

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

By: Alisha Fisher

K-State Research and Extension Greenwood County

Family and Community Wellness Extension Agent

*“Cut the Clutter”*

Spring is the perfect time to refresh your home after months of being cooped up indoors. Clutter accumulates easily in busy households, whether from mail, magazines, games, tools, clothing, or outdated items. Taking the time to declutter can create a more organized and stress-free living space.

Choose a time that works for your household and dedicate a few days to decluttering. In each room, begin in one spot and work your way around in a clockwise direction until you’ve covered the entire space. As you go, sort items into four categories: keep, store, giveaway/sell, and throw away. Items you plan on keeping should be returned to their proper places, with similar items grouped together to make organization easier. Seasonal or rarely used items you are going to store should be placed in labeled storage containers such as “Sarah’s Winter Clothes” to ensure everything is easy to find when needed.

For items that you no longer need, consider donating them to secondhand stores, churches, or nonprofit organizations. Before dropping off donations, check what items are currently accepted to avoid creating clutter for someone else. New or good condition items can be sold online, at a consignment shop, or through a garage sale. If you go this route, follow through promptly so those items don’t end up in a corner collecting dust. Anything broken, ripped, worn out, or stained should be thrown away. Paper clutter can often be recycled, while larger unusable items may need a trip to the landfill.

Once your space is decluttered, it’s important to establish habits that will help keep it that way. The One Touch Rule is a great method that encourages handling items immediately instead of letting them pile up. For example, when you receive mail, sort it right away, bills get organized together, junk mail gets tossed, and important information is filed away. This small habit can prevent unnecessary clutter from accumulating over time.

Everyone in the household should take responsibility for picking up and putting away their belongings. Assign age-appropriate tasks, keeping in mind that younger children may need guidance as they learn new responsibilities. Be patient, adjusting to these changes may take some time. Expect these tasks to take two to four weeks to become a natural part of your household routine, but with consistency and encouragement, everyone will get on board.

Information comes from Kansas State University Publications.

Join Walk Kansas this year! Go solo or form a team to track your exercise minutes over eight weeks and complete a virtual trail across Kansas. The program runs from March 30 to May 24, registration is open until April 7. The top team members and individual with the most activity minutes each week will be entered in a drawing to win a free month of membership to The Gym. For more details or to sign up, contact the Greenwood County Extension Office or visit [WalkKansas.org](http://WalkKansas.org).