk the walk”. With that said, we here at Revolve decided that this Spring, we would put our own advice to the test and declutter one of our biggest problem areas, our office closet/storage area, by following a few key steps and rules.

Have a decluttering goal. Perhaps you are tired of watching that pile of unattended papers grow and grow or maybe you are hoping to use the problem area more efficiently. Whatever the reason, once you have a keen understanding of your goal, then you’re halfway done. For us, the goal was to reclaim some much needed storage space as well as make it more useable. The problem for us is that it would take us way too long to find anything in the clutter (if we found them at all) and as you know ... time is money in business. Essentially, the storage problem was costing us money.



Before



After

Start small. Perhaps the ultimate goal is to fully declutter your master bedroom, but the thought of it may be a bit daunting for you. If that’s the case, break down the project into smaller bite-sized chunks. Declutter a nightstand first. Once that’s done, move on to the dresser. Next, tackle the stuff (and dust) under the bed. Finally, with your newfound confidence, you can take on the dreaded closet. We decided to start with the office closet/storage, but in all honesty, our office is a mess and much more work needs to be done. (Sorry, no photos of just how bad it looks.) Next weekend we’ll turn our attention to the desks. But for now, it’s the closet.

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Empty/clear the space to be decluttered of its contents. For us, that meant emptying out the closet. Be prepared that this task may get a bit dirty, but it needs to be done. Once empty, I'd suggest a light dusting, vacuuming, and cleaning of the space before replacing anything back into the space.

Divide the 'contents' into three piles: discard, donate, and keep. Now it's time for the real work to begin: to go through the contents and determine what to keep, what to discard, and what to donate, sell, or give away (depending on the item's condition, of course). When trying to decide which pile an item should go into, we found that the "snap" decisions were and are usually the best. When presented with an item, if you hesitate in deciding to keep it or if you haven't touched it in a year, then you probably don't need it. (One trick that may help is to get a friend to come by and help you divvy the items into piles ... often times their objective opinions will help you more easily identify trash vs. treasure.)

Carefully and neatly return the items to the freshly decluttered space. As you replace the items, be sure to ask yourself if the items you're keeping really need to occupy the space in question or can they be stored some place else. In going through the contents of the office closet, we found tons of items that should have been kept somewhere else and simply moved them to a more appropriate storage place. As you can see from the photos, we were able to reclaim almost half of the closet. At this point, we thought it best to buy some inexpensive, plastic drawers to better organize the office supplies and items that need to stay in the closet. In the not too distant future, we will add even more storage options for the closet by installing a couple of shelves along the back of the closet above the drawers and are even considering painting or wallpapering the closet's interior a funky color or pattern to add a bit of drama - we are decorators, for Pete's sake!

We are quite pleased with how simple the entire decluttering process went for the office closet and look forward to tackling the desks and other problems area. The best thing is that the whole project took less than three (3) hours to complete (not including the time we spent shopping for plastic drawers). Now that we can "walk the walk", we are confident that you too can successfully and easily declutter your homes and personal spaces.