

Prep Your Home to Sell with the 2021 Decluttering Challenge

If you're planning to sell your house or condo this year, decluttering is the first bit of advice your REALTOR® will give you.

Why not start now when you have time and can break up the job into manageable bits?

If the strategy of piling every piece of clothing or paper in one spot and dealing with the stash during one long session is too overwhelming, you're not alone. Try a different tactic.

Apartment Therapy <https://bit.ly/2KfsZBb> has you covered with its annual January Cure – a daily dose of tasks to accomplish.

Day one's assignment is easy: declutter one drawer.

It's a simple assignment that you can accomplish in less than an hour. Plus, it's an instant gratification task that motivates you to keep going when you see the results.

You can follow the day-by-day decluttering advice for a complete home declutter, but if you have specific trouble areas, Apartment Therapy also provides task- and room-specific suggestions.

For example, if you're working from home, you may find the "8 Quick Steps to a Cleaner Desk" (<https://bit.ly/3qg5ze4>) especially helpful. Plus, it's a 20-minute engagement.

And if your closets are bursting with unworn clothes, see "Cut Your Wardrobe in Half by Asking Yourself These 3 Organizer-Approved Questions" (<https://bit.ly/3nldwXV>)

Brain Health and Quality of Life

Ask any baby boomer or senior about their greatest wish for aging, and nearly all will rank quality of life and aging in place as top picks.

But achieving such goals starts with a healthy brain.

Dr. Sanjay Gupta, a neurosurgeon and CNN's chief medical correspondent, has suggestions about maintaining brain health. The author of "Keep Sharp: Build A Better Brain at Any Age," Gupta chatted with National Public Radio's Terry Gross of "Fresh Air."

During the interview, he provides insight into maintaining brain health and talks about his research and the pandemic's effect on our brains. He also dispels some myths about the aging brain.

There is a perception that as people age, they lose the ability to learn new things, create new habits, and new behavior patterns.

According to Gupta, yes, the brain ages and changes, but it can get sharper as we age. "It is sort of the use it or lose it phenomenon, when it comes to the brain if you think of the brain like a muscle, which, I think, is a fair metaphor," he says.

It's good, for example, for our brains to find new patterns and routines, continue learning, experiencing new things, and modifying daily habits to shake things up. As Gupta puts it, "...mix it up a little bit, shock the brain, shock the body a little bit" and get out of your comfort zone.

Exercise, a heart-healthy diet, and sleep also are critical to brain health, and he calls the latter a "'rinse' cycle."

Listen to the 41-minute interview at: <https://n.pr/3bEpcbL>

Listen to Your Elders. Record Their Stories.

Though there's hope on the horizon that the vaccine will let us live freer lives later this year, the reality is that we're all still stuck at home right now.

Staying connected with seniors in the family in a meaningful way continues to be tough.

StoryCorps may be one way to reconnect with them, find out more about a loved one, and forge stronger bonds.

And kill some time.

StoryCorps gives people – everyday folks -- the opportunity to record interviews about their lives.

One option is having and recording a conversation with a loved one. You can ask about relatives' lives, talk about a significant life event or hobby, explore their belief system, or ask about their memories of a significant historical event.

StoryCorps' goal is to "record, preserve, and share the stories of Americans from all backgrounds and beliefs," with a mission of preserving and sharing humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.

Its archive of stories covers a vast array of topics, including:

- Unusual hobbies – Tom Gasko collects vacuum cleaners and runs a vacuum cleaner museum in Missouri (<https://bit.ly/2LR2Uc9>).
- Friendship – Two people reflect on their 30-year friendship and finding joy in challenging times (<https://bit.ly/2LSYgdn>).
- Professions – Who knew that "freelance embalmers" (<https://bit.ly/3oM6fHQ>) existed?

It also offers has various series <https://bit.ly/3blsSt2> focused on specific topics.

For instance, Stonewall Outloud features LGBTQ stories, and the memory loss initiative allows those living with memory loss to share their stories. Another, the Justice Project, documents youth of color's experience in the juvenile and adult justice system.

StoryCorps has recording booths in Atlanta, Chicago, and New York. You also may record your story remotely, even if the participants live in separate cities.

Visit <https://bit.ly/38LrS5L> to find out how.

Real Estate Matters: News & Issues for the Mature Market

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GETTING READY TO LIST YOUR HOME?

Preparing a home for sale is always a significant undertaking. For seniors, in particular, the pre-listing process can feel overwhelming. An agent who has earned their Seniors Real Estate Specialist® (SRES®) designation can guide your efforts and help make the transition go as smoothly as possible.

You can trust your SRES® designee to help you:



MAP OUT A PLAN

SET PRIORITIES

EVALUATE RENOVATIONS

SUGGEST TRUSTED RESOURCES

DISCUSS STAGING OPTIONS

1. Map out a plan.

An SRES® understands that each client faces different circumstances and challenges. They can advise you on a sequence of steps tailored to your situation. And they'll guide you through the process at whatever pace suits your needs. Your SRES® will take a no-pressure approach and look for ways to make your move more manageable and less stressful.

2. Set priorities.

Please don't assume that every aspect of your home has to appear picture-perfect before listing it for sale. Your SRES® understands what matters most to buyers in your market and can help you focus on the most critical projects. The top priorities are often decluttering living spaces and cleaning your home thoroughly, immediately before it is listed.

3. Evaluate renovations.

Is it essential to update your flooring, paint your walls, or replace your appliances? Your SRES® knows local buyers' top priorities and understands which renovations offer the biggest bang for the buck. They'll explain your options, but it's up to you to decide if you want to add these projects to your list.

4. Suggest trusted resources.

If you need help with any aspect of your move, your SRES® can provide suggestions. They've already vetted related service professionals that understand seniors' concerns and can assist in decluttering, packing, renovating, and more. The choice is always yours, but it's nice knowing you can turn to these trusted resources.

5. Discuss staging options.

Many sellers assume they need to stage their home before listing it. Again, this depends on your local real estate market and your personal situation. Often, staging isn't mandatory. Today's property marketing options include virtual staging techniques, which might be a good alternative. Your SRES® can discuss your options and offer recommendations tailored to your concerns.

Regardless of when and where you are moving, you'll have a better experience if you work with an agent who has earned the SRES® designation—someone who is committed to helping seniors navigate their housing transitions successfully.

Count on an SRES® to guide you through the process of buying or selling your home, making the transaction less stressful and more successful.

The Seniors Real Estate Specialist® (SRES®) designation is awarded by the SRES® Council, a subsidiary of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR).

To learn more about SRES® and access various consumer resources, please visit seniorsresource.realtor.

