



BEST GARAGE SALE TIPS

BestGarageSaleTips.com

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What's this all about?

These are the **Best Garage Sale Tips** that will help you have the most successful garage sale ever!

The Best Garage Sale Tips on these pages will help you:

- Get rid of **ALL** your clutter.
- Get the **MOST MONEY** you can for it.
- Avoid your garage sale becoming a never-to-repeat nightmare.

It doesn't matter if you've never had a garage sale before or you've been having them all your life, I guarantee you'll find the best garage sale tips here to help you have the best, most successful garage sale ever.

PLANNING TIPS & CHECKLISTS

This section takes you through the questions you need to ask and checklists of what to do several weeks (months) before your garage sale to what to do on the day and after.

Is a garage sale a good idea?

Are your bills piling up or you just need some extra cash and think a garage sale will help but don't know where to start? The following questions and answers will help you decide whether or not a garage sale is a good idea for you.

First, a garage sale can be a life-changing event - really

Holding a garage sale makes you realize that no one else values your treasured and valued possessions like you do.

Before the garage sale you had a collection of valued and treasured possessions that you paid your hard-earned money for and may have spent your valuable time researching the best buy and agonized over the decision to buy or not.

Then, going through closets you realize the amount of money you've wasted over the years with impulse buying.

Then you watched as people inspected your possessions with unappreciative looks, at best, and left without buying anything.

You are left wondering why your stuff isn't good enough to even give away! Why did you value it so much? Why did you buy it in the first place? Why does your life revolve around the struggle to earn money to buy stuff that, in the end, has no value?

Some people's lives have changed with this realization.

Ready? OK, let's ask some more questions...

What is the purpose of your garage sale?

Do you want to just get rid of some clutter or do you want to make as much money as you can in the process?

- If you just want to get rid of some junk and don't care about making any money then **stop reading this** right now.
Honestly. Having a garage sale will be too much hard work. You will be better off donating your "good junk" to your local charity for some good karma and possibly a tax deduction in April and dump the rest.
- If you want to make **lots and lots** of money then **stop reading this** right now.
A garage sale won't make you rich. Don't believe the claims of how to

"have a huge money making garage sale" or "get rich with garage sales". You won't get rich on 'garage sale' prices.

- But, if you want to get enough money to buy a new dishwasher, or TV or as much money as you can for your 'junk' (average profits from a garage sale is \$500 - \$700) then, keep your goal in mind and read on.

First, the 5 best tips for a successful garage sale

- **Planning**
- **Preparation**
- **Presentation**
- **People**
- **Patience**

You have to devote time to all 5 to have a successful garage sale.

- You won't have a successful garage sale if you don't plan.
- You won't have a successful garage sale if you don't prepare.
- You won't have a successful garage sale if you don't properly clean and present your items for sale.
- You won't have a successful garage sale if you don't have people to buy your stuff.
- You won't have a successful garage sale if you don't have patience when preparing and on the day to enjoy the experience.

When is the best time to have it?

Now!

Well, unless it's the middle of winter and your letter box is under 2 feet of snow. If you wait for 5 years, your junk will also be out of date and old fashioned and harder to sell. By having it now or this year, at least your junk will still be in fashion and in demand which means it will be easier to sell at a higher price.

Are you able to have other people help you?

It's really hard to prepare for and run a garage sale on your own. It's also risky from a security point of view. Are you able to enlist the help of at least one other adult to help prepare and run your garage sale with you?

It's easier, safer and much more fun if you can have three or four adults to help. Here are some ideas if they need encouragement:

- Let them sell some of their own unwanted items to earn some money of their own.

- Offer them, say 10%, of the profits.
- Offer a nice brunch or lunch.
- Offer to help them with theirs when they have one.

If you have a toddler - can you organize a baby-sitter?

Don't try to run a garage sale at the same time as trying to look after your toddler. Apart from not being enjoyable, it isn't safe.

Are you covered for accidents?

Check that you are covered for accidents by your renters/home owners insurance. If your garage sale is a one-time event for the sole purpose of selling unwanted personal items, your homeowners policy is likely to provide liability coverage. Check you have enough. If your garage sale is a regular weekly or monthly money-making event, your homeowners policy may not cover you and you may need business insurance instead.

Can you have a garage sale in your area?

Check if your local government has restrictions on garage sales. Hopefully, you can call or email someone with these questions:

- Do I need a permit? If so, how much will it cost and how long will it take.
- Is it the same permit for garage sales and yard sales?
- How many days can a garage sale go for?
- How long can I stay open (hours, days)?
- Can I put up signs?
- Where can or can't signs be placed?
- What size and number of signs can I use?
- Can I post flyers?
- Where can or can't I place flyers?
- What are the rules for rain dates?
- Am I allowed to conduct a garage sale in my desired location?
- Can I put merchandise on my driveway or on my lawn or on the footpath?
- Can I sell home-baked or pre-packaged food? Some will require a food retailer license along with complying with the health regulations.
- Can I sell new items? Some will require you to be a registered retailer which brings related sales and income tax issues.

Can you have a garage sale when you want to?

If you already have a date in mind:

- You will need a **minimum** of 3-4 weeks to prepare for a successful and enjoyable garage sale. I have done a lot of garage sales over the years and I have found it to be more enjoyable if I allow 2-3 months though.
- Check that your immediate neighbors aren't planning any big parties with lots of guests and cars for that date that may make parking a problem.
- Check if your neighbors are planning a garage sale too. Having a multi-neighbor 'group' sale is by far the best way to have a successful garage sale. If they aren't planning on having a sale too they may have some items they would like to sell in yours. A big single garage sale is the next best thing to ensure a successful garage sale.
- Check there aren't any big events on or public holidays at the same time that might draw the crowds away.
- But then, check if there **are** any big events nearby that might attract big crowds! Hope they see your signs!
- If you're in a country town, plan you garage sale around a local event when there are more people in town and it's more likely neighbors will be having their garage sale too!
- Hold the sale during spring/summer to reduce the chance of it raining on your day. It isn't pleasant trying to get all your items you arranged on the front yard back under cover from the rain. Less people are likely to show up too if it's raining.

Garage Sale Alternatives

If a garage sale sounds too hard and you don't really want to make as much money as you can from your unwanted stuff but just want to get rid of it, what are the alternatives to having a garage sale?

- If you don't have enough stuff for a garage sale then try a specialized garage sale where you only focus on a specific range of items. For example baby clothes & toys or gardening tools, home grown plants, etc.
- You could earn some good karma and a possibly tax deduction by donating your quality items to a charity.
- Why not wait until your school, church, club, etc has a fundraiser and donate some items then.
- Your furniture, larger items or special clothing could be sold in consignment or possibly antique stores.
- You could contact your local second-hand dealer directly and get them to "make an offer".
- Are any items suitable for selling in your local auction house?
- What about your local vintage or retro stores?
- What about organizing a Swap Party for books, CDs, DVDs, videos, clothes or toys.
- You could try listing individual or grouped items on online auction sites (eg eBay). But read [Garage Sales vs eBay](#) first.
- You could always share the effort by 'piggy-backing' on a neighbor's or relative's garage sale or by organizing a street sale.
- Have a garage sale but advertise it as an **EVERYTHING FREE GARAGE SALE !!** That's right - no charge, free, it's yours, take it away - please. The catch - If you want it for free, you have to take it all. You could be amazed at how quickly someone will clear your garage. Easy - no pricing, no setting up, no getting rid of leftovers.
- Have a garage sale anyway just for the experience, meet your neighbors, meet all sorts of people, your kids can learn negotiation skills by setting up a lemonade stand and you'll know what to do differently next time.

What have you got to sell?

What will sell well in a garage sale?

- Children's clothes (usually outgrown before they are worn out)
- Power and hand tools
- Sporting and exercising equipment (usually only used once)
- Bicycles
- Electrical goods
- Toys
- Kitchenware
- Empty bottles of all kinds
- Furniture (small items)
- Books (especially children's books)
- Gardening equipment
- Costume Jewelry
- Blankets, quilts, bedding, etc.

What can't or shouldn't be sold in a garage sale?

- Quality jewelry, silverware, antiques, collectibles or paintings.**
If you have these items, do your homework, have them appraised and approach a reputable dealer or try eBay or a local online auction site or check Antique and Collectables Price Guides (<http://antiques.about.com/cs/priceguides/>). You'll get a better price.
- Better quality clothes.**
Try them at a consignment store first because you are more likely get a better price there. I personally haven't had a lot of success on consignment but it doesn't hurt to give them a go first. It will take a while to get your price.
- Similarly with big furniture items (beds, sofas, etc) and anything over \$50.**
You should consider placing an ad in the local paper. You are more likely to get a higher price that way than through a garage sale.
- Don't sell underwear at a yard sale.**
Do you really want me to elaborate?
-

Don't sell illegal goods, unsafe or recalled goods.

Check that the items you're selling haven't been recalled or pose any potential hazards. It is now illegal to sell these in the US

- There are about 20 deaths a year from use of older and used crib models made before CPSC and industry safety standards. If you're thinking of selling an old crib, destroy it.
- Infant car seats/carriers, when being used as a carrier, can eject infants because the handles break or side locks break.
- Old baby walkers can fit through doorways and don't stop at the top of stairs.
- Baby gates made until 1985 were accordion style and had large openings which can entrap children or fail to keep them from falling down stairs.
- Do not sell old children's clothing that has strings around the neck, such as jackets and sweatshirts, which can catch and strangle children.
- Beanbag chairs that can be unzipped can suffocate or choke children.
- Since the 1990s, hairdryers have built in shock protection devices. You can tell if your hairdryer has one by whether it has a large rectangular plug and the mark of a recognized testing laboratory.



*On August 14, 2008, the President signed the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (CPSIA) into law. Under the new law, **it is now illegal to sell ANY recalled product** (for adults as well as children). This includes selling items in thrift stores, consignment stores, charities, and individuals holding yard sales and flea markets. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has created a Handbook for Resale Stores and Product Resellers to help sellers of used products understand the new law and existing regulations. Make sure you visit www.cpsc.gov frequently for updated information. To see a listing of recalled car seats, visit the www.nhtsa.dot.gov and www.recalls.gov for other recalled items.*

How to find things to sell in your garage sale

It's easy, but it's going to take a while. Go through your house, room by room, cupboard by cupboard, drawer by drawer and take everything out. Then as you repack each item, hold it in front of you and ask yourself:

- Does this add value to my life?
- Can I use something else if I didn't have this anymore?
- When was the last time I used/wore it?
- When am I realistically going to use it again?
- If it's broken, why haven't I fixed it?

At the end you will not only have identified all your unwanted junk but have re-organized your cupboards!

This is a big job if you want to do it properly so spread it over a few weeks. Don't forget the garage, shed, basement, attic and the backyard. Get the kids to do this with their toys too and tell them that can keep the money that they can sell it for - its amazing how this motivates them.

Then...

- If it's really junk, put it in the garbage now, although remember:
 - One person's junk is another's treasure so have a good think if it's really junk to others.
 - If it's broken, would someone want to tinker with it to try to fix it.
- If it's going to be sold, put it in a '**Garage Sale**' box, bag or pile.
- If you aren't sure, put it in a '**Maybe**' box or pile. Go through these again next week.
- Anything that looks remotely like an antique or collectible should go in another box to be examined by an appraiser or dealer - just in case.
- Anything that could be considered a family heirloom should go in another box. You should check if a family member or relative would like to buy any of these items first to keep it the family. If so, then you should have it appraised and sell it for its fair market value.
- Don't think about prices at this stage because you'll start to think that you won't get enough for it and decide to keep it.



*You don't want to hear in the news about a person who bought an old broken clock at a garage sale for \$1 and discovered it is an antique worth \$3,000 - and it was from **your** garage sale.*

What if you have trouble letting go of your possessions?

Do you suffer from “Separation Anxiety” when trying to decide whether to part with sentimental items like favorite t-shirts, toys, etc. To make it easier to let go of the items of questionable sentimental value, take some photos of it and you holding it or wearing it so you have something to still remember it by after it has gone.

What if you don't have enough stuff for a garage sale?

The more items you offer at your garage sale, the more you are likely to sell. The larger your display, the more shoppers you will attract. If you don't think you have enough - try to have a **group sale**.

A group sale can be:

- When others (family, friends, neighbors, school, club, church) provide items of their own for you to sell in your garage sale.
- When neighbors have their own garage sale too. Buyers are more likely to come to a group sale when there are two or more houses in the street having a garage sale at the same time. Shoppers think these are like a shopping mall!

See **Best group garage sale tips** for more tips to have a successful group garage sale

What if you still don't have enough for a sale?

What about including:

- Handicrafts by a member of the family, friend or relative.
- Baked cookies, cake, muffins, etc.
- Home grown fruit or vegetables.
- Divide or dig up some of your plants or grow seedlings and put in cheap pots.
- Buy something cheaply in bulk (candy, liquid soap, detergent, candles, etc) and repackage it for sale.
- Buy additional inventory from other garage sales to fill gaps or compliment the type of items you have. I'm sure I don't need to point out that you should make sure you'll be able to sell the extra stuff you bought so you aren't left with more stuff than you started with! Yeah, I'm sure I don't need to say that so I won't.

What if you really still don't have enough for a sale?

If you don't have a range of goods to attract a cross-section of buyers, then go for a **specialty sale**. Some examples are:

- **A children's sale** that only has items for children. This makes advertising easier because you only need to put flyers up in areas frequented by new mothers, mothers-to-be and grandparents.
- **A kitchen & bedding sale** marketed to newly weds, young adults who are or have just moved out from home or people setting up a holiday home.
- **A handicraft sale** where you can sell your stock of hand made items before Christmas. People won't pay the same price as they would at a craft fair so you won't make as much money but it can be an excellent promotional event. Have plenty of business cards, discount coupons and brochures to hand out for repeat business.
- **A music sale** where you digitize you entire CD, cassette and/or record collection, burn the files to CDs (as a backup) then sell your entire collection. Check the prices of your classic LPs on eBay first as some LPs are in high demand by collectors.
- **A Gardener's Delight Sale** where you sell your old gardening tools, wheel barrows, buckets, tubs, etc. Throw in some home grown plants, vegetables, fruit, seedlings, etc. Include some crafty statues or garden decorations. Got any old pavers or bricks? What about gardening or home decorating magazines?

Then rent a table in your local flea market, neighborhood or community-wide sale, or join in with someone else's garage sale.

Now get into the garage sale mind-set

The pile or boxes of your unwanted possessions you have just collected is no longer junk or stuff, it is **your inventory**. Your garage sale mind-set should be of a retailer or a shop-owner - you now need to attract customers to buy your inventory and its maximum price.

What's the best time and best place for your garage sale?

OK, you've gone through your house from the top to the bottom and even the dog kennel and you now have inventory to sell.

When during the year should you hold your garage sale?

- The best time is generally spring, especially early spring. Shoppers have been missing their "fix" all winter and are busting to get out and find bargains!
- Summer is next best if it isn't too hot. People won't browse long or even come out if the sun is beating down.
- End of summer and fall are often ignored but can also be successful because the weather's just as nice, and there's less competition.
- I have found overcast days and, surprisingly rainy days, as being the most successful. I'm not sure of the exact reason but on rainy days, although less people venture out, those that do are keen to buy and seem to browse longer because they welcome the heater that I usually have on and are reluctant to go back out into the rain.

What day/s should you hold your garage sale?

- You should check your local area for the most popular day but generally most garage sales are held on a Saturday with all serious buyers on the prowl first thing in the morning ready to buy. This is good and recommended if you are new to garage sales.
- But then everyone else is having their garage sale on Saturday too so competition to attract buyers is fierce. An alternative for experienced garage salers is to have it on a weekday when serious garage sale customers are free to find bargains. You'll get a lot less of casual buyers though compared to a weekend though.
- I have heard some like to have their garage sale on Friday afternoon/early evening (especially on a balmy summer evening) at firm prices - to see what they can get, then a normal one on Saturday. The thinking is that people may not want to miss out by waiting for a better price on Saturday. A similar strategy is used for a one-day garage sale when the prices are firm in the morning or first couple of hours and get more 'negotiable' as the day progresses.
- I read somewhere that if you live near a large military base then the 1st of the month is best as that's when they get paid. What "influences" do you have in your community?

What time should your garage sale start and how long should it go for?

- If you have a small amount of quality items then a short, intense, painless 3 or 4 hours in the morning say from 7 – 11 or 9 – 12.
- An alternative that I like is 3 or 4 hours in the afternoon. You can sleep in and have less competition. Hopefully customers still have money to spend. This afternoon time only works if you are able to keep the location of your garage sale hidden until your actual start time otherwise you will have the dealers knocking on your door first thing in the morning. I'll talk about how to handle these early birds later.

Also, if you start late, highlight your late start time in your ads, flyers and signs so people who come upon your sale in the afternoon don't think that it's been going all morning, all the good stuff has probably gone so decide to skip it.

- If you have a big sale or a group sale, then an all-day affair, going to 4pm or 5pm, will give you a better chance to sell as much as possible and to capture as many casual buyers driving past during the day.
- A big group sale could also go over 2 or 3 days although this would be a bit of a marathon and for the experienced only as it would need careful planning.
- Also, as mentioned earlier, check your local authorities if there are any restrictions on when and how long it can go for.

What about the neighbors?

- Don't forget to let the neighbors know of the date and times.
- Best to find out now if they are planning a big party for the same time and parking will be an issue.
- They may even have some tables they can loan you.
- Hey, they might like to join in or have one of their own on the same day too! You are likely to attract more buyers if there are 2 or more garage sales near each other.
- The neighbor's children might be little entrepreneurs and jump at the chance of setting up their own "lemonade stand". Refer to **Best 'Lemonade Stand' tips** for more information.



I have heard of a 3 house garage sale that has now become an annual street garage sale/street party involving the entire street with catering, clowns, face painting, donkey rides and even a jumping castle.

What if you don't have a suitable garage?

If your garage is around the back of your house or used for storage or just plain falling over then consider these places for your 'garage' sale:

- Your driveway
- Front porch
- Front yard – now it's a yard sale!
- Footpath
- Your neighbor's garage
- The side lane
- Your own business's car park
- Your club's car park
- Your child's school
- A friend's or relative's garage
- You local church hall
- A local flea market

The benefits of a flea market are you are guaranteed more customers than a garage sale and they expect to pay more than at a garage sale. It will cost about the same as you would spend on advertising and signs but you have limited space and you need to transport your merchandise there.

Are you able to hold your garage sale in commercial property or car park?

- People associate businesses with items that are good quality, professionally made and are being sold because they aren't needed rather than being worn out or broken.
- Having it in a related commercial property may be more profitable than having it in your garage. People will also expect dealings to be more business-like than a home-based garage sale and so you can set your prices higher.
- If you have mostly one type of items (eg computer, office and electronic items or furniture items) then see if you can set up in a car park of a store that sells similar products. You can benefit from shoppers of that type of

product being in the area and the store can benefit from you attracting that type of shopper.

- The store may also have items of their own they would like to include in your "garage sale".

Are you able to hold your garage sale in a more affluent or up-market area and is this beneficial?

- Generally, better quality items are found in garage sales in more affluent areas.
 - You are more likely to find near-new items because people in these areas are more likely to be able to buy new toys and clothes more often.
 - You may find quality exercise equipment bought with good intentions and last year's fashions and fads.
 - I also think you're unlikely to find items bought from "low cost discount stores" in these garage sales because the owners don't want to give their neighbors something to gossip about.

For these reason's buyers come expecting to find quality items and are prepared to pay a bit more for them.

- Do you have a family member or friend in one of these areas that is happy to hold a group garage sale with you and also benefit from the advantages of holding a group garage sale?
- Having said all that, shoppers know that prices will be higher in these areas and the home owners are more likely to be business-savvy and haggle more seriously so shoppers may skip garage sales in these areas. Most serious shoppers are attracted to garage sales in middle-class areas.

Where to hold a second end-of-season garage sale

Some people hold a garage sale at the beginning of the garage sale season in spring and then another at the end of summer to have a second try at selling the leftovers from the first sale. Have your second sale at a family members' or friend's house in another suburb. It's a bit more work to haul your stuff to another house but I've found the different customers at my second sale find my leftovers more appealing.

Garage Sale vs eBay

You're considering having a garage sale but you've heard about people selling stuff on the Internet by using an online auction site like eBay.

Should you do this instead of having a garage sale?

What items should be sold on an online auction site

- When the item is unlikely to appeal to many local buyers but have a better chance of finding a buyer nationally who is willing to pay a top-dollar price. It may be a specialized collectible or "one of a set" or an "orphaned" item to complete the set. Some examples of "one of a set" or an "orphaned" item are:
 - a piece of uniquely designed or patterned chinaware by a specific manufacturer
 - a piece from a board game
 - a book end
 - one part of a multi-part tool
 - a tabletop lamp base missing its lampshade
- When the item is small and easy to pack and ship.
- When the item doesn't have any flaws or imperfections that buyers would need to see before purchasing.
- When the item can be satisfactorily shown off via sharp, multiple-view photos without the need to physically feel, touch, hold and inspect it.
- When you want top-dollar for it and can't consider giving it away at garage sale prices.
- When it can generate and benefit from bidding wars.
- When you have time to wait for a buyer to find it.

What items should be sold at a garage sale

- When the item is a common household item.
- When the item is large and/or heavy and would be difficult or expensive to ship. Like furniture or a lawn mower.
- When you don't need to get a top-dollar price for the item.
- When the item would need to be physically inspected for imperfections or held before a buying decision can be made.
- When you need to sell the item quickly.

- When you have lots of separate items to sell at once.
- Are similar items already being sold – is there a demand?
 - Searching for the item or equivalent on eBay and note how many are listed, what price is being asked and if the items have bids on them.
 - Also check recently ended auctions (in the left hand panel, select *Preferences > Show only > Completed listings*) and note how many bids were on the items.
 - Check Craigslist and note how many similar items are listed and what price is being asked.
 - Also, check how much it will cost to post yourself. While usually the customer pays for shipping, you may want to offer free shipping (where you pay the shipping costs) to encourage more bids. If you do this you want to know how much you'll have to pay when deciding on what sale price you will accept. Check shipping costs at Postage Price Calculator (<http://postcalc.usps.gov/>) or at UPS (<http://www.ups.com/content/us/en/shipping/cost/zones/>). It may be too expensive to sell online when considering the shipping costs too.

If there aren't many items listed or there aren't or weren't many bids then this indicates you may have difficulty selling it online. This is not to say it won't sell. If the average asking price is over \$10 then it may be worth your time trying to sell it online first. Garage sale prices are always less (perhaps 1/3) than online prices. You only need that right person to come along at the right time to make a sale. You may need some patience though.

eBay Reality

What's it really like selling on eBay?

- You may have 50 items to list. This will require a lot of your time:
 - Photographing each item trying to get each in the best light and angle.
 - Deciding on a price that isn't too high or too low.
 - Uploading the photos and listing each item.
 - Describing each item in detail including the scratches, dents, cracks, etc.
 - Describing each item to capture the interest of potential buyers.
 - Answering emails enquiries (often because the enquirer didn't read your detailed description).

- Checking on the auction progress on all 50 items waiting at the mercy of the buyers – if any.
- Of those 50 items, only 20 will sell.
- Of those 20 items, only 1 will fetch a price that makes it worth it, while the other 19 will barely cover your costs.
- You then need to spend time (and your own money?) carefully wrapping and packaging the sold items, queuing at the post office with your packages, hoping the postage you charged covers the actual cost and hoping the items get there in one piece.
- And then there are the fees charged by the online auction site, PayPal, etc.
- And then you worry about the buyer returning the item and wanting their money back!

End of Preview

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