



FEATURE ARTICLE FROM ALWAYS BEST CARE

Spring Cleaning Tips

Matt Paxton, founder of the premier hoarding and estate cleanup company, Clutter Cleaners, and author of *The Secret Lives of Hoarders*, offers his tips for spring cleaning. With the arrival of warm weather, it's the perfect time to do maintenance chores around the house. "Now is the time to start preparing for summer guests, and get rid of clothes that no longer fit," Paxton states.

- **Fresh start.** Change all the air filters in the house. Most of us forget to change these monthly, and seeing the dirt that has collected will make you want to clean the rest of your house.
- **Spring forward.** Look around the house and remove all your "cold weather" holiday items. Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah and Valentines decorations are ready to be stored away. Use your smartphone to take pictures of the addresses from your holiday cards before tossing them in the trash. Be realistic when storing these items and donate excess decorations each year. The goal should be to keep no more than one box per holiday.
- **Quick closet cleanout.** When you are going through your clothes, it's easy to lose countless hours making decisions. My advice is to simply be honest. This year I finally got rid of my size 28 jeans. I've been a size 36 for 5 years. Hang up winter coats and store unused boots and shoes in the back of the closet. Limit the sorting to no more than 30 minutes at a time and clean every other day until your house is clean and spacious. Keeping a nice throw blanket close to your couch will clear up space and keep you warm all spring long.
- **Get ready for guests.** Sweep out the garage and/or porches. Yup, pull all the items out, sweep off the entire floor and replace the items one by one by importance for spring/summer. Box up the winter stuff and store it in the garage. Involve the family in the process and donate what doesn't fit. A really nice touch is to vacuum the door mats (inside and out).
- **Paper, paper, paper.** Make space for the spring and clear off those counter tops. If it's for the IRS, save it. All other bills that aren't due this month, SHRED or toss it. If you owe them money, they know where you live. If you haven't read January's magazines yet, you probably won't. Recycling is the best way to clear

off the counter tops. Look for free local shredding days that show up in the spring.

- **Digital picture frame.** Tired of asking your kids and grandkids to send pictures? Consider getting a digital picture frame. There are wireless frames that allow family members to email pictures from their smart phones directly to your home. Waking up to find new pictures from your friends and family never gets old. Not only is it fun, but it also decreases the amount of printed emails and mail cluttering up your kitchen and refrigerator. Have a family member set up the frame, so it doesn't sit waiting to be setup in the box on your floor.

Matt Paxton has appeared on more than 52 episodes of the television show "Hoarders." He's been cleaning hoarded homes for 10 years and shares his insights and effective techniques to understand, motivate and successfully communicate with hoarders and their family members.

You can watch the Season Premier of the Emmy nominated show *Hoarders* on Thursday, May 28 at 9/8c.

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June, 2015