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## Organizing tips from Marie Kondo's Philly-based comrades

by [Grace Dickinson](#), Updated: February 5, 2019



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Contemplating an urge to sort through your belongings after bingeing *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*? Feeling overwhelmed by your cluttered house but powerless to fight it? Philly's professional organizers can help.

Professional organizers don't just help you straighten up your apartment; they also help you acknowledge and overcome emotional attachments to objects, and coach you on how to choose future possessions more carefully. But even if you don't shell out for a pro, you can benefit from their organizational wisdom.

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and Christina Rosenbruch of Bucks County's SparkJoy.Space — about tips for decluttering on your own and where to take your stuff once you've decided to part with it.

- **Start with a written plan:** “People get distracted, especially when they're moving from room to room, or have gadgets competing for their attention. Written goals help keep you focused,” says DeMorrow. “It can be as simple as a bullet-point reading, ‘I'm going to clear the kitchen counter.’”
- **Create a donation box:** Kilbride recommends having a designated container for donations in your garage or basement and using it to collect anything that you don't actually use. “Each day, as you notice things laying around your rooms that you're not using, put them in the bin,” she says. “Then schedule a regular pick up once a month — you don't want that bin to become an eyesore in itself.”
- **Commit to decluttering:** Each week, schedule time to tackle a messy space. “Decide what you can afford — whether it's two hours every Saturday or 15 minutes every night — and stick to it,” Rosenbruch says.
- **Do it anyway:** Even if you don't feel like organizing on a given day, trudge through five minutes. “It's like exercising — no one likes the first 15 minutes of exercise, but once you get started, you can go for a half hour, sometimes an hour, and feel good after,” DeMorrow says.
- **Break large projects into smaller tasks:** For seemingly overwhelming projects, Rosenbruch recommends an incremental approach. “For instance, with your clothes, map it out. Day one, start with your pants, and day two, your shirts, and the next day, your dress clothes.”
- **Get over your “what if” fears:** “If you think you might need something down the road, but you haven't used the item in months, it's time to let go,” Rosenbruch says. “You don't need to fear the future.”
- **Set a timer:** If you're hung up on tossing something, bag it up, then make a reminder for yourself down the road. “When the calendar reminder goes off in a month, if you haven't used anything in your discard bag, let it go,” Kilbride says.
- **Ask a friend to keep you accountable:** “Have them come over for coffee and help you stay on track as you go through a drawer, a cabinet, or a room,” Kilbride says. “Then ask them to text you at a later date to make sure you're moving forward on the next project.”
- **Make it an activity — not a chore:** “Play music and have fun with it, and then reward yourself,” Kilbride says. “If you tackle a pile of clothes, go get yourself a nice coffee, but not until every last item is picked up off the floor.”
- **Utilize resources:** Thanks in part to the popularity of Marie Kondo's *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, there's a number of books, podcasts, bloggers, and [Facebook communities](#) dedicated to organizing — but choose wisely, urges DeMorrow, who has written multiple books and maintains [a blog](#). “Remember, you don't live in a magazine, so be careful about what you're consuming.” (To listen to DeMorrow's favorite podcast, check out [The Art of Decluttering](#).)

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## Where to donate your ‘junk’

While organizers advocate for getting rid of things, they don't want clients throwing items in the trash. In fact, Rosenbruch encourages customers to consider their effect on the environment.

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On her site ([heartworkorg.com](http://heartworkorg.com)), DeMorrow offers a donation recycling directory that includes several niche organizations with more targeted audiences: musical instruments for students who can't afford them ([musicopia.net](http://musicopia.net)); clothes and toys for kids living in poverty ([cradlestocrayons.org](http://cradlestocrayons.org)); unopened makeup and toiletries for those in homeless shelters ([homelesshelterdirectory.org](http://homelesshelterdirectory.org)); and bikes for youth ([neighborhoodbikeworks.org](http://neighborhoodbikeworks.org)).

"There's someone out there that's going to be so grateful to find the items you're giving away," Rosenbruch says. "Always donate when you can, instead of adding more pollution to the world."



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