

Procrastination has its place in cleaning post-Christmas clutter

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Struggling with post-Christmas clutter can suck the holiday cheer out of any home as festive lights yield to January bleakness, so Metro asked professional organizers for tips on reclaiming your space.

Jane Veldhoven, owner of the Halifax-based Get Organized!, says the first step is out with the old to make room for the new.

"I see so many people spending time moving their stuff from one place to another, when in reality there is just way too much stuff and no matter how much organizing you do, it's never going to be under control," she says.

Go online to offload your old TVs and sweaters. Use Facebook, Kijiji, Craigslist and your local freecycling site to find new homes.

"You post something on there you think no one will want and lo and behold, there they are," she says. "It amazes me."

If that doesn't work, give your excess baggage to furniture banks and charity stores.

Veldhoven connects clients to an artistically inclined church that regularly funnels unwanted items to amateur artisans, who happily recraft them.

Rosalie Maggio, author of *The Art of Organizing Anything*, says don't fear the clutter.

"Here's my theory: If you have clutter in the house, there's probably room for it in the house," she says. "What blows a lot of people is that it's so much to deal with."

So don't deal with it. Take Santa and the lights down, stuff things under the bed and make your house livable. Then forget about it until February.

"Procrastinating has its place," the California-based consultant says.

When you do start, break it down. Line up the rooms and go after them one by one. Channel the clutter as you go by starting a pile at the front door for things leaving the house, one for keys, one for mail and even one for things that have no immediate home. This keeps things moving toward their intended destinations, cutting clutter off at the pass. When you get to re-storing things, use the unused spaces under the bed for clothes or nets hanging from children's bedroom walls for toys or in the garage for sports equipment.

In the end, it only matters if it bothers you and your housemates, Maggio says. "There are people who are just a mess, and they're fine. It's only other people who say, 'Do you have enemies? Who did this to you?'"



Tidying after the holiday may seem daunting, but as author and consultant Rosalie Maggio says, "Procrastinating has its place."