



Tips for Spring Cleaning

Kick-start your spring cleaning and organizing with this quick checklist.

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Read It!

For the whole story and a fun, step-by-step narration about how to make spring cleaning a breeze, read "Spring Clean" by Gretchen Olson. Spring is here! And if you haven't already started, now's the perfect time to take another look at that farm shop or garden shed that doubles as storage for everything from empty planters to leftover paint.

The best way to begin is to have a plan--and it helps to write it down. Here's a checklist to get you started: Start with pen and paper: Then go out and have a look at "the mess." Categorize: Organize the items into broad categories or types. Regroup: Look at your broad categories. Make subcategories, if needed, and be tough with yourself about what you think you might need to dispose of. Decide what to throw away (and where!): After you've decided what to throw away, don't forget to check local regulations on

Environmental Tip

Concerned about contamination due to household cleaners and pesticides? To learn more about more eco-friendly alternatives that still get the job done, visit the World Watch Institute website. how dispose of chemicals and other hazardous materials. Keep charities in mind for the items that still have some life in them. Choose your organizational system: Will you need more shelves or storage containers? What are your space needs? Go shopping: In addition to purchasing any needed storage equipment, you'll want to make sure you have cleaning supplies as well. Get it all out in the open: Make like reality TV and make a big pile outside. After you clean, you'll get to sort through it all. Clean up: From top to bottom, get out the grime and dust so you can start with a clean room. Make a floor plan: Figure out where you need to install any additional shelving or storage containers or where to move the existing ones to suit your needs. Sort it and put everything back: Dispose of unwanted and put back what you'll use where you decided it needs to go.

A place for everything and everything in its place!