

# R.E.A.L. Goal<sup>SM</sup>: Declutter Your Home

(Realistic, Easy, Attainable, Life Goals)

**Example:** I will organize one room in my home weekly so everything has a purpose and place.

## The benefits:

- People who choose to declutter and have a purposeful home identify as having less stress and more time to do what they want.
- When everything has a place, you know right where to find it.
- When your space is tidy, there is less time needed for cleaning and searching for anything missing.

## Quick tips:

- **Identify the purpose of each room.**
  - What will the room be used for?
  - What do you want the room to look and feel like?
  - Do the current contents of the room support the end goal?
- **Go Easy.**
  - Start with five minutes daily or a handful of items each week.
- **When ready to act, focus on one room at a time.**
  - Determine a spot for any item that has a purpose and will stay. Commit to returning the item when you are done using it, such as the TV remote.
  - Remove any item that doesn't belong. Does the removed item serve a purpose in another room? If not, donate, toss, or put in storage for a rummage sale.
  - Create *donate*, *toss*, and *storage* boxes as you move from room to room.
- **Keeping counters and shelves clear of clutter creates a sense of order.**
  - Use drawer bins and closet organizers to help keep things organized and out of sight.
  - Have a place in your home for papers and keys. Review each paper you decide to keep; consider storing paperwork electronically.
  - Do you need to un-decorate? If your tabletops are full of pictures, try using floating shelves.
- **Do you need to add more storage?**
  - Baskets, shelving, and furniture/storage combos are all options that can be low-cost and add to the feel of the room.
  - Try to avoid storing items on the floor. Your home will look cleaner and less cluttered.

- **One tip for each room.**
  - **Bedroom:** Make the bed first.
  - **Closet:** Put anything away that is in the wrong spot- like a pair of shorts that belong in the dresser.
  - **Bathroom:** Start by removing everything from the medicine cabinet tossing out old makeup, skincare, and medications.
  - **Living room:** Wipe surfaces clean, fill a basket with items that don't belong in the living room, and return them to the right place.
  - **Kitchen:** Empty the pantry and fridge. Throw away anything that is broken or expired. Donate things you don't use anymore. Use drawer dividers for utensils; everything should have a place.
- **While tidying up, consider some of these safety recommendations.**
  - Go through your cabinets and pull out all the cleaning products and other possibly toxic items in your home. Properly get rid of any that have expired or you no longer need.
  - Make sure that your medications are stored away from children and pets. Also, remember to keep the medicine in the container it came in so that you know exactly what it is.
  - Review the physical safety of the home. Make sure that handrails are not loose, knives are sharp, and rugs are on a non-slip surface or pad. Test carbon monoxide and smoke detectors and change batteries if needed.

### Try a 30-day declutter challenge:

**Day 1:** Walk your home with a few trash bags. Be ruthless. Papers, receipts, empty bottles. Go!

**Day 2:** Go through your kitchen drawers. Do you have three carrot peelers? Two ice cream scoops? You only need one.

**Day 3:** Clean out your fridge, pantry, and spice cabinet. Throw away anything expired. Donate any unopened items you no longer want. Make a list of restocking needs as you go.

**Day 4:** Simplify your phone. Delete old contacts and unused apps, and refresh your wallpaper.

**Day 5:** Organize the notes app on your phone to hold lists of all kinds (e.g., books to read, hashtags you use, or other information you often need to retrieve).

**Day 6:** Use the reminders app on your phone to set alerts for routines or habits you're trying to create (e.g., take vitamins, put the phone away, and go for a walk).

**Day 7:** Consider reading as a brain break. Make a list of 10 books you'd like to read this year.

**Day 8:** Walk your house with a donate bag. Schedule a pick-up or drop it off as soon as the bag is full. Record each item on a donate list and get a donation slip for a tax deduction.

**Day 9:** Start the habit of throwing a small load of laundry in every morning.

**Day 10:** Set a recurring alarm (or use the bedtime feature on iPhones) for every weekday. If you're letting your kids wake you, set it for one hour earlier.

**Day 11:** Put gas in your car today. While you're there, clean out your car. Throw trash away.

**Day 12:** Buy a few birthday and blank cards (and small gift cards). Keep them on hand for birthdays and events that pop up that you're not prepared for.

**Day 13:** Put your number on the Do Not Call list. Visit [donotcall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov) or call 1.888.382.1222.

**Day 14:** Do something with all the precious photos and videos on your phone. (e.g., print, backup, store.)

**Day 15:** Consider the amount of information coming at you all day. What can you turn off to quiet your mind? Turn off the television or take a break from social media.

**Day 16:** Identify pain points in your day (e.g., kids getting shoes on in the morning). Alleviate these (e.g., put a basket for shoes near the front door for easy access).

**Day 17:** Dump out your purse. Throw away trash. Create a little bag of essentials.

**Day 18:** Ruthlessly clean out your closet. Say goodbye to clothes that "will fit one day".

**Day 19:** Clean out your medicine cabinet. Trash anything expired. Restock essentials.

- Day 20:** Detox your social media feeds. Follow inspirational accounts. Unfollow anyone draining.
- Day 21:** Identify subscriptions you forgot you had and don't need and cancel or turn them off.
- Day 22:** Clean off your desk and wipe it down (and your keyboard)—ditch clutter. Keep only the essentials, including your computer.
- Day 23:** Clear the clutter on your computer. Delete unused files and organize important ones.
- Day 24:** Take inventory of the mail coming to your mailbox. Visit [directmail.com](http://directmail.com) to remove your name from the lists.
- Day 25:** Make a list of 10 go-to meals. Tape it to the fridge for simple meal planning.
- Day 26:** Schedule a vacation or staycation for some time this year.
- Day 27:** Organize your inbox. Search the word “unsubscribe” and remove yourself from non-essential lists. Try [Unroll.me](http://Unroll.me).
- Day 28:** Using a large piece of paper or poster board, make a list of all your commitments. Which ones can you say “not now” to?
- Day 29:** Create a weekly prep list with tasks that make you feel prepared for the upcoming week.
- Day 30:** Make a list of household items you use frequently. Stock up on these. Watch for B.O.G.O. sales.

### Try this cleaning schedule.

<p><b>Monday – Bedroom day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change sheets</li> <li>• Dust furniture</li> <li>• Clean mirrors</li> <li>• Clean fans</li> <li>• Sweep and vacuum floors</li> <li>• Declutter for ten minutes</li> <li>• Laundry - sheets</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday – Bathroom day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean shower and toilet</li> <li>• Disinfect sink, counter, faucet</li> <li>• Clean mirror</li> <li>• Sweep and mop floors</li> <li>• Restock toiletries</li> <li>• Change towels</li> <li>• Laundry - towels</li> </ul>	<p><b>Wednesday – Kitchen day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean out the refrigerator</li> <li>• Disinfect counters</li> <li>• Dust table and chairs</li> <li>• Sweep and mop floors</li> <li>• Take out trash</li> <li>• Laundry - light colors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Thursday - Living room day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dust and polish furniture</li> <li>• Clean the TV</li> <li>• Freshen fabrics</li> <li>• Sweep and vacuum floors</li> <li>• Declutter for ten minutes</li> <li>• Laundry - dark colors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Friday – Alternate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 1 – all appliances</li> <li>• Week 2 – kitchen cabinets</li> <li>• Week 3 – windows and blinds</li> <li>• Week 4 – walls and baseboards</li> </ul>	<p><b>Saturday – Outside</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean out car</li> <li>• Straighten up the garage</li> <li>• Sweep of steps</li> <li>• Yardwork</li> <li>• Laundry – catch up</li> </ul>

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