Too Much Stuff? Here's How to Organize Your Clutter, According to an Expert

Decluttering can be a rewarding experience—but it can also be an intimidating one. Over time, rooms can get absolutely packed with stuff, and finding a way to sift through all that? Well, it’s no easy feat. But, rest assured: no room is impossible to organize. Even if your space feels overwhelmingly cluttered, there is a way to get through it. And by breaking down the process into manageable steps, you can make your decluttering spree faster, more efficient, and a lot easier to tackle. How to Organize a Cluttered Room Step 1: Set a Goal for the Room Think about what you’re trying to achieve before you start decluttering. Are you hoping to clean up your space, cut down on old possessions, or simply see your floor for the first time in a long time? “Set a specific goal for the room,” Joanna Wirick, life and home professional organizer at Joanna Organize, says. “What outcome are you trying to achieve? What does a big win look like?” Envisioning your dream scenario can help you clarify what you need to do, and it can also help you stay motivated when you encounter challenges during your decluttering spree. “A common mistake people tend to make when decluttering is to not be specific enough about the goal they want to achieve,” Wirick says. “For example, more specific goals may look like this: ‘I want to give every item a home,’ or ‘I will invest in organizing containers and labels, so I can stay organized.’” Step 2: Knock Out Some Logistics Once you’ve set your goal, you may be eager to start decluttering. But, take a moment to handle some logistics before you do. “Create a plan,” Wirick says. “What day and time will you declutter? Is this a multi-day project? Where will you take donation items?” Answering these questions now will save you time later. You can ensure you have all the supplies you need to sort and store your stuff. You can fall back on the decluttering schedule you’ve created for yourself, and since you’ve already decided what to do with donation items, you don’t have to worry about a “donation bin” lingering in your home long after you’ve finished your deep clean. “Sometimes, we get bitten by the organizing bug on a whim, start pulling things off shelves, and then feel overwhelmed by the chaos around us,” Wirick says. “Intentionally set aside several hours for a project and set a date for when you will take all of the donation items to a center, so they don’t stay in your house for weeks on end.” Step 3: Pick a Strategic Starting Point By this point, you’ve done all the planning you need to do. You’ve established a goal, and you've set your schedule. Now, you’re standing in front of a veritable mountain of clutter—where do you begin? Wirick recommends starting with the hardest task in front of you. “I would recommend starting with the area that you’ll feel the biggest impact with,” she says. “Think about the space that causes your shoulders to tense.” By getting the most stressful part of the process out of the way, you can set yourself up for success.