

EverydayKitsap

A Kitsap County Public Works Publication

Solid Waste Division

Waste reduction and recycling, garbage, litter, business technical assistance, and household hazardous waste

Stormwater Division

Stormwater infrastructure and maintenance, water quality protection, and habitat improvement

Sewer Utility Division

Sewer service, wastewater treatment plants, and pump and lift stations

Roads Division

Engineering, construction, traffic, survey, right of way, and maintenance

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> KitsapGov.com/pw Kitsap1: 360.337.5777 or email: help@kitsap1.com

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Kitsap County Public Works 614 Division St. MS-26 Port Orchard, WA 98366



An APWA accredited agency

director's note



66 We are dedicated to making your every day a great day > >

itsap County Public Works strives to make your every day a great day! Through the infrastructure and services we provide, Public Works supports the daily lives of people and businesses in Kitsap County. We continually work to improve and make Kitsap County a better place to live, work, and play. You can help by following the tips and techniques we discuss in this magazine and becoming an advocate for a better way.

Our everyday lives impact the people and environment around us. By reusing products and materials more while disposing of less, we can reduce the amount of garbage in our waste stream. By being mindful of the products and methods we use to operate, clean, and manage our homes and businesses, we can reduce our impact on the environment. By joining in to clean up a roadside, build a rain garden, pick up our pet waste, or fix our leaking vehicles, we can improve our neighborhoods across Kitsap County.

Learn about how you can make a difference in Kitsap County and become a leader in your community. Let's work together to make every day a great day!

> Inhu B. Mlan Andrew B. Nelson, P.E. - Public Works Director

Do You Dig

Call 811 at least a few days before you start any digging project – big or small. Whether you are planning to do it yourself or hire a professional, smart digging means calling 811 before every job.

811 sends utility crews to mark the utility lines in the area where you will dig. If you dig without calling, you could disrupt utility services for your whole neighborhood, cause injuries, or pay repair costs or fines.

Planting a shrub in your yard? Call! Burying a new mailbox post? Call! Searching for gold? Call!





LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

Take a brief online survey about this magazine for a chance to win an

Amazon Fire 7" Tablet

Don't miss out! Visit kcowa.us/eksurvey



Waste Away

A crisis has people wondering: what is recycling's future?

fter decades of public education campaigns, most Americans recycle. It feels like an easy way to help the Earth. Give dirty containers a quick rinse, pop them in the blue cart, and they're taken away to become something new.

Governments and waste management companies have invested lots of time and money into modern recycling. It's now a critical part of dealing with the waste Americans create (4.4 pounds of waste per person per day, more than any other country). Yet less than half this waste is recycled or composted.

So why can't we just recycle more? Well, the current recycling system is in trouble.

Recycling's Global Crisis

For the last 25 years, China's booming manufacturing industry was eager to buy America's recyclables. China needed cheap and reliable raw materials for making the stuff they were selling back to us. Even if our recyclables were low quality, they cleaned them up and used them. China was the #1 buyer of our recyclables, and Washington state relied on them as many American manufacturers closed or moved overseas.

In 2018, China made an announcement that changed recycling overnight. They restricted imports of certain recyclables, including mixed paper, most plastics, and dirty recyclables contaminated with plastic bags, food residue, and trash. They wanted to clean up their environment, and a growing Chinese middle class was creating enough recyclables to meet their need.



Since this announcement, America's waste management companies have struggled to sell some types of recyclables. Yet these companies are still working hard to keep recyclables out of landfills.

Metal cans, corrugated cardboard, glass, and high-quality plastics like water bottles and milk jugs can still be recycled in North America. Mixed paper is harder to sell domestically, so recyclers currently sell most of it to SE Asian recyclers. Low-quality plastics have never been accepted in Kitsap's recycling program because they are not recyclable with our region's current technologies.

Our Recycling System is Flawed

Americans are consuming more and more stuff, and manufacturers design much of it to be used once and then thrown away. Our current recycling system simply cannot keep up with the

amount of stuff we buy and toss! Even if another nation replaces China as the world's #1 recycling buyer, we still need to fix some serious flaws in the system.

The first flaw is that manufacturers do not pay for the disposal or recycling of the items they make. That responsibility falls to you, the consumer. Because they do not pay this cost, they sometimes design products and packaging that cannot be reused, repaired, or easily recycled.

One solution is to create "producer responsibility programs" that shift the cost and responsibility of waste back to the manufacturers. These programs incentivize manufacturers to create long-lasting, reusable, repairable, or recyclable products. Washington's government has created these programs for TVs and computers, mercury-containing light bulbs, and solar panels (and recently, paint!), but similar programs are not yet in place for common items like packaging.

The second flaw is that we cannot recycle items that manufacturers don't want. Right now, nobody forces manufacturers to use recycled materials. It's often cheaper for them to use new materials instead of recycled ones, especially when the price of oil is low. Luckily, this is starting to change. Thirteen leading brands, retailers, and packaging companies recently committed to using more recyclable materials in their products. Read about these commitments at NewPlasticsEconomy.org.

The final flaw is one that you can help fix today: your recyclables are too dirty. Some people carelessly toss garbage into the recycling, but most people care about recycling and think they're recycling right. Unfortunately, many people are "wish-cycling." This means putting wrong or dirty items into the recycling cart with the hope they will be washed or recycled by someone. Our recycling system does not yet have intelligent robots to sort and wash our recyclables with 100% accuracy. We rely on you doing the right thing!

What You Can Do to Help

Recycle right

Recyclables must be empty, clean, and dry. Wash dirty food containers with soapy water (or in the dishwasher) and shake it dry (or let it air dry). Do not "wish-cycle" items and don't rely on the misleading recycling symbol printed on packages.

The items on Kitsap County's Recycling



Guide are the ONLY items that can go into the recycling bin. Go to *Recycle*. *KitsapGov.com* to see the guide.

Put only these items in the recycling:

- Flattened and dry cardboard. Tape is OK.
- Clean paper and paper boxes that are flat and larger than a postcard.
- Clean metal cans. Paper labels are OK. Leave the lid partially attached and push it into the can.
- Clean glass bottles and jars. No other glass items allowed. Paper labels are OK, but put caps in the trash.
- Clean milk and juice cartons with "gable-tops".
- Clean plastic bottles, jugs, jars, and dairy tubs. No other plastic items allowed. If your bottle is fully wrapped in a plastic sleeve, remove and throw away the sleeve.

As of May 2019, Kitsap County does not have immediate plans to change our recycling list. Years ago, we created our list to include only items that are usually

easy to sell. We are studying the list right now and will notify you if we need to make changes.

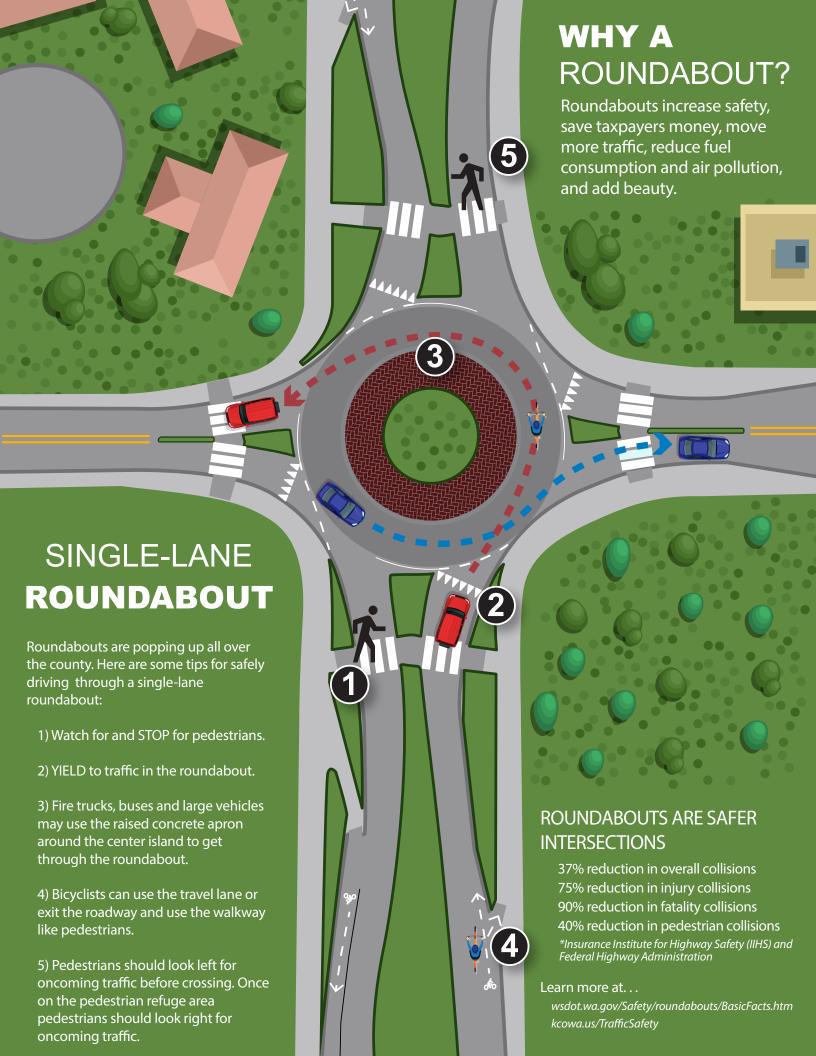
Demand innovation

Tell the companies you buy from that you want long-lasting, repairable, and recyclable products made with recycled materials. Tell them in an email, on social media, or by not buying their products! Some companies say their items are recyclable, but recyclers will tell you that this is not always true.

Tell your government what types of programs and regulations you want. 2019 has been a record-breaking year for Washington state waste reduction legislation. Read about these legislative efforts at *ZeroWasteWashington.org*.

Reduce your personal waste

If recycling has been your thing, take it to the next level! In this issue of *Everyday Kitsap*, you'll find tips for reducing your household's waste. Although the problem of waste does not rest solely on the shoulders of individuals, individual actions can and do push manufacturers and recyclers to create better waste systems for a better future.



Tiny Tips To make your life easier



Dining Out

Keep a few washable food containers in your vehicle or bag.

The next time you eat at a restaurant, take the containers inside for leftovers. (For easy portion control, put half your meal into the containers right away!)

After you wash the containers, set your keys on top of them so you remember to take them with you.



Get a Fix

Everybody knows you can hire someone to fix your cars and major appliances. But did you know you can get your smaller household stuff repaired or mended, too?

In Kitsap County, we have repair shops and services for sewing machines, small engines, watches and jewelry, vacuums, clothing, shoes, upholstery, appliances, knife and scissor sharpening, computers, TVs, cell phones, lamps, diesel farm equipment, and more!



Avoid the Grind

Sink disposals may be convenient for after dinner cleanup, but they can lead to clogged drains or the occasional mangled dinner fork. Put your organic food scraps to practical use by composting.

You'll help prevent clogs and keep food waste out of the landfill. Meat and grease can't go in your backyard compost, so put these in your garbage or curbside compost. See page 10 to learn more about composting.



STYRO-Roundup

What should you do with unwanted Styrofoam™ blocks or peanuts? Handle them with care! The spongy plastic easily breaks into tiny pieces that can pollute the waters of our lovely Puget Sound.

Option#1: Save them for our upcoming STYRO-Roundup collection event! Collected foam is turned into solid blocks that manufacturers use to make picture frames, eye glass frames, software cases, and more. Visit Recycle. KitsapGov.com to learn about our July 29 collection event.

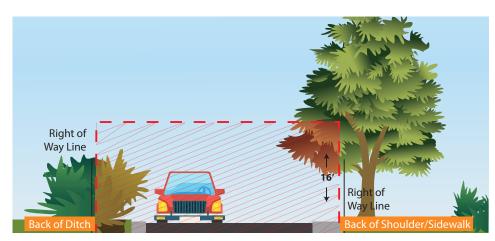
Option #2: Bag them and put it in the garbage. Garbage landfills are safe places to put materials we do not want to escape into the environment. Never put foam in the recycling bin.

Curb Appeal

Did you know that property owners are responsible for maintaining any vegetation in the county right of way? The right of way is the area along your property frontage reserved for road use. Maintenance is important because road users need good sight lines. It also helps prevent flooding caused by built-up yard debris.

If you are unable to maintain the vegetation, county crews will do it. However, we have limited time and resources and are not professional landscapers. We landscape using a large mowing arm that is not very delicate. For this reason, we encourage

property owners to do their own maintenance! You can sign up for the "Owner Will Maintain" program to let county crews know you plan to do the work yourself. Go to *kcowa.us/ RoadMaint* to learn more.







DID YOU GET YOUR CAN THE GREASE KIT?

If you're a Kitsap County Sewer customer,

Kit contains a reusable can lid, scraper to transfer grease to a can, and instructions for proper grease disposal.

we have one for you!

Call Kitsap1: 360.337.5777

JANUARY:

Take burned-out CFL bulbs to a free LightRecycle WA site. Find one at Recycle.KitsapGov.com.



FEBRUARY:

Set your reusable water bottle or mug next to your purse or keys each night so you don't forget them.



MARCH:

Shop Naked! But with your clothing on. Learn how on page 12.

APRIL:

Opt-out of junk mail by using a service like



catalogchoice.org.

MAY:

Keep reusable cutlery and straws in your bag or vehicle to avoid singleuse plastics.



JUNE:

Hang the Kitsap County Recycling Guide and help your family stop "wishcycling" the wrong stuff. Get the guide at Recycle.KitsapGov.com.



GREEN ONE MONTH AT A TIME



Making the decision to go eco-friendly doesn't have to be scary. One small change can make a difference!

Commit to making one small change a month to make a bigger impact in our community.

Sign-up at kcowa.us/gogreen for a reminder at the start of each month.

JULY:



AUGUST:



Properly store fruits or veggies that often go bad in your home. Find our Food 2 Good 2 Waste guide at kcowa.us/f2g2w.

SEPTEMBER:

Avoid single-use plastic food wraps. Use a plate, shower cap, or beeswax wrap to cover bowls.



OCTOBER:



Clean your kitchen with washable cloth rags instead of paper towels.

NOVEMBER:



Time vourself in the shower. Can you beat 5 minutes?

DECEMBER:



Clean with white vinegar and baking soda. It works!

Snow Angels

Keeping Kitsap's streets safe when the weather gets frosty

y the time Super Bowl 2019 was reaching half time, Super Storm 2019 was hitting Kitsap County. Road Maintenance crews swung into action to clear major roadways critical to the County's road system.

As the storm raged on, Public Works employees worked overtime to maintain the high level of service Kitsap residents expect and are accustomed to. Road crews returned to roads over and over to clear snow, remove downed trees and respond to road closures. Sewer utility workers sent staff to remote pump stations and the Central Kitsap

Treatment Plant to keep them operating through power failures. As the storm finally melted away, crews cleared storm drains to prevent flooding. By the end of "Snowmageddon", four major storms had pummeled the County with over 20 inches of snow, and crews had worked around the clock for nearly two weeks in response.

Responding to this one storm event cost the County over \$500,000!

While Snowmaggedon was an exception to the rule, the County must be prepared to respond to these types

of weather events or a catastrophic roadway event (like major culvert fails or a bridge washes out) with staff, equipment, and a healthy road operational budget.

To learn more, we've created a three-installment story about the County's road system—how our roadway system developed, the cost of maintaining the system and how it is funded, and what's in store for the financial future of our roadway system. Read the first installment at kcowa.us/GettingYouThere.



The Mummy's Curse

What you find in the landfill might scare you

In the 1970s, American professor William Rathje and his students dug into landfills to study the garbage our society creates. "The Garbage Project" discovered something surprising:

Landfills "mummify" food

Even after 25 years in a landfill, a head of lettuce still looks like a head of lettuce! There is not enough oxygen inside a landfill for composting bacteria to survive, so food remains largely intact taking up space and releasing greenhouse gases.

In 2016, Washington's Department of Ecology did their own garbage study, and they even came to Kitsap County to sort and weigh our waste. They learned:

- Non-edible food (like banana peels) is the #1 item we throw away at home.
- Yard waste (leaves, grass, branches) is the #2 item we throw away at home.
- Around 42% of our household trash is material that could have been composted.

Spooky! Even worse, Kitsap County doesn't have working landfills. Our garbage must travel 300 miles by train to a landfill in Arlington, Oregon. Food and yard waste are full of water, so they're heavy and bulky. We use a lot of energy to move this waste to the landfill and it takes up a lot of space once there.

Start Composting Today

Curbside compost service makes composting easy.

pg 10 | Spring 2019 | KitsapGov.com

Most people in Kitsap County can get

curbside compost collection for their single-family home. The current cost is around \$8 per month. Simply put your food scraps and yard waste into the provided cart and your waste hauler will take it to a local, privately-owned composting facility.

Visit *kcowa.us/curbside* and type your address into the composting map tool to see if your single-family home is eligible for this service.

Not in the service area?

35% of single-family homes are not in the current service area for curbside composting. We want to change this, but we need your help. Let us know you're interested in seeing the service area expand to your neighborhood!

Visit *kcowa.us/curbside*, type your address into the composting map tool, and complete the form. This data helps us measure demand and plan for the future of Kitsap's composting services.

Do you live in a multifamily apartment or condo? The rules are a bit different for these commercial properties. Property owners or managers can contact private waste haulers to ask about curbside compost services.

Backyard or Drop-Off Composting

You can compost without curbside service! Take your yard waste to a local composting business or compost at home with a backyard pile or worm compost bin. Visit *Recycle.KitsapGov. com f*or composting resources.

Already have yard waste service?

You can include food scraps in your yard waste cart, even if it is labeled "YARD WASTE ONLY."

Visit *kcowa.us/includethefood* to learn which food items can go in!



ZERO WASTE FOR YOUR PETS

We've been trying to reduce our use of plastics like single-use bags, but there's one place where these bags still rule - holding your pet's waste. Picking up poop protects Puget Sound because bacteria can be carried into waterways by storm runoff.

It's important to get these bags into the trash. It can be tempting to leave it on the trail and come back for it later, but it's easy to forget and even "biodegradable" bags become another source of plastic – and bacteria! - in the environment.

Fortunately, there are lots of products to help you carry the bag all the way to the trash can. Hands-free bag carriers come in a variety of styles, from leash hangers to packs your dog can carry himself. There are even containers that keep odors locked away until the mission is complete.

THE NITTY GRITTY FOR KITTIES

Kick the plastic grocery bag! Here are 'zero waste' ways to get 'litter gems' to the can.

- What goes in, comes out Reuse your cat food bag. It's good for several box cleanings.
- Second life Give your existing waste another job! Chip or cereal bags, frozen food bags, or other solid-bottomed items can double as kitty litter holders on their way to the trash.
- Fur baby Just like diaper pails, there are litter pails that keep multiple scoopings inside without any odor until the bag inside is full.



Leftovers?

Get rid of your extra medications

Bring unwanted or expired prescription and over-the-counter medications to a new MED-Project drug disposal kiosk!

Go to MED-Project.org and enter your zip code to see a list of accepted medications and to find a kiosk near you. Free disposal kiosks are located at participating pharmacies, clinics, hospitals, and law enforcement offices throughout the County.

MED-Project also provides free medication mail-back services for homebound and differently-abled persons Visit MED-Project.org to request a free mail-back package.

Safe disposal of medications helps reduce improper drug use, prevent accidental poisonings, and keep our drinking water and Puget Sound environment clean.

Can You Recycle Empty Pill Bottles?

White bottles – YES, but only if they're bigger than 3". Please put the caps in your garbage.

Amber-colored bottles - NO. Please reuse amber-colored pill bottles, but don't put them in the recycling bin.



Save an Orca



Our Puget Sound orcas depend on clean water. Rain gardens make your home beautiful, help with your home's drainage, and keep polluted runoff out of streams and Puget Sound. Find out how to get your own! *Kcowa.us/orcagarden*



Shop Naked

Tips for zero waste grocery shopping

"shop naked" at grocery stores across Kitsap County, from WinCo to Central Market. It's easy! I just try to buy as little packaging as possible. I don't worry about being totally "zero waste," but I do make it my goal to buy most of my groceries without packaging.

Shopping zero waste has three big benefits: you reduce your personal waste, create positive "peer pressure" on those shopping around you, and show stores and companies that you prefer buying less packaging. These little actions are starting to add up; big names like Trader Joe's are now reducing packaging in their stores.

Try these tips the next time you shop -but please wear clothing while you do.

1) Skip plastic produce bags

Fruits and veggies grew their own protective skin (and experts recommend you wash it), so there's no need to bag them. Stores don't mind.

Worried about germs? Well, many hands have already touched your produce by the time it gets to your cart. Set your produce on or inside your shopping bag if you want to make a barrier between your food and the cart.

Storing produce and keeping it fresh without plastic bags is easy. Search online for "storing produce without plastic" instructions.

2) Choose low-package items

Sometimes you have a choice of packaging. Can you buy loose potatoes instead of a plastic bag of potatoes? A head of lettuce instead of a plastic container? Crackers wrapped in paper instead of a box and plastic? Loose

bagels instead of a bag? Loose coffee beans or tea?

3) Remember your reusable shopping bags

- Stick them under your purse, car keys, or grocery list. Hang them on your door handle.
- Divide your bags into two sets and keep one set in your car.
- Set them on your driver's seat.
- Write "remember bags!" at the top of your grocery list.
- Tell your kids or partner you'll give them a dollar or a cookie every time they catch you forgetting the bags.

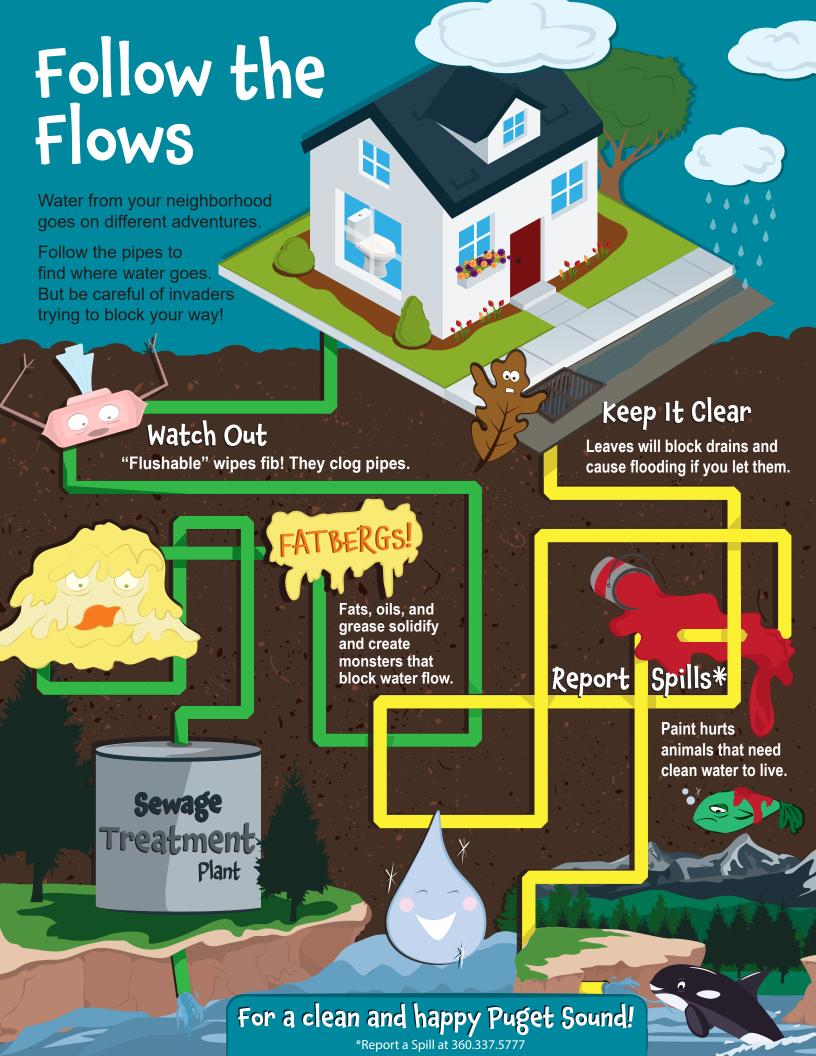
4) Use washable cloth bags for small produce, bulk food, and bakery treats

Many local stores let you use your own containers. And shopping bulk often saves you money!

I recommend cloth bags because they're lightweight, long-lasting, and washable. They weigh a bit more than plastic bulk bags, so expect to pay a few extra pennies. Or ask your store how checkers can subtract the "tare weight" of your empty bag.

When I get home, I transfer my goodies into a glass food storage container and pop the cloth bags into the wash. Some stores allow you to put bulk items directly into jars, but make sure you ask first so you don't end up paying for the weight of the jar.





Smart Sizing

Clearing through and cleaning up the clutter

lutter can overwhelm your home and prevent your mind from relaxing. Studies show that clutter has real effects on our mental and physical health. But if the thought of sorting through a lifetime of stuff feels paralyzing, never fear! We have some suggestions for tackling the task.

Move on it

Every journey begins with a single step and the first is the most important. Give yourself permission to move at your own pace, and tackle just one room or pile at a time.

Try a decluttering strategy like Marie Kondo's "KonMari" method. This method helps you look at each item and evaluate its usefulness. Following a methodical system helps keep you from becoming overwhelmed.

Move it out

Once you've sorted your items into "keep" or "no longer useful," it's time to move it out.

- Repair it. Local repair businesses can fix shoes, clothing, electronics, motors, vacuums, sewing machines and more. Even if you don't plan to keep the item, repairing it will allow you to sell it more easily.
- Trash or Recycle it. Some things are beyond fixing. Visit Recycle. KitsapGov.com to learn how and where to bring it. (Chunky TV, anyone?)
- Sell it. It doesn't matter what it is—there's probably a place to sell it! Want to stay local? Try Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace, or local sellers groups. Prefer

to sell from home? Try online services like eBay, Etsy, or other sites specific to your product. Clothing is difficult to sell because everyone usually has a pile of clothing they're trying to get rid of.

- **Upcycle it.** It's too good to toss, and you're still fond of it, but you don't LOVE/love it anymore. If it doesn't fit your style anymore, consider giving it a second life. Furniture is a great candidate for upcycling. Grab some sandpaper, a brush, and turn that ratty brown dresser into the funky piece of your dreams!
- Donate or Gift it. You can usually donate good-quality stuff to a thrift store or give it away online. (Parting with your prom dress is much less painful when you know its going to a high schooler in need.) Clothing donation boxes are in parking lots all over the county. Don't forget the receipt for your tax deduction!

Pro tip – if you're having a hard time evaluating clothing, try the closet hanger method. At the beginning of each year, reverse all the hangers in your closet. As you wear a piece, put it back on the correct way. At the end of the year, send the unused clothes on those backwards hangers packing!

Moving forward

Reward yourself now that the cleaning is done and you feel so good! Sit down, savor a cup of tea, and revel in your success. Here's how to keep that feeling.

 When an item comes up on your shopping list, think hard before

- you purchase. Is it a need or a want? Do you already have something that can take its place?
- Look for multi-use items and make each possession count. Pick the multi-use pressure cooker and banish the crock pot and rice steamer. Choose a bathroom stand with a cat box cubby underneath. It's your money - make it work for you!
- Think eco-friendly. Newspapers can become kitty litter. Go digital with music and books.
- Subscribe to the 'one item in, one item out' philosophy.
- Take a picture of it, rather than owning it.

You don't have to have a small house to feel the freedom of a smart-sized home.





ECRWSS



Gift experiences and services like movie or theater tickets, salon or spa visits, or childcare or cleaning favors.