



The Season for Garage Sales!

By Emily Fitzgerald, Organized Living Solutions

So you have a garage, basement or house full of stuff you don't want or use anymore and you're not sure what to do with it. The idea of having a garage sale can be overwhelming, but here are some tips to make the whole process a bit more doable. Keep in mind, one person's trash is always another one's treasure!

Pick a date and give yourself a deadline. Once you've set the date, you'll be much more motivated to go through all your belongings to decide what stays and what goes. If you get stuck, ask yourself if you love it or if you use it. If the answer is yes, the item stays. If the answer is no, what is it doing taking up valuable space in your home?

Pair up with a friend or another family. More items draw more of a crowd. Just be sure to set some guidelines for how you will track each family's items. Color-coded stickers work well. Remove the sticker from the item and transfer them to a list to track income.



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Some items sell better than others: baby equipment, children’s clothes and toys, household items, tools, books, sporting goods, brand-name clothing and furniture are among them.

Place a newspaper ad to appear the day before the sale if your house is not on a major thoroughfare. List the date and time of your sale as well

as some of the big ticket items you’re selling to attract more buyers. Posting signs at major intersections is usually a necessity, too.

Make a trip to the bank before the sale. Get plenty of quarters and \$1 bills. For simplicity’s sake, stick to pricing items in increments of 25 cents, rather than using nickels and dimes. Use whole dollar amounts whenever possible.

Know your bottom line. Haggling is all part of the experience for buyers, so don’t be offended by it. Expect to get about 10 percent of what you paid for the item new. You can try setting your price at closer to 25 percent so you have some room to negotiate.

Don’t let the stuff go back inside! If it does not sell, load it up and take it immediately to a donation center. You decided once that you didn’t want it; don’t undo your progress by taking it back in the house.

Other options besides a tag sale:

Make a donation: As a professional organizer, I am not a huge fan of the garage sale. More often than not, people set aside items to have a sale someday, but sometimes someday never comes. If your goal is to clear the clutter, consider donating the items and taking the deduction on your taxes. Ask for a local valuation guide at your nearest Goodwill donation center.

www.Ebay.com: Large ticket items will probably not sell well at a tag sale. Try selling the item online. If you are inexperienced or do not have time to list your own items, check out www.ebay.com/tahub for some help. A trading assistant will do all the work for you for a portion of the sale price.

www.Craigslist.com: Like Ebay, but local. You can arrange for transfer of items person-to-person to avoid high shipping costs.

Local Used Furniture or Antique Shops: Don’t forget secondhand specialty stores as an option for your nicer furniture or antiques.

There are several options to rid yourself of some of the unnecessary items around your home. Take advantage of the beautiful summer weather to clean up and clear out! ■

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