



*The* UNIVERSITY of  
WEST ALABAMA

## Spring Cleaning 101

Lately, it seems like organizing has become an extreme sport, with aggressive purges and cut-throat decisions about what “sparks joy.”

While Marie Kondo’s method of organizing is certainly popular, your spring cleaning doesn’t have to be quite so extreme. Here are a few ways you can freshen up your dorm room or apartment and start the spring semester with a clean slate:

**Clean out last semester’s books and notes.** As you go through the likely massive amount of paper you accumulated from last semester – everything from the class syllabus to a binder full of notes – consider building three piles. One pile for everything you know is trash, one pile you might want to sell (like textbooks) or share with someone who’s taking that class this semester, and one pile to keep. This “keep pile” is probably best suited for materials from classes in your major that you’ll want to refer back to in later classes.

**Swap seasonal clothes.** Now that winter’s over, it’s time to pack up those bulky coats and sweaters to make room for t-shirts, shorts and, yes, rain jackets. Fewer long sleeves and more sundresses. Fewer boots, more flip flops. Pack up your out-of-season clothes in plastic bins or boxes for storage, and if you have the luxury, haul them off to store in mom and dad’s garage. While you’re sorting, this is a great time to donate clothes you never wear, replace buttons, or mend items that are slightly worn, or discard those pieces that are beyond repair.

**Wash the things that don’t get washed too often.** Nothing makes a home feel quite as clean as the smell of freshly washed laundry. A great way to achieve that freshness is to launder those things that don’t go through the washer very often: shower curtains and bath mats, area rugs, curtains and bedding (comforter, blankets and pillows... not just the sheets). It may require a trip to the laundromat, but using a couple of commercial-sized machines, you’ll be done in no time.

**Air out your dorm room or apartment.** While the curtains and rugs are out, take the opportunity to let some fresh air in. After a winter of tightly sealed doors and windows, let some outside air circulate through open windows (and doors, too, if you can). But don’t leave the windows open too long, or you’ll just be swapping dust for pollen.

**Consider purging...at least a little.** Do you really need last year’s football schedule on your bulletin board? Or an entire drawer full of take-out menus, plastic utensils, and condiment packets? Try to fill at least one trash bag with things that are out of date, expired, or you know you don’t really need. Kitchen and desk drawers make great hiding places, so check there first.

Spring cleaning is definitely a chore, but it can be a cathartic start to a new semester and a new season. After all, your seasonal updates can seriously impact your mental clarity, meaning more brain space to hit the books!