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## Declutter and Fall in Love With Your Home Again

Decluttering your home can be an overwhelming task for most of us, but your efforts should result in a refreshing and less stressful environment. Here are a few tips from the experts to help you get started.

**Have a goal in mind.** Figure out the intent of your decluttering project. Do you want more space, less stress, or more organization to your space? This goal will keep you motivated.

**Start with the little stuff.** As we said, tackling the decluttering of an entire house can be overwhelming. Start with a specific area, and when we say specific, we mean specific. This can be a drawer. Next, try a closet, then a room, and work your way from there.

**Sort with purpose.** Experts suggest sorting your belongings into three categories. "Keep," "Donate," and "Toss." As you go through your task of sorting through items in question, ask yourself if the item is useful, or more importantly, if the item brings you, or anyone you know, joy.

**Digitize your paperwork.** Scan important papers to reduce paper clutter and store digital copies on an external hard drive or in the cloud. Digitizing sentimental paper items can encourage you to keep only

those paper items that are the most meaningful to you, and taking digital photos of others to store on a hard drive.

**Utilize creative storage solutions.** Use storage containers, shelves, and bins to help you get and *keep* things organized. Consider furniture available with built-in storage options, such as ottomans or beds with storage drawers.

**Categorize with storage bins.** Once you have put "like" items together for storage, label them clearly for easy reference. Categorize your items using logic. Group as "Kitchen," "Clothing," "Books," etc.

**Create home zones.** It's easier to think in terms of zones when you organize, so why not organize your living spaces by creating designated zones for a specific purpose? When your space is divided by zones for "relaxing" or "working," it helps prevent clutter from spreading throughout your home.

**Declutter on the regular.** Once you've successfully decluttered your home, keep up the routine. When you bring something new into your home, get rid of something old to maintain your clutter. Set aside a specific time each month to address clutter *before* it gets out of hand. You're going to fall in love with your home again.

## February Calendar

**February 2** - Groundhog Day

**February 10** - Home Warranty Day

**February 14** - St. Valentine's Day

**February 19** - Presidents Day

## Homeowner Tips



### Thermal Curtains Lower Heat Costs

According to the Department of Energy, "about 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through windows." Thermal curtains are made of usually 2-4 layers of material that provide thermal resistance *and* prevent thermal transmittance. In other words, they keep the heat in and the cold out. They are a great way to reduce your home's heat loss by up to 25% in the winter.

## February 10 is National Home Warranty Day

Created by home warranty company 2-10 HBW ([2-10.com](http://2-10.com)) in 2016, Home Warranty Day's purpose is to remind homeowners how they can protect their home's valuable systems and appliances.

- A home warranty is different from home insurance. The warranty covers the costs of service, repair, and/or replacement of specific appliances or systems due to normal wear and tear. Your home insurance will take over for damage or loss due to fire, water, or other unexpected event damages to your home.
- Today's houses are full of complex appliances

and technology, which can stop working at any time - and unexpected repairs can wreak havoc on your budget.

- A home warranty, usually a one-year contract, covers the appliances and systems you use every day, like your washing machine, dryer, refrigerator, stove, HVAC system, hot water heater, plumbing systems, garage door openers, and much more.
- Take time on February 10 to review the value of a home warranty. Learn how a policy works and decide which one best suits your family's needs.



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## Valentine's Day "Love Potion" Mocktail

One taste and you'll fall in love with this "Love Potion" mocktail – a sparkling pink non-alcoholic drink recipe that's perfect for Valentine's Day, baby or bridal showers, or any special occasion!

Recipe makes six - 7 oz servings

### Ingredients

- ½ cup fresh raspberries
- 1 TBSP granulated sugar
- 1 TBSP lemon juice, freshly squeezed preferable
- 1 pint raspberry sherbet
- 3 cups sparkling berry lemonade

### Directions

Combine the fresh raspberries, granulated sugar, and lemon juice in a bowl, and mash them together with a fork until you have a berry puree.

Place a generous spoonful of puree at the bottom of 6 glasses. (We used 7 oz French champagne glasses). Top with a small scoop of raspberry sherbet, and fill the cups to the brim with sparkling berry lemonade. Garnish with a few more fresh berries, if desired.

For punch bowl: Combine raspberry puree and sparkling lemonade in a punch bowl and whisk together. Next add scoops of sherbet, and stir briefly so the sherbet melts a little and the drink gets creamy.



*Photo and recipe courtesy of: [SugarHero.com](http://SugarHero.com)*