

Spring Cleaning the Attic

Spring is a wonderful time to attack the attic – it's still cool enough to be able to tackle this decluttering job! And the timing is perfect – you may find you have enough for a yard sale. Now that's motivating, isn't it?

Start by walking around your attic to take a mental inventory of what you have there. Designate corners for each category – Christmas, other seasonal decorations, keepsakes, off-season clothing, suitcases and traveling accessories, home repair supplies, - whatever categories represent your life. Make those items that you use more often more accessible and those used less often less accessible.

Now that you have designated certain areas for your categories, it's time to sort. Start in one corner of your attic. You may want to surround yourself with several boxes – one for each category plus one for giveaways and a trash bag for throwaways. As you sort each item, ask yourself if it's necessary, if you've used it in the last year, if it's excessive, if it's important to you or someone else, and if someone else could use it. If you absolutely must keep the item you're sorting, place it in the appropriate box.

Work your way around the attic. You may discover additional categories as you go. You may also find items in your attic which would be better used elsewhere in your home.

Place each box in the area you have designated for that category.

Now that you've decluttered and sorted, you're ready to look at your storage needs for your attic.

Look at each category to see what would best house those items. Do you need large clear storage containers for linens? Do you need small boxes for books? Do you need a place to hang out-of-season clothes? Do you need shelves, drawers, hooks, etc?

Before you go out and purchase storage containers, look around your house, basement, garage, etc. to see if you already have storage that would fill your need. You may have an unused dresser that would work for storage if it were moved up the attic, for example.

Label each container with the contents so when you're hunting for something, you don't need to open every container. If you are using clear storage containers, write your list of contents on a piece of paper and slide it down the side of the container so you can read it without opening the box.

Storage containers usually go on sale during the back-to-schools in late summer and around Christmas.

An idea for storing off-season clothing: when we lived in a townhouse and storage space was at a premium, we purchased a couple of wardrobe boxes. Moving companies or storage facilities usually sell such supplies. My husband cut a piece of cedar plywood to fit in the bottom. We placed these boxes in our attic. When we swapped out our seasonal clothes, we could take them from the closet and hang them in the wardrobe box. Our clothes stayed unwrinkled and were protected from moths.