

# Tackling Basement Clutter



By Cathy Shouse

Even the most organized among us have a dirty little secret: basement clutter. To make 2019 the year you get rid of the stuff down under, there's no need to channel *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo* on Netflix. We got the scoop from three local experts.

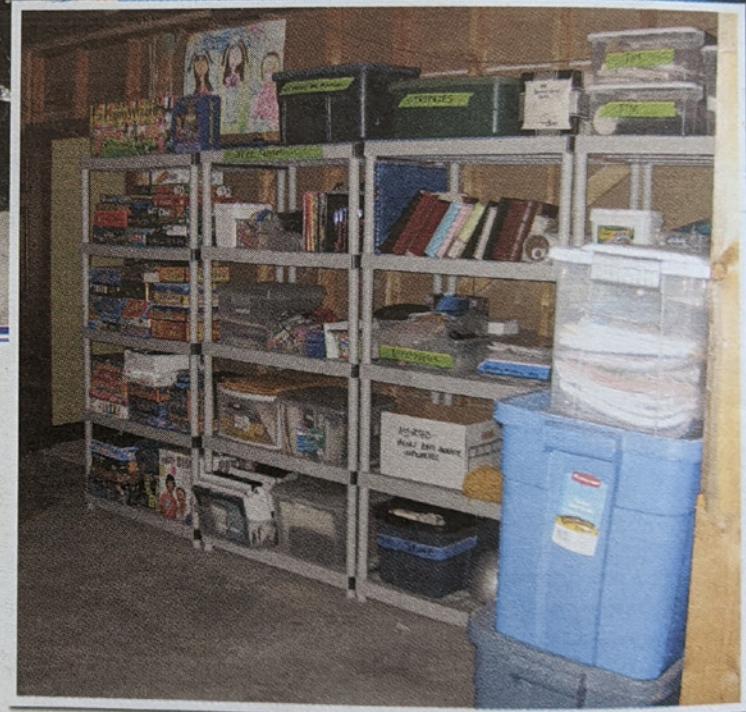
Janet Evans of Tiny 'n' Tidy has worked on many basements. "Typically, the trouble is, it isn't very well lit," she said. "It's usually things people don't know what to do with. They think they'll deal with it later. A lot of times, people have things in cardboard boxes and they're on top of one another. It's just a whole mix of things. We make a mess before we make it better."

Her secret weapon? Compressed board that has brackets and hangs on the wall.

**Evans advised to sort into three categories, in this order:**

- 1) Things you definitely want to keep
- 2) Items easily eliminated
- 3) Stuff you think: Why have I been holding onto this?

An easy fix is big furniture you're holding for grown children in case they need it. Evans said, "Give the kids a date to come get it. If they don't, get rid of it."



Emily Fitzgerald is a Certified Professional Organizer and Productivity Consultant who owns OLS Organizing, LLC.

"Kitchens come standard with cabinets and we buy furniture for the rest of the rooms, but sometimes basements don't have any storage, or not much, added to them," Fitzgerald said. "So people store everything on the floor and then it gets too hard to move and is overwhelming."

#### Fitzgerald's tips:

- 1) Dedicate a space near the doorway for items to donate or get rid of.
- 2) If you are working in a small storage space, consider pulling some items out into the regular basement area to sort through.
- 3) Pull together different categories of items. Use bright paper and a marker to label as you go (then you can move it around if needed.)

#### Examples:

- Household stuff like extra paint, extra tile, window screens
- Mementos - kids and your own
- Holiday decor



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- Extra furniture and card table and chairs, and regular decor (extra picture frames, etc).
- Toys and other items the kids have outgrown. (Maybe you're not sure you're done having kids or just find yourself to be sentimental. By grouping this all together, it will help you see and realize how much you have. It can also then help you determine what you care about the most and what you wouldn't miss.)

Stacey Spuller of Better Organized Spaces said the company works with the brand Inspired Closets and creates solutions for basement storage. They evaluate your items and options to contain it.

"It depends on what they have and what they need," Spuller said. "If their teenager is moving down to the basement, they can add a walk-in closet. The possibilities are endless." 