

HOW TO

Hold a Successful Garage Sale

Garage sales can be a great way to get rid of clutter and earn a little extra cash before you move. But make sure you plan ahead; they can take on a life of their own.

Don't wait until the last minute.

Depending on how long you've lived in your home and how much stuff you want to sell, planning a garage sale can take a lot of time and energy. And that's on top of the effort of putting your home on the market!

Contact your local government.

Most municipalities will require you to obtain a permit in order to hold a garage sale. They're often free or cheap, but the fines for neglecting to obtain one can be hefty.

See if neighbors want to join in.

You can turn your garage sale into a block-wide event and lure more shoppers. However, a permit may be necessary for each home owner, even if it's a group event.

Schedule the sale.

Sales on Saturdays and Sundays will generate the most traffic, especially if the weather cooperates. Start the sale early — 8 or 9 a.m. is best — and be ready for early birds.

Advertise.

Place an ad in the newspaper, free classified papers, and websites, including the date(s), time, and address of the garage sale. Add information about what will be available, such as kids' clothes, furniture, or special equipment. On the day of the sale, use balloons and signs with prominent arrows to grab attention.

Price your goods.

Clearly mark rounded prices (50 cents, 3 for \$1, or \$5, for example) with easily removable stickers.

If it's junk, recycle or donate it.

If it's truly garbage, throw it away or place it in a freebie bin. Don't try to sell broken appliances, and have an electrical outlet nearby in case a customer wants to try plugging something in.

Display items nicely.

Organize by category, and don't make customers dig through boxes.

Stock up on supplies.

Having a stock of old shopping bags that can be reused encourages people to buy more items. Newspapers are handy for wrapping fragile goods.

Manage your money.

Obtain ample change for your cashbox, and have a calculator on hand. Assign one person to man the "register," keeping a tally of what was purchased and for how much.