

Conquering Christmas Chaos

Christmas is only six days away and that fact either excites or terrifies us! I love the fun and excitement of exchanging gifts, but I dread the chaos that can ensue. The new gifts and torn wrapping paper end up scattered about. Then, sometime before Valentine's Day, it's time to take down the Christmas decorations and move on. This month, I'll give you organizational tips to conquer, or at least minimize this Christmas chaos and ease your transition back into "normal" life.

First, **START NOW** to make room for the new stuff entering your life. I encourage the young and the old alike to ask themselves: "What can I get rid of to make room for new the new stuff coming in?" It is easier to give stuff away when you know that you are getting new stuff. This is a season to donate items to help others less fortunate than you to enjoy Christmas. This provides a great opportunity to teach our children to be generous. Once you receive your gifts, ask yourself the same question, and get rid of what you can, especially duplicates – how many shavers does a man really need? And another thing, only keep boxes for items for which the box is needed to return the item for warranty service. Unless you are planning on moving anytime soon, empty cardboard boxes just take up space and create a potential fire hazard.

After Christmas, you'll probably notice sales on holiday storage boxes. This provides a great opportunity to upgrade your storage. I prefer the clear storage bins; you can see what's inside, they are durable and the lids keep bugs and dust out. I also prefer rectangular bins over round bins as they are easier to stack and fill. You can even use different colors to differentiate between seasons, such as black for Halloween, orange for Thanksgiving and the traditional green and red for Christmas décor. If Christmas spending drained your budget start with one or two new containers this year and put the rest of your stuff in cardboard boxes, you can get more containers next year.

When taking down your Christmas decorations, remember to use the "zone" method I described in last month's article (available at www.clutterflies.org). You can even use the "zone" method to simplify and schedule the work. Focus on taking down and packing one "zone" at a time. By using zones, you can break this potentially daunting task into smaller, manageable pieces. As you pack, try to not store candles or glued items that can be damaged by heat in outside storage sheds or garages. Neatly roll any lighting on reels so as not to damage the bulbs and to make next year's decorating easier. If you are using cardboard boxes, place them on shelving to protect them from flooding. This will ensure that you have your special decorations for years to come.

Wishing everyone a very organized Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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Address This Mess
Las Cruces Sun News
December 2009