

# clutter free

## THE 2000 THINGS CHALLENGE

### **1. Find two friends (at least) to do this challenge with you.**

It doesn't matter if they're phone friends, Internet buddies, or face-to-face girlfriends you meet with at Starbucks down the street. Find someone to keep you accountable.

### **2. Pick a room-any room- to start the purge.**

I would pick the room that's giving you the most stress and start there. You'll feel better when some of the pressure is taken off.

### **3. Evaluate your plan.**

This is where people often give up. If something doesn't work, they will scrap the whole idea. You decide what steps you're going to take each day. Then after trying it, see if that is a good goal. Feel free to change it, but just keep your focus on trying to organize areas of your life.

### **4. Be flexible.**

The intention of the 2000 Things Challenge is not to add stress, but to make your life simpler by removing the clutter from your life and helping you stay organized. Just do something, intentionally, every day. If you can be flexible in the day-to-day goals, you will learn to be flexible when things come up that you cannot control.

### **5. Come up with some ground rules.**

First you need some ground rules, especially if you and your spouse don't see eye-to-eye on the types of things that are "necessary" to running a house. Which means that if he can't throw away your yoga pants that have holes in the seams, then you can't throw away his recliner that has been decorating your house since you got married. You both have to be in it together.

Here are the rules that we set up for our house:

- Consumables are not counted. (Doggy waste bags don't count - the plastic doggy-waste-bag holder does.)
- If a piece of a set can be used on its own, it's counted. (For example, each piece of silverware counts, but a thousand piece puzzle counts as one thing.)
- We will donate or get rid of things in the most responsible way possible.
- We will work together to be thoughtful and intentional in the process so no one is upset.



# SOME TIPS FOR THE 2000 THINGS CHALLENGE

Here are some tips that helped me get through as I got rid of two thousand things:

## 1. Have a Donation Station.

One of the difficulties I encountered during the 2000 Things Challenge was keeping track of all the things I came across that I knew I didn't need anymore. I needed a dedicated place to put those things (that also had easy access) until I could count and donate them.

Finally, I cleaned out a small portion of our closet in the office and put a box in there lined with a large garbage bag. Every time I found something that I no longer needed or wanted, it went to the closet. Once the bag was full, I counted the things and then put the bag in my car to donate.

If your Donation Station is in your garage or basement, you are less likely to put things away there. Instead, put your Donation Station somewhere that you will see it every day. Let it be a constant reminder to you and your family that you are getting rid of two thousand things. (Feel free to hide it when company comes over.)

## 2. Take time to purge every day.

This goes without saying, but if you wait until December to start getting rid of two thousand things, you might struggle a little bit. Instead, do your best to get rid of a few things every day. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Go through your magazine rack and pitch any issue that's over three months old.
- Go through your gadget drawer in your kitchen.
- If it's spring or summer, donate any clothes you didn't wear all winter, as well as any summer clothes that you're pulling out that just don't work for you anymore.
- Do the same with your kids' clothes. If it's fall or winter, donate any clothes you didn't wear all summer... (you get the idea).
  - Look at the paperwork on your desk. Every decision is a thing and it counts.



## 3. Keep count (even if you don't feel like it).

There is something about totaling up the number of items that keeps you focused. You want to get to that next hundred (or thousand), and setting intermediate goals is a good way to keep you reaching for that next number. Two thousand things seems like an overwhelming number, but I've never had anyone say they couldn't do it. Start small (a hundred things) and get the feel for processing your stuff. You'll feel lighter in less than a day.

*I promise.*

