

Make Extra Cash by Selling Your Junk

"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."

~Leonardo DaVinci

We sold everything we owned to take our trip around the world, but we didn't rely on that money to build our nest egg. Sure, it was a nice little addition, but you'll find out like we did that your crap is not worth nearly as much as you thought.

You don't have to sell a thing to save money for your dream, but we're betting that you have a few things lying around unused that could bring in some money with very little effort. Why not make a few extra bucks and pad your savings a bit?

Many of those things won't fit into your new dream life anyway, will they?



When we lived in suburban Washington, DC we bought a dresser and small chest off of a [Craigslist](#) classified ad in Chevy Chase, Maryland. We drove to the swanky building, walked through the doors that were opened by the uniformed doorman, and up the elevator to the seller's apartment.

Posh, huh? We couldn't believe this was the address of a Craigslist seller.

We grinned at each other as we stood in front of the grand doorway and pushed the bell. We were surprised when the apartment door opened to reveal a slightly grungy mid-30s guy with two active bulldogs who had obviously destroyed the intricate wooden parquet floor with their claws. Mom was right: You can't judge a book by its cover, though I doubt this is what she had in mind. The rest of the apartment was designed in a similar "destroyed elegance" look, and we wondered what the furniture we liked in the ad would look like in person.

He took us into the bedroom to see them, and we confirmed they were what we wanted. We walked over to pick them up to carry them out when he stopped us. He still hadn't unloaded them, so we waited in his messy bedroom with two drooling bulldogs circling our legs while he pulled out all sorts of sexy women's lingerie and "marital aids" and tossed them on the bed. And there were a LOT of marital aids and lingerie in that dresser.

When he finished unloading the items on the unmade bed, the dogs jumped up and made a nest right in the middle of them.

Yeah, we know. Gross.

We handed over our cash and picked up the furniture to carry out. He called out to us as we were leaving that he might have more furniture to sell since he and his wife were likely splitting up. (Obviously the marital aids did not provide enough help to that relationship.) We smiled and got to the elevator as quickly as we could.

I told Warren as soon as we carried them out that we were scrubbing them down in the garage before they ever made it inside our house.

When we got home, we put the smaller chest in the corner of the guest bedroom to hold gloves and scarves and infrequently used items. The larger chest went there as well to hold sheets and towels. Since we rarely had overnight guests, we basically forgot about our new furniture until it came time to move again.

A couple of years later we were gearing up for a move across the country and selling much of our furniture through Craigslist. These two chests were part of the sale, and we honestly depicted them in the ad as a little bit scratched and with a wonky bottom drawer.

A very nice woman in a minivan came to buy the smaller chest, and said it was the perfect fit for her entryway to hold gloves and scarves. We told her we used it the exact same way. She jiggled the wonky bottom drawer and confirmed that it would not be a big deal for her, and she paid us for the chest. We helped her load it in her trunk, wondering if she would make it to her house without any ropes to secure it. We watched her drive away and went back inside, never planning to think about that furniture or the buyer again. We transferred our money to The Vault.

A few hours later the phone rang, and it was the buyer. Uh-oh. This could not be good news. We instantly knew that she had some kind of problem getting the chest home because she did not have any rope to secure it. We had never had anyone come back to us with a problem after a Craigslist sale, so we weren't sure what to do.

It turns out she made it home just fine and unloaded the chest in her entryway as planned. As she was loading her gloves and scarves, however, she figured out why the bottom drawer was so wonky. She pulled out an expensive-looking purple lace bra that was stuck behind the drawer and was calling to return it to us!

Warren and I looked at each other and burst out laughing. I don't own an expensive purple lace bra. We knew immediately that it had been stuck back there for years from the original owners in that funky apartment in Chevy Chase. No wonder the bottom drawer was wonky.

We were just glad she didn't find anything else.

It is crazy to think that we spent the money on that furniture, drove to get it, and then let it sit in our house for years without ever realizing what was in it. These kinds of things will make you realize quickly how much of your money was spent on things you truly don't need or even really want.

Does this crap fit in your dream life?

The more you work toward your new dream life, the more you'll look around and see the evidence of your past self, the one who spent all that money on stuff you don't really need. Craigslist, Gumtree, classified ads, and eBay are probably based on the principle of reselling IKEA furniture and products.

Instead of looking at your old IKEA purchases and feeling guilty, why not make a few bucks? It will also clear your space, which will help you better imagine your new lifestyle.

Over the years we've made several thousand dollars selling our stuff on Craigslist. The highest-priced item we have sold is a dresser for \$500 that wouldn't fit in our new townhouse. The least expensive thing we've sold is a random box of cords for \$5. There is a market for just about anything.

Believe me, someone wants your crap.

If you have smaller items to sell or live in an area that doesn't have an active Craigslist audience, you can use eBay or even yard sales or consignment shops. In the UK Gumtree.com is another choice.

Again, you really won't believe what people will buy. Oh wait, of course you will. You bought it first!

(Check out the handy checklist below.)



How to sell your junk online

Tips for selling on Craigslist or Gumtree

- ⦿ You get what you pay for. Ads are free and there is no online payment to guarantee the transaction until pickup. People are sometimes unreliable, and even when they show up they may decide the item is not for them. Keep in contact with at least two to three interested people so you don't have to repost the ad later.
- ⦿ Let your #2 and #3 buyers know that you are holding it for someone until X date and if they don't show or don't want it you will contact them back.
- ⦿ State "cash only" in the ad. Be very upfront about this and firm. You are selling to someone you don't know, and an honest face does not necessarily mean honesty where checks are concerned.
- ⦿ Specify whether you will help them load or not. Someone who buys a large piece of furniture from you may want your help loading. If you can't do this or don't want to, make sure you state in the ad that you cannot load so they know to bring help.
- ⦿ Are you willing to negotiate on site? Once someone is there to pick up, they will often try for a last-minute bargain. This isn't necessarily bad, you just need to be prepared. My favorite tactic is to have a "staging area" of all my for-sale items and offer something else in addition to the main item and stay firm on the price (selling a chair – offer a small area rug or throw pillows). Then everyone wins.
- ⦿ Be honest in your ad description. Not everyone who stops by will actually buy, so don't waste anyone's time by claiming something is in excellent condition when it really isn't, or that it works when it doesn't.
- ⦿ Always include a picture. College students, the newly divorced, newlyweds – many of these people are looking for bargains and don't mind a little wear and tear, but they certainly don't want something that is not as advertised.

Craigslist and Gumtree are free, and you can easily set up an account and start selling within minutes. [Click here](#) to go to Craigslist and get started. Click here for [Gumtree](#).

