

# Practical Tips for a Sewing Room Clutter Cleanse

Kick clutter to the curb in minutes a day! This no-fail plan shows you how to confront quilting room mess—and keep it clean.

## Practical Tips for a Successful Cleanse

*Follow these tips to making your Clutter Cleanse a life-changing success:*

**Schedule your cleanse.** You make better decisions when you work uninterrupted, so block out 15- to 45-minute appointments on your schedule.

**Aim for consistency.** Schedule your cleanse session for the same time for a few consecutive days, perhaps every morning before your family wakes or immediately after dinner.

**Minimize disruptions.** Let your family know ahead of time when you'll be busy. A consistent daily decluttering time helps.

**Be prepared:** Dress in comfy clothes. Put on some music. Have a favorite beverage or snack close by.

**Gather your supplies.** You'll need the following items close at hand for each cleanse session:

- Permanent markers and index cards or heavy stock paper to make labels for piles as you sort or boxes headed to donation centers
- Boxes and bags to hold sorted items
- Scissors or utility knife

**Touch once, decide once.** Decluttering involves deciding to keep or let go, so the main activity throughout the cleanse is picking up or touching an item and asking, "Should I keep this?" If you instantly know something needs to stay or go (and you have space to store it), go with your gut. No need to analyze. However, if you're not quite sure, see "Four Tough Questions," *below*, to help you reach your decision.

**Work like a machine.** Go through any space you're decluttering in a methodical fashion—left to right, high to low, front to back—whatever makes sense for your project. Don't jump around the space. Don't try to be creative or clever.

**Keep moving.** When you don't quickly know whether to keep or get rid of an item, place it in a pile and keep moving through the room. Save the last 5 to 10 minutes of the session to deal with your pile of questionable items.

**Know what's next.** Don't fret about what to do with stuff you're not keeping. You have only four options: Sell it, give it away, donate it, or recycle/dispose of it. Label four boxes accordingly and keep moving.

**Keep testing simple.** Operate tools and machines to see whether they work. Verify that you have all the pieces of kits. Then move immediately to deciding whether the item is a keeper.



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**Skip touching when it bogs you down.** If you're decluttering items with emotional connections, have a neutral person hold up the item and ask whether you want to keep it. Without a physical connection to the item, you'll be in a better state of mind to make quick, clear-headed decisions.

### **Four Tough Questions**

1. **Do I love it?** Keep anything you truly love. You'll always remember (and probably regret) giving away something you love. But be aware that keeping a beloved item may mean you must get rid of something else in order to make room.
2. **Do I use it?** And if so, how often? Keep anything you use—and start storing the stuff you use more frequently in the easiest places to access.
3. **Do I have more than one?** If so, edit down to the best one. Of course, having more than one rotary cutter may make sense, but having two of the same triangle template is tough to justify.
4. **Can I get another?** If you suddenly need the item or it miraculously comes back into style, remind yourself that you can usually buy or borrow another one.

### **Cleanse Your Work Space**

*Ask yourself:*

1. **Am I surrounded by only working, functional items?** When you sit or stand at your desk, every item within reach must work. Test every tool, supply, and machine. Toss (never donate) dull scissors or broken tools. Furthermore, a desk isn't about display; narrow down to one or two personal items and move the rest of your tchotchkes to shelves or display ledges.
2. **Do I need more than one?** Sewing supplies are sometimes sold in multiples or include refills. Multiples can go into a drawer or cabinet elsewhere in the room -- you don't need them clogging up your work space.
3. **What's my go-to choice?** Embrace your preference for rulers, cutting and marking tools, and other supplies—and stock only these in your work zone. Let go of all the nice-enough-but-not-for-you options now.
4. **What do I actually use?** Keep only items you use frequently on your work space. Place items you use less regularly nearby shelves, drawers, or cabinets.
5. **Short-term or long-term?** The quickest way to cut through piled papers is to sort short-term (patterns you're working on, articles you're reading) and long-term (machine instructions). Organize short-term papers with vertical solutions (a bulletin board above your desk, wall pockets) and long-term papers with horizontal solutions (sorting trays, a file box, or a file cabinet with hanging folders).