THE ART OF HOME
Jacquelynne Steves

Sorting and Letting Go of UFOs

(Unfinished Objects)

How to Finally Get Them Done



TAKING THE FIRST STEP

Do you have stacks of unfinished quilting and sewing projects tucked away in drawers, bins, or closets?

You're not alone.

Almost every crafter accumulates **UFOs (unfinished objects and projects)** over time.

Maybe you lost interest, got stuck on a tricky step, or simply got excited about a shiny new project.

Whatever the reason, those unfinished projects can pile up quickly.

But don't worry—this guide will help! You'll learn how to:

- ✓ Sort and organize your UFOs efficiently.
- ✓ Create a realistic plan to complete them.
- ✓ Decide which projects to finish, repurpose, or let go.
- ✓ Stay motivated while avoiding new unfinished projects.

By following this process, you can reclaim your creative space and enjoy the satisfaction of completing projects with confidence.





WHY DO UFOS GET ABANDONED?

Sometimes unfinished projects are just a few stitches away from completion, yet they still end up tucked away. Understanding why this happens can help us take the next step.



Lost Interest

The excitement that once fueled the project has faded



Frustration

Mistakes, setbacks, or challenges made it feel like more trouble than it's worth



Overwhelm

Too many projects, too little time



Negative Associations

A project may bring up memories or emotions we'd rather avoid



Shiny Object Syndrome

New projects always seem more exciting



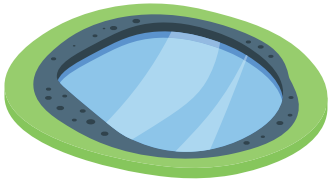
*Recognizing why a project was abandoned helps us decide whether to **finish it**, **repurpose it**, or **let it go**.*

THE RIVER VS. THE RESERVOIR MAKING ROOM FOR CREATIVITY



River

Water continuously **flows** in and out of the river- and brings **nourishment** and life to the creatures living in and near the river.



Reservoir

If there is no way for the water to flow out, then the water can become **stagnant** and **unhealthy**.

When we cling to unfinished projects that no longer bring joy, they can block creative energy.

Making Space for the New

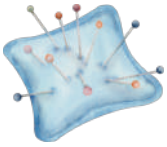
Letting go doesn't mean wastefulness. Instead, consider:



Releasing what no longer serves you
It's okay to move on from projects that no longer bring joy



Passing along unfinished projects
Someone else might love the challenge of completing it



Repurposing materials
Fabrics and materials can be reused in fresh, inspiring ways

By letting go, we open the door for new ideas and creativity.

EVALUATING YOUR UFOS: WHAT STAYS AND WHAT GOES?

Take a moment to reflect on each unfinished project.

1. **Do I still love this?**
   Does it excite or inspire me?

2. **Am I willing to put in the time and energy?**
   Be honest about what it takes to finish.

3. **Will I hold off on new projects to complete this one?**
   Prioritizing is key.

4. **Will working on it bring joy or feel like a chore?**
   If it feels like an obligation, is it worth it?

5. **Does this project still make sense?**
   A baby quilt for a now-teenager may need a new purpose.

6. **Can I realistically finish this in the next 6–12 months?**
   If not, why hold onto it?

These questions help clarify what's worth your time and energy.

WHEN A UFO FEELS LIKE A WEIGHT

Some unfinished projects create stress rather than inspiration

The Emotional Toll of an Unfinished Project

- Seeing it triggers guilt or anxiety
- Avoiding it because of past mistakes
- Feeling like it's an obligation rather than a joy

A Path Forward

- **Be honest with yourself**
  Do you truly want to finish it?
- **Assess your options**
  Can it be repurposed or passed along?
- **Let go of perfection**
  A finished project with imperfections is better than an abandoned one.

Facing UFOs with fresh eyes can help you decide whether to finish, rework, or release them.

GIVING YOURSELF PERMISSION TO LET GO



"Things serve us, we do not serve things." If a project feels like a burden rather than a joy, it may be time to let it go.

Let go guilt-free

Releasing a project doesn't mean failure.

Make space for new creativity

Just like the healthy, running river, clearing out the old allows for fresh inspiration.

Choose intentionally

Only keep what truly deserves your time and energy.



TIP: If you're struggling to part with a project, take a picture of it before letting it go. This way, you can remember it without having to store it physically.

SORTING YOUR UFOS: A SIMPLE SYSTEM

Organize unfinished projects into **four categories**

1

Love It & Will Finish Soon
Prioritize projects that bring joy.

2

Unsure, But Has Potential
Maybe it needs a fresh perspective or a slight tweak.

3

Not for Me, But Someone Else Might Love It
Donate or swap it.

4

Beyond Saving
If it's damaged or no longer relevant, let it go.



TIP: Use storage bins, labeled bags, or clear plastic containers to keep each category organized and accessible.

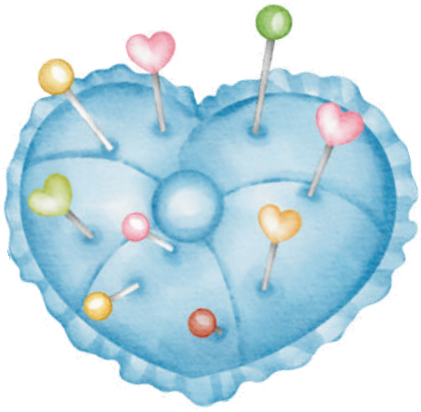
DECIDING WHAT TO DO WITH UNFINISHED PROJECTS

How Close Is It to Being Finished?

- If it only needs binding or a small fix, it may be worth putting on the top of your "to-do" list. Finishing a project feels great and will give you momentum to keep going!
- If a certain step feels overwhelming, consider swapping tasks with a friend.
- Longarm quilters can help with quilting or binding if those are steps that are slowing you down.

Can It Be Downsized or Repurposed?

- A king-size quilt can become a lap quilt, wall hanging, or pillow.
- Single blocks can be turned into potholders or mini quilts.
- Leftover fabric can be donated or added to your stash.
- A quilt top that you don't love could become an interesting backing for another quilt or project.







TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR UFOS DONE

So, you've decided which projects are worth finishing—now let's make progress!

Choose Your Project

- Begin with the easiest project to build momentum.
- If you're feeling very indecisive, write project names on slips of paper and randomly pick one to work on next.

Stay Organized & Make It Easy

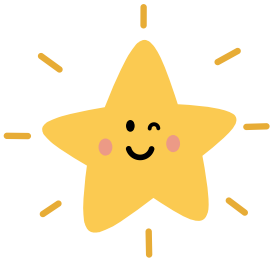
- Keep all materials together in clear zip-lock bags or bins.
- Mark progress on the pattern with notes to avoid confusion when you pick up the project next time.
- Keep a hand project near your chair, another in a tote for on-the-go sewing, and one by the machine. You'll always be ready to work on a project!

Set a Time & Stick to It

- Dedicate 20–60 minutes a day (or whatever works for you).
- Try the 20-minute rule - set a timer, work on a UFO, then move on to something else guilt free.
- Assign a specific UFO to each month and track progress.

Make It Social & Fun

- Partner with a friend or group for accountability.
- Celebrate progress with small rewards (new fabric, notions, a class, or a fancy coffee).
- Join or organize a charity quilt day – giving back can be motivating!
- Reward yourself and plan a sewing retreat to enjoy focused time on finishing projects



By keeping things manageable, organized, and fun, those UFOs will turn into finished projects before you know it!

STAYING MOTIVATED & AVOIDING MORE UFOS

The best way to prevent more UFOs from piling up? A little planning and motivation!

Join a Community

- Participate in UFO challenges, quilting groups, or sew-alongs. Being part of a group can be incredibly motivating!
- Share progress photos online or with a friend to stay accountable and celebrate small wins.

Keep a Project Tracker

- Maintain a simple list, journal, or spreadsheet to track your UFOs and progress.
- Mark completed projects on your list or tracker - it's so satisfying to see them finished!
- Include notes on where you left off in case you set a project aside for a while.

Limit New Projects

- Before starting something new, commit to finishing at least one UFO first.
- If you start a new project, write down your vision, deadline, and plan/schedule your next steps so it doesn't turn into another UFO!





STAY INSPIRED

Unfinished projects don't have to weigh you down. Whether you choose to finish, repurpose, or release them, making intentional choices will bring a sense of relief and inspiration.

> "Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep." – Scott Adams

Make space for new projects, fresh ideas, and joyful creativity!

Need supplies to finish up your UFOs or to start planning your next project?

Click here for 10% off your order from our online Shop!

https://tinyurl.com/yvtawsk9

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