

Life A-Go-Go

Your Decluttering & Organizing Quick Start Guide



How To Get Started-Decluttering:

Remember, the goal is to keep making progress and overtime it will add up. Even 15 minutes a day adds up to over 11 work days a year (or 3.8 full 24-hour days). Do it at your own pace, as you can!

Prep Supplies:

- Ideally, have black trash bags for trash and white or clear bags for donations. If you ALREADY recycle, have a recycle bin.
- Place donations in a container you don't want back (avoids rehandling the items and is less of a barrier to getting the items out!). Boxes; heavy-duty shopping bags, etc.
- Have a space for items for others, but try to get these out ASAP. Don't wait, send a text to get back to you by this day/time if they want it.
- If you plan to do a lot of decluttering, consider setting up a designated area, such as a table or a corner of your home, for these items. If you are in maintenance, then having a donation bin in your home will help you stay on top of the clutter.
- If you live with others, consider having a separate bin with items for them to approve before donating
- Create a bin for sentimental/memory items, and when you come across these items, toss them like a hot potato into this bin to sort later.
- Create a bin for paperwork and all the money you find!

Prep Yourself:

- This is a skill, and like any skill, you will get better at it over time. Give yourself grace and acknowledge how awesome you are for investing this time into your home and yourself.
- Envision your why for doing this (save money, have more space, feel better in your home, etc)
- Create a plan for how you will tackle decluttering. Do it all in one go and then 15 minutes a few times a week? Do an hour or two a week? Set aside a weekend? Be realistic, but also keep the goal to finish an area even if you have to keep coming back to it.
- How will you dispose of items? It's okay to throw them away if that's what you need to do to get organized. You will be able to save the planet and find the perfect homes in the future when you are spending less time on your clutter. "It's not a cat!"
 - Have a plan for when items will leave. At the end of a long decluttering session, once a week when you go by the donation center, have a free sale on your lawn, etc.
 - Sometimes knowing the cause you are giving to will help you make progress. You may

want to keep a bin for that charity/cause's donations and one for regular donations.

- If you will sell the items make a rule for posting the items, the value you will keep (over \$20 resell), and the timeline.
- Think about what items are no longer serving you. Remember, the money is already spent, and it's okay if you don't want an item. Your needs and interests change; bless someone else with those items and give yourself the space to focus on what matters to you today.

Getting Started Decluttering:

- After the prep, pick an area to focus on. Some people prefer to bounce around, but try to have a goal space that you keep coming back to so you can finish it and have the reward of knowing you can finish a space.
- Take a before picture
- Get some energy flowing with music, body doubling (call a friend, a YouTube declutter with me), listen to an e-book, get a fancy drink, whatever motivates you.
- We like Dana K. White's No Mess Method with some modifications. In this system, you do not pull everything out; you do not make piles; you just pick up the items that are going. This way, if life happens, the space is not worse off than when you started.
 - Start with Trash—This will train your eyes to look at your space differently. Cas recommends the 21 Item Toss to make it a game and push yourself.
 - Next, look for “Duh clutter.” This includes items you know should be gone. It can also include items that are broken and could be fixed, but it's not worth your time to do so. If you are in maintenance mode, this can be when you also tackle to-do items.
 - Depending on your style, take items that don't belong where they go or where you would look for them first (if you wouldn't even think to look for the item, it's likely you don't need it). If there's no space, declutter there until there's room.
 - Personally, we find this distracting, so we recommend having a bin for items that go to other places, and then take it there at the end of the decluttering period. If the room is already decluttered and organized, take time to put it away, but if it's a hot mess express, leave it to come back to in the future.
- Declutter, declutter, declutter!
 - Pro Tip: The clutter is usually not what is out in the open. Those are items you are using. Look in the pantry and closets for items that are taking up room that you are not using so you can move your current items there.
 - Pro Tip: Floor clutter is a threat to your brain. If you can, start clearing the floors first to relieve this mental stress.
- Note items you are struggling to let go of to think about why that is later. Decluttering is really a self-discovery journey.

- Don't clean and organize in this phase, just declutter. These are separate tasks. Only wipe stuff down if it would be hard to do so after you are done.
- At the end of the time, take out trash, move your donations out or to the holding area, text anyone who may want the stuff, and take the items that go to other spaces there if you didn't do it during the session.
- Take an after picture. You will be able to see the difference and items you want to tackle in the future that you may not have even "seen" while you were in the space. These photos can also motivate you for future sessions.

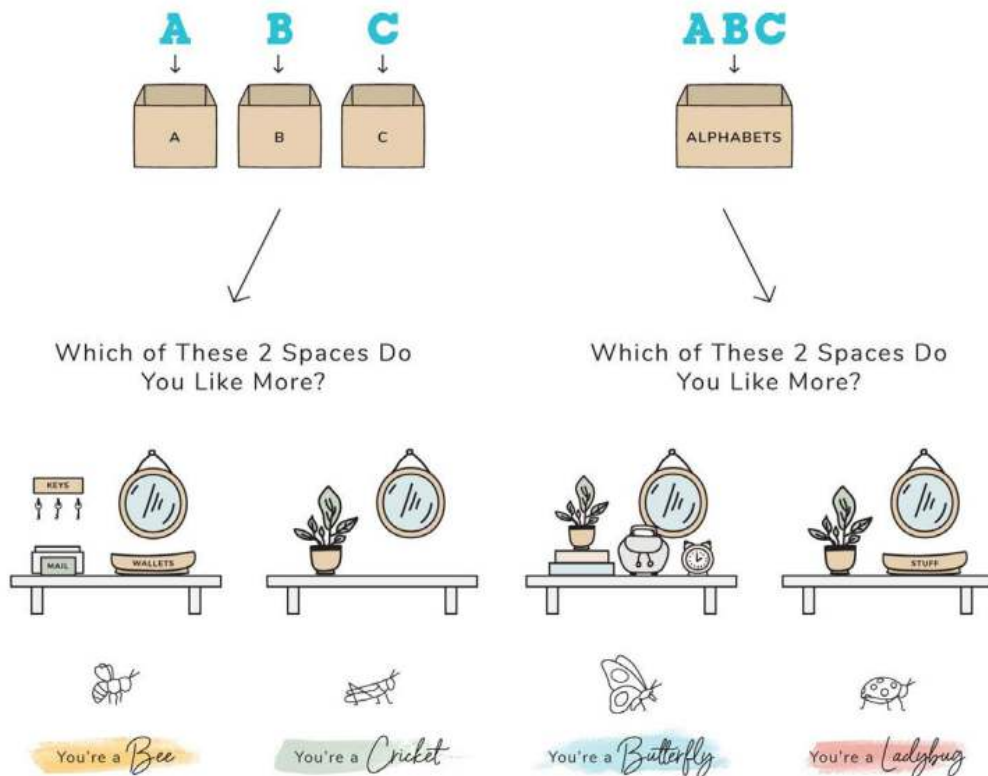
Need More Support?

You can email us at Hello@Life-A-Go-Go.com to have your questions answered for free on our monthly lives, or you can hire either one of us to help with your organization issues:

	<i>Adriane McGraw of Paper & Progress</i> PaperandProgress.com 217-255-3122 Helping individuals get organized through practical home systems, paper management, and clutter reduction that bring ease and clarity to everyday life. Also supports digital organization, workflow optimization, and workplace paperwork — including employee files and annual review preparation — for those needing structure beyond the home. Certified in Organize 365® Paper Solutions & Friday Workbox® and Clutterbug®, Adriane creates sustainable systems that reduce overwhelm and make organization feel achievable.
	<i>Mary Sommer of Squared Away Mary</i> SquaredAwayMary.com Mary empowers everyday people to declutter and create functional, realistic systems that actually work in real life — not just on Pinterest. Drawing from her own journey of learning organization step by step, she brings empathy, encouragement, and practical strategies to those who feel overwhelmed or don't know where to start. Mary specializes in helping clients sort through their belongings, develop personalized storage solutions, and build simple habits that keep spaces comfortable and manageable. Her relatable, judgment-free approach makes asking for help easier and turns getting organized into a sustainable gift you give yourself.

What Clutter Bug Are You (adapted from ClutterBug.me):

Which do you prefer?



Rules for All Bugs:

- There is no perfect “bug”. Having a system that works is the key!
- No one type will fit everyone in every situation, but we want to identify our truest selves most of the time.
- If you share a space, lean with the bug style that is more visual (large labels help with this). A compromise is using the same bins in a muted color for visual simplicity.
- If you share a space and you have different preferences for organizing your items (macro or micro), you may need to lean toward the macro organizer in the most frequently used areas, such as the kitchen. However, you may break down lesser-used categories, like paperwork, to please the micro-organizer. You may also create put-back baskets, like those found in a hardware store, if the organization of a category is very important to you, such as your tools or seasonings.
- Vertical is visual, horizontal is hidden
- When everything is visual, nothing is (you won’t forget you own a toaster!)
- You will take the time to get something, but not the time to put it back. Make it easy to put it back!

The Four ClutterBug Styles:

Cricket-Traditional Organizer-Hidden and micro-sorted

Traits:

- Prefer minimal visual clutter and detailed, micro-organizing systems.
- Crickets often are “a bit of a perfectionist” and will pile their items until a perfect system is in place. Once they have the perfect system, they will follow it to a T.
- Prefer organizing systems within organizing systems.

What works:

- Containers, especially stackable and bento box style
- Labelmaker style labels for all the micro-categories
- Closed storage
- Binders and file cabinets

What doesn't work:

- Getting so caught up in finding the “perfect” organizing system that they never actually set up any systems at all. Start with macro-categories and come back and fine-tune the system later.

Ladybug-Hidden and macro-sorted

Traits:

- They are stressed out by surface clutter. Like to keep their living space clean and clutter-free
- Take pride in having a clean and well-decorated home
- Often shove items into hidden areas of the home, creating a true “Monica’s Closet”

What works:

- Large bins without lids that you can “just throw items into.” Preferably storing these bins in drawers and closets
- Drawer dividers to tame down the shoving instinct
- Pretty baskets and bins or at least solid bins
- Cube organizers
- Creating zones for items

What doesn't work:

- Micro-organized systems. Ladybugs are great at setting these up, but can't maintain them.
- Bins with lids or bins that are hard to access (have to move other items, stacked, etc.)

Butterfly-Visual; Macro-Sorters

Traits:

- You are likely a butterfly if your surfaces are cluttered but your drawers are empty.
- Like to see all of their belongings; Out of sight, out of mind
- Easily distracted by their clutter.
- Have anxiety over organizing because they “failed” using traditional organizing methods, and often these methods hid their items, making them impossible to find.
- Most kids are butterflies.

What works:

- Clear, larger bins without the lids
- Large labels with words or pictures
- Hooks in the entranceway, inside the closet, and on the back of doors
- Open shelving and even removing doors on closets

What doesn't work:

- Hidden and detailed organizing systems, like file cabinets
- Making everything visual. You can go too far, and then it's overwhelming. You won't forget you own a toaster, iron, or light bulbs, so put those items away.

Bee-Visual; Micro-Sorters**Traits:**

- Like to see their important and frequently used items.
- Very organized and may be a bit of an "organizing perfectionist" (think rainbow sorted books and clothing).
- Tend to be crafters/tinkerers and often run into trouble because they like to have all their stuff out while they are working. They also have a lot of stuff for their hobbies.

What works:

- Pegboard organizers. Clear bins, baskets, and jars
- Open shelving
- Project boxes

What doesn't work:

- Micro-systems and closed storage for things they use often or things they love (hobbies)
- Keeping things "just in case" they may need them someday.

Educational Resources:

- Bug Styles
 - Bug Style Quiz-100% Free (no email required):
<https://clutterbug.me/what-clutterbug-are-you-test>
 - Bug Styles Course-Free Mini Course on the Bug Types (you do need to enter an email, but the content is great!)
<https://clutterbug.thinkific.com/courses/what-clutterbug-are-you-mini-course>
- YouTube
 - Cas from ClutterBug-down to earth, ADHD friendly, pushes you for decluttering energy
 - @Clutterbug and her podcast is @ClutterbugPod
 - Cas also has a free 30-Day Decluttering Challenge YouTube playlist to help you with the various spaces.
 - Her website does offer a lot of free printables and information
 - You can see her in action on the HGTV Show *Hot Mess House*.
 - Dana K. White-A Slob Comes Clean @DanaKWhite
 - No Mess Decluttering Method
 - Nikki Boyd from At Home With Nikki—a lifestyle channel on how to optimize your home.
 - Note her older videos are very budget and space-conscious
- Podcasts
 - ClutterBug Podcast-Productivity, motivation, decluttering, organizing energy
 - Lisa Woodruff of Organize365—Paper and productivity, optimizing your home
 - Note Lisa's Sunday Basket system is really great for papers, but it is pricey
 - She outlines how to get your papers under control in her book *The Paper Solution*
 - There are DIY videos on YouTube that show you how to set up a Sunday Basket, one of my favorites is by @ShesinHerApron called "NO MORE PILES! Stop Paper Clutter WITH This 1 Genius Tip!!"
- Course
 - Take Back Your House Course with Cas from ClutterBug, Dana K. White from a Slob Comes Clean and Dawn from the Minimal Mom
 - It goes on sale before each live declutter (so it should be on sale by the end of September) and is about \$100, and then \$10 a year after that. You get four live decluttering sessions, monthly live training calls, a Facebook group, and all the replays.
 - It's really great if you want inspiration, benefit from body doubling, or you want more guidance on your home. They cover almost every area, and while the lives focus on decluttering, the trainings go into organizing and optimization.

Favorite Organizing Products for Any Home:

- Dry Erase Clip-On Labels for Baskets & Bins (sell them at the Dollar Tree around the office/school supplies or Amazon)
 - Pro Tip: Use Wet Erase (not Dry Erase) markers. Crayola Washable Markers will also work and they are also great for labeling leftovers!
- Sterilite® Large Shallow Clear Clip Box 14"x11" great for holding papers that you don't want to lose or have extra papers added, such as a project. Plastic File Box with Lid for long-term paper storage.
- Removable Labels (sold at Dollar Tree) or Scotch Paper Tape. Mini Hair Ties for electronics and cords.
- 13-inch cube units (do not buy the 11-inch; it's tempting for price, but you will regret it), also buy the premium cubes (Amazon usually has the best deal in bulk), and with the hole versus the handle to keep them looking great!
- Waterproof, Freestanding Laundry Hamper, Collapsible Tall Clothes Hamper with Extended Handles-Great for storing seasonal clothes and bedding or extra paper supplies. I usually buy the 75L.
- S hooks and over-the-door hooks for hanging items off of open shelving
- We buy almost all our bins from stores like Menards and Walmart. TJ Maxx and Hobby Lobby are good options if you want visual bins, such as decorative boxes or baskets. Dollar Tree is great around back-to-school and early spring, but be careful as the bins are usually smaller. Always test with items in your home first, and then invest in the bins. They are pricey but will last you years. Bonus take an item with you or find a similar item (like a can of beans) to measure the bins in the store.

Skip on These Organizers:

- Multi Spice Holders that do not have tight-fitting lids (you will lose your spices, and it's visually unappetizing)
- Multi-Drawer plastic storage unit that's all connected-they are hard to clean, impossible to organize, and everything shifts when you open the drawer creating mess, the drawers are also not uniform inside
- Plastic storage shelving is okay if that's all you can afford, but metal is so much better because it will hold its shape, and often the bottom can be positioned above the floor for easy cleaning. Wal-Mart sells BestOffice 4 Shelf Wire Shelving Unit 1000lb, and it frequently goes on sale for around \$40. Metal shelves can be covered with heavy plastic to keep items from falling through.
- Consider how hard it is to clean, how easy it is to get more if you want it to match, and will it optimize the space. Also can it be returned?