

# MEAP Quarterly

## Spring 2023

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### Special points of interest:

- *Let's clean!*
- *Taking time to declutter our physical and mental space.*
- *Where to declutter the clutter.*
- *Taking care of your furry family members.*
- *Taking time to enjoy π*

## It's time for Spring Cleaning!

Spring cleaning, our annual ritual of starting anew, just like newly budding Spring flowers. But, what is it about Spring cleaning that makes us feel so good mentally and physically? Let's explore this question by looking at some of the health benefits related to Spring cleaning.

Physically, we're moving again after a slow moving winter hibernation. That snap - crackle - popping of our bone joints tells us we need a little more movement in our life, so what better way than Spring cleaning?!

A second health benefit of Spring cleaning is decreasing the annual respiratory triggers related to seasonal allergies. By reducing mold, dust bunnies, and other allergens from the home (and car), you're boosting and supporting a healthy immune system for you and your loved ones with whom you share your home with.

Psychologically, there are many benefits related to Spring cleaning. Admit it, when you finish cleaning something and you stand back and look at it, you feel accomplished, you feel like you just rocked out that task and it looks good! Now, who doesn't like that feeling? We all love that increase in the feel good chemical of dopamine.

Now that we're moving, cleaning, decluttering, and starting to feel accomplished, we start to mentally regain that feeling of being in control of our space again. We now feel more at peace and less

anxious about the physical and mental clutter we accumulated during the winter months. Wow....that's a breath of fresh air!

Spring cleaning and decluttering can also help decrease depression symptoms. As we accomplish tasks, we start to awaken and unleash those dormant feelings of accomplishment, thus we start to feel more focused and present, resulting in the reduction of ruminating and negative thought distortions associated with depression.

For further reading regarding the benefits of Spring cleaning, please be sure to check out the following website; <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/5-health-benefits-of-spring-cleaning>

Now that your reading and getting mentally primed for this year's Spring cleaning, let's further explore some other facets related to Spring cleaning, so as to decrease any possible road blocks you may encounter while cleaning. So please, breath in, breath out, and read on!



## Decluttering and Reclaiming Physical and Mental Space

Letting go of tangible items and relationships is sometimes hard and anxiety provoking, especially if they hold sentimental value. But what we have to ask ourselves is, what joy is it bringing me in my life now, and if that answer is none, it's time to let go and find peace of mind.

When starting down the road to decluttering your physical spaces, we have to remember to start small, so as to avoid getting burnt out and feeling over-whelmed. Making yourself a schedule will help alleviate some of these feelings.

Now that you made yourself a schedule, go room by room in your home (this includes your home office), and ask yourself these three questions:

1. What am I using?
2. What's getting in my way?
3. What's distracting me?

After asking and answering these three questions, you should have a pile of donate and keep items. Place your keep items where they will be seen and used and box up your donate items. Once you box up the donate items, seal it, and DO NOT open it again and start the bargaining game of, "well, I can use/wear it again".

Next, clear and declutter your digital space. Keep two to three platforms that mean a lot to you. When deciding what to clear out, ask yourself the following questions;

1. Do I even care about the platform?
2. Is it bringing negativity/anxiety to my life?
3. Is it taking up too much time in my life?

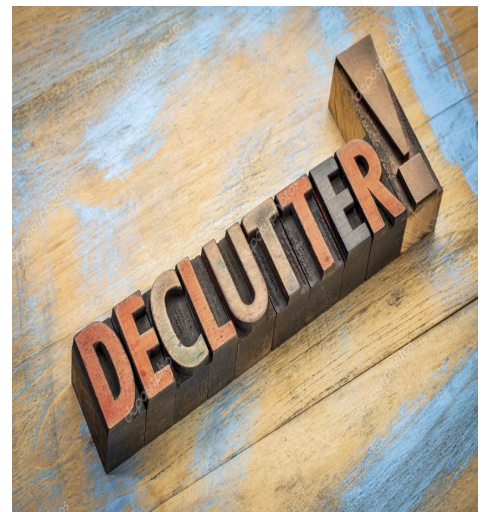
After answering these questions, uninstall accordingly and take inventory of what's good in your life and invest your time and efforts there.

Now for the even more difficult task, decluttering relationships. Let's face it, sometimes relationships are formed on a meaningless bases. Relationships can often be formed on the bases of wanting to be socially and or emotionally accepted, and this can be truly toxic, unhealthy, and not meant for us. Here, we have to be honest with ourselves, and evaluate where we're at in our lives and what the relationship means in our life. If it's decided that the relationship is truly healthy, enjoy the relationship and all the love and joy it brings you. However, if it's toxic, it's time to let go and reclaim your inner peace. It's okay to grieve the loss and give yourself space for healing and growth.

As we declutter our lives, we also need to be cognizant of our mental state and address negativity when it starts to rear its head, so as not to sit in the negativity that can lead to stress and or depression. We can help our mental state by scheduling time for ourselves and engaging in activities we enjoy or conversing with loved ones.

Decluttering your life is an on going life long process and something you should be actively doing. By routinely decluttering your life you can develop a routine where decluttering just becomes a natural life process.

Now that you've decided to declutter and you're in motion, how are you going to keep yourself motivated on your Spring cleaning journey? Try using some of these simple tricks such as, taking before and after pictures so you can see your progress and or seek a second opinion from a friend before tossing something out. However, when it comes to relationship decluttering, it's not as easy as tossing a relationship to the recycling bin. Try to start yourself a journal and journal your thoughts, feelings, and growth. Just remember, journaling is not only journaling the negative, its also about journaling and acknowledging the positives as well.



## Where to Donate My Decluttered Items

Now, what do you do with that donate pile of items you just decluttered? Thankfully, here in St. Joseph County, we have some really good non-for-profit organizations that accept gently used items. All that's left for you to do is, pack up your items and drop them off (don't leave them in your trunk for two months).

Resale to the Rescue is a local non-for-profit located in Mishawaka, IN. Resale to the Rescue resales donated items at its store location and donates that money to local animal organizations such as, Heartland Small Animal Rescue, Pet Refuge, Meow Mission, Frantz Fund,

St. Joseph County Humane Society, and many other animal organizations. Please be sure to check out their website for further information regarding donations;

<http://www.resaletotherescue.org/>

Another local non-for-profit that accepts donations is the Center for the Homeless. Located in South Bend, the Center for the Homeless strives to break the cycle of homelessness for men, women, children and our Veterans. Please be sure to check out their website for information regarding the donation needs of those they serve;

<https://www.cfh.net/criticalneeds>

Another local non-for-profit that helps Americans nationally is the Salvation Army. Located on South Bend Ave., in South Bend, the Salvation Army has many programs that assist adults, families, Veterans, and provides emergency disaster services to those in crisis. The Salvation Army also has pick up services for those items that are too heavy and big for you to load up in your car. Please be sure to check out their website for information regarding donations and pick up services;

<https://satruck.org/>

Now for the more serious items that can't be

disposed of in trash bins. Please be sure to check out the St Joseph County website for disposal of the following items,

**Hazardous materials;**  
<https://www.sjcindiana.com/204/Accepted-Hazardous-Waste-Materials>.

**Electronic disposal;**  
<https://www.sjcindiana.com/203/Electronic-Disposal>

**Medication disposal;**  
<https://www.cvs.com/content/safer-communities-locate>.



## Fur-Kid Corner

As much as we love Spring time, so do our furry family members. So, as we're cleaning and decluttering, let's be sure to keep the furry ones safe this Spring by following some simple safety precautions.

1. Play it safe with plants. Remember to keep them off of fertilizers used on grass and plants. Also, Lily's are beautiful to look at, but they are poisonous to cat's.
2. Be sure to use pet friendly cleaning supplies when you can.

3. Keep an eye out for Foxtail grass. If it gets embedded in your furry ones fur, ear, or nose, it can become painful, and cause infections.

4. Yes, it's flea and tick season again. So, please be sure to get them ready and start your care regimen ASAP.

5. As much as we hate seasonal allergies, so do your furry ones. Know the signs of pet allergies and consult with your veterinarian on how to best treat them.

6. Be sure to trim your furry ones nails or take them to a

local salon/pet store that offers these services. Also be sure to check their paw pads for cracked paws and apply ointment as needed.

7. Hair, hair and more hair! It's time for them to shed that thick winter coat, so get your furminator or de-shedding tool ready and get to work! After that nice de-shedding I think a bath may be in order...just don't tell them..shhh!

8. Now that they're de-shedded and clean, don't forget to wash their bedding and leashes. This

will help remove that winter funk.

Lastly and most important, go for a walk with your furry family member. Get outside, get your bodies in motion, and enjoy the outdoors and Spring time together.





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# MEAP

**π** Let's celebrate **π** day buy having a slice! **π**

NO bake peanut butter pie....can you say yum?!

### Ingredients

4 oz. package of cream cheese  
3/4 cup of confectioner's sugar  
1/2 cup peanut butter  
1/2 cup milk  
8 oz frozen whipped topping  
(thawed)  
9 in. graham cracker crust (or  
chocolate cookie crust)



### Directions

Beat together cream cheese and confectioners' sugar. Mix in peanut butter and milk. Beat until smooth. Fold in whipped topping.

Spoon into a 9 inch graham cracker pie shell. Cover and freeze until firm. Takes about 2 hours and 30 minutes to set.

Remove from freezer and allow pie to soften for 10 minutes.

<https://insanelygoodrecipes.com/no-bake-peanut-butter-pie>

