

HEALTHY HOMES: DEALING WITH HOUSEHOLD CLUTTER

What is Clutter?

Clutter is a collection of things lying around in an untidy mess, usually because we don't have a designated place for it. It can be all kinds of different stuff that people buy, receive and/or collect over the years. Clutter can accumulate anywhere – it can start in one small space, like a dining room table, and eventually spread to take over a whole room, or in severe cases, a whole house. Some prime sources of clutter include paper (mail, bills, etc.), books & magazines, toys & games, hobby materials, shoes & clothes, tools & hardware, cleaning supplies, and laundry.

Why Should You Be Concerned About Clutter?

Household clutter has a big impact on your health and quality of life. It can be so out of control that people fall and injure themselves because they cannot reach things or maneuver around piles of junk. This can be especially hazardous for elderly people or people with limited mobility. Most people spend 90% of their time indoors – a lot of which is spent at home. Home is the place you start and end your day, the place where you spend time with family and friends. Research has indicated that a clean house can positively affect your physical and mental health. By cutting down on "stuff," you make room to socialize with the people who matter to you.



Does Clutter Really Affect Indoor Air Quality?

Yes – piles of clutter that are left undisturbed for long periods of time can accumulate dust, dirt and allergens, including pet hair and dander, pollen, dust mites and other pests. Mold can also develop undetected if the area is damp. If someone smokes cigarettes in a cluttered home, the walls and furnishings can become tinged with yellow and smell of smoke. This is especially hazardous for people with asthma, children, and the elderly.

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Health & Human Science News

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 2022

- 10 Extension Homemakers Executive Council, 2:00 PM, Comm. Center, 4-H Park
- 10 Extension Homemakers President’s Council, 3:00 PM, Comm. Center, 4-H Park
- 17 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day—County Offices Closed
- 18-20 Fort Wayne Farm Show, Allen County Memorial Coliseum



February 2022

- 3 Toddler Block Party, City Hall, 11am-12noon
- 14-20 Random Acts of Kindness Week
- 17 Extension Annual Meeting
- 21 President’s Day—County Offices Closed

March 2022

- 14 Extension Homemakers Executive Council, 2:00 PM, Comm. Center, 4-H Park
- 14 Extension Homemakers President’s Council, 3:00 PM, Comm. Center, 4-H Park
- 16 IEHA District Spring Meeting, Noble County

April 2022

- 15 Good Friday—County Offices Closed
- 17 Easter
- 21 Volunteer Community Support Day, 9AM–2PM



ServSafe Training and Exam Schedule

February 4	Allen County Extension Office	Exam Only	9 AM
February 23	Noble County Extension Office	Exam Only	9 AM
March 16	Allen County Extension Office	1 Day Training /Exam	8 AM–4 PM Exam @ 4:30
March 30	Huntington County—location TBD	1 Day Training /Exam	8 AM–4 PM Exam @ 4:30
April 12	Adams County Extension Office	1 Day Training /Exam	8 AM–4 PM Exam @ 4:30
April 21	Noble County Extension Office	1 Day Training	8 AM–4 PM
April 26	Noble County Extension Office	Exam	9 AM

To register, go to <https://www.purdue.edu/servsafe> or contact the Purdue Education Store—Phone: 765-494-6794 or email: edustore@purdue.edu

Healthy Homes: Dealing with Household Clutter

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Do You Have a Problem with Clutter?

If you think you may have a problem with household clutter, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have to move things around or step over things to get around your house?
- Are tables and counters filled with so many items that you have few (if any) free spaces?
- Are your drawers, closets and other storage areas overflowing with “stuff”?
- Do you have piles of papers that you plan to sort through but never do?
- Do you lose things and have to search for them several times a week?
- Do you keep things in a storage facility on an ongoing basis?
- Are dirty dishes and empty drink cans left out for more than 24 hours?
- Are you ashamed to invite company over to your house because of clutter?
- Are your closets full of clothes and shoes that you no longer wear?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you have a clutter problem! Read on for steps you can take to de-clutter your home.

Take Charge and Clear Your Clutter

Assemble your very own Clutter Emergency Kit – stock it with large garbage bags, a broom and dust pan, a vacuum cleaner, storage boxes, a marker and labels, multipurpose and glass cleaners, a mop, paper towels, and laundry detergent. Why the cleaning products? After you clear the clutter, you will need to clean the newly exposed surfaces. You can also use different kinds of containers to help with your sorting – anything from boxes to different sizes of plastic containers or bags will work.

Start by sorting items into separate piles: keep, trash (or recycle), donate, sell, or uncertain.

Experts estimate that people only use about 20% of the items in their home. This means the other 80% is potential clutter. Take a good look

at your “stuff” and be honest with yourself about what you really use. Only keep things that you need and will use or that have a strong personal meaning to you. Don’t confuse things with memories. Our memories of people and events in our past will be with us long after the “stuff” is gone.

- ⇒ **KEEP** – put items you will keep in this pile. Sort like items together so they will be easier to put away. Create organized centers for things like cleaning products, office supplies, cooking, makeup, hardware, etc. The keep pile may be divided into two separate categories in some cases:
 - ◇ Things to keep and put away now OR
 - ◇ Things that are broken or need repair before they can be put away. If you haven’t repaired a “keep” item in two months, dispose of it.
- ⇒ **GIVE AWAY** – put items you will give to friends or donate to charity in this box.
- ⇒ **TRASH/RECYCLE** – put items that need to be thrown away in trash bags or recycling containers.
- ⇒ **SELL** – put items that can be sold for a profit on websites (like eBay or Craigslist), at consignment shops, or yard sales in this box.
- ⇒ **UNCERTAIN** – put items that you are unsure about in this box. If you have enough room, keep the box for 6 months. If you haven’t needed anything in the box after 6 months, get rid of it.



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Be sure to deal with sorted items as soon as possible after de-cluttering. For example, take bags of trash and recycling to the recycling center and give items to friends, the Good Will, or Salvation Army. If you are selling items on a website, list them as soon as possible. If you need to have a yard sale, try to plan to have it within a couple of weeks. Donate the stuff that doesn't sell online or at your yard sale.

Maintenance

To maintain your clutter free home, the whole family has to understand that everyone needs to pick up after themselves. Doing a little cleaning and straightening every day can save you the hassle of going through this whole process again. Use the 60 second rule – if it takes no longer than 60 seconds to put something away, then go ahead and put it away instead of laying it down for “the time being.” Make a chore chart and assign age appropriate jobs for everyone in the house, so everyone knows that they are expected to do their part to keep things clutter free. Stay firm and don't do anyone else's share of the work or one of two things will happen – you will always do their share of the work or the clutter will slowly build back up. Remember, it takes two weeks minimum for a new chore to become a routine.



Source: University of Georgia Extension

Apple Chicken Salad Recipe



Ingredients

- 2 red apples (such as Cameo Apples)
- 2 celery stalks (diced)
- 2 chicken breasts (skinless, cooked, diced, about 2 cups)
- 1/4 cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 16 lettuce leaves (Bibb, Romaine, green or red leaf)

Directions

1. Cut apples in quarters; remove core and chop.
2. In a medium size bowl, mix all ingredients, except lettuce.
3. To serve, arrange lettuce on serving plates top with apple and chicken salad.

Notes:

Weekly Menu Planning Tip: When you're planning a dinner with chicken cook up extra chicken breast and refrigerate for later use in this salad.

Serve with 8 oz. non-fat milk and 1 slice rustic whole grain bread.

Source: Produce for Better Health Foundation

60 Things to Toss Out in the Next 60 Days

1. Wrapping paper scraps
2. Christmas lights that don't work
3. Out of date magazines
4. Old receipts that you don't need
5. Worn out hair ties
6. Unmatched earrings
7. Worn out or unmatched socks
8. Old CDs
9. Damaged / worn out sunglasses
10. Out of date makeup products
11. Out of date hair products
12. Out of date skincare products
13. Worn out undergarments
14. Scarves that never see the light of day
15. Ragged t-shirts
16. Expired meds
17. Scraps of mail
18. Expired coupons
19. Gifts you don't use/want
20. Gloopy nail polish
21. Old electronics
22. Tarnished jewelry
23. Makeup bags you never use
24. Change purses you never use
25. Actual purses you never use
26. Worn out sheets
27. Old pillows
28. Worn out or scuffed shoes
29. Boxes
30. Empty jars or storage containers
31. Old phones
32. Store rewards cards you never use
33. Shopping bags
34. Frayed or stained towels
35. Frayed or stained washcloths
36. Old school books
37. Old phone covers
38. Candles that have burned out
39. Books you don't enjoy
40. Ragged nail accessories
41. DVDs you don't watch
42. Any duplicate hair accessories
43. Tattered makeup brushes
44. Gunked up makeup sponges
45. Promo t-shirts you never wear
46. Jeans that don't fit just right
47. Belts you don't wear
48. Old school bags
49. Empty or almost empty products
50. Knickknacks that are taking up space
51. Old gift cards
52. Product samples
53. Old paperwork
54. Delete & Unsubscribe to store emails
55. Delete junk emails
56. Delete music you don't enjoy
57. Delete unwanted & duplicate photos
58. Delete unwanted apps from your phone
59. Delete old texts or contacts
60. Cancel digital services you don't use

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS WEEK

Random Acts of Kindness week is February 14-20, 2022. Did you know there are a multitude of health benefits to practicing acts of kindness? Random acts of kindness can...

- Increase Happiness
- Increase Energy
- Increase Lifespan
- Increase Serotonin
- Decrease Depression
- Decrease Stress
- Decrease Anxiety
- Decrease Pain
- Decrease Blood Pressure



Need some suggestions to get you started? Here are some great ideas that won't break the bank:

- Consider virtual kindness options like inviting someone new to a zoom call
- Send a text to your Mom and/or Dad letting them know how much they mean to you
- Make or take a meal to a family that is going through a difficult time
- Build a snowman outside the window of a resident of a long-term care facility
- Open the door or hold the door for somebody
- Write a note/letter to a teacher who has positively impacted your life
- Bake something for a neighbor
- Write a thank you note to somebody who works in the school office or cafeteria
- Text someone on your team and say, "I like having you on our team because _____"
- Bring in the garbage cans for a neighbor
- Pay for the person behind you in line
- Tape a dollar bill to a vending machine with a note that says "your snack is on me"
- Call a relative you haven't spoken to in a while and catch up.
- Place notes with positive messages in library books, on lockers or on the restroom mirrors at your school
- Put a note in your mailbox for the postman, thanking him/her for what they do
- Offer to help a teacher with a task
- Wash someone's car
- Surprise someone by bringing them a favorite snack or drink they love
- Help a fellow student study for a test or with homework
- Sit next to someone who is sitting alone at lunch and have a conversation with them
- Do the dishes or another household chore unexpectedly
- Write a letter to your advisor or coach, listing your favorite 3 things about them
- Make a care bag for a homeless person (bottle of H2O, toothbrush, socks, snack...)
- Go to a friend's or family member's sporting event or concert to support them
- Visit an elderly care home.
- Leave a "Have a Great Day" note on someone's car in a parking lot
- Make two lunches and give one to someone
- Bring a treat to the local fire house and thank them for their service
- Compliment someone to their boss
- Help clean up trash at the end of lunch or around campus
- When in class or at practice and a partner is needed choose someone who is usually left out.
- Dedicate 24 hours to spreading positivity on social media
- Ask somebody over 50 to tell you about their best childhood memory
- Offer to help an elderly person with a chore
- Return shopping carts in a parking lot
- Hold up inspiring signs during rush hour or another location in need of inspiration
- Let someone go ahead of you in line
- Take a treat to your librarian or custodian and thank them for what they do
- Make a list of your favorite things about each person in your family and hang it on the refrigerator
- Give someone a book that you liked
- Give some flowers to somebody to brighten their day
- Make a playlist for someone
- Send a favorite quote to a person in need
- Volunteer for a non profit
- Spend 10 minutes cleaning up your neighborhood park

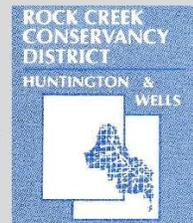
Source: randomactsmatter.com

Wells County
Soil & Water Conservation District's
 66th Annual Meeting,
Rock Creek Conservancy District's
 55th Annual Meeting,
Purdue Extension Service's
 Annual Meeting



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Extension - Wells County



Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022 @ 6:00 P.M.

Wells County Community Center

1240 4-H Park Road, Bluffton, IN 46714

Dinner will be provided by:

Norm's Catering

Annual Business Meetings

Award Presentations

Please Join Us!!!

To receive a complimentary ticket, please reserve by Feb. 11th.

Speaker: Tom Crowe, Consulting Forester

Crowe has been a private forestry consultant in northeast Indiana since 1985, assisting private, mostly non-industrial forest landowners with management of their forestland, including program assistance (NRCS technical service provider - TSP), appraisals and management plans, timber sales and tax assistance, forest stand improvement, invasive species control, and tree planting and plantation management. BS degree in forest management from Purdue University in 1983. Allen County SWCD supervisor for over 20 years, NACD Forest Resource Policy committee since 2008 and National Joint Forestry Team member since 2010.

“Healthy Forests, Productive Forests”

-with proper management forestlands can earn as much as cropland.

Contact the SWCD or Purdue Extension Office
for more information or to reserve tickets.

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Wells Co. 4-H Enrollment



Youth in grades 3-12 (grades K-2 for Mini 4-H) are encouraged to join Wells County 4-H now through January 15th.

To enroll go to V2.4HOnline.com

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