

Taking a Home Inventory

By Sarah Welch and Alicia Rockmore



Staying on top of all of your valuables is a difficult task. With hurricane, tornado and fire season coming up, however, it's a good time to take stock of exactly what you have in your home. Itemizing valuables isn't necessarily on the top of anyone's "To Do" list, but when something unexpected happens, such as a natural disaster or a burglary, you need to have documentation of what you own in order to get properly reimbursed. Determining exactly what to catalog is often the most overwhelming part of putting together a home inventory, since the sheer number of things you own seems insurmountable, or you may think what's valuable to you may not seem valuable in the eyes of an insurance company. Unfortunately, delaying the project only sets you up for a bigger disaster should something unforeseen happen.

Alicia on "Getting Insured"

"First things first: get insured! Homeowner's or renter's insurance typically covers the market value or the replacement value of your house and its contents. It can be difficult to put a dollar figure on household furnishings, and it's tempting to estimate low to avoid big premiums. However, if unique or expensive possessions are stolen, broken or damaged, you'll be happy to get financial compensation. Also, be sure to review the amount of homeowner's or renter's coverage you have every year to determine whether it is too much or too little for your current needs. (In other words, be sure that new plasma TV is insured!)"

Sarah on "Overcoming Inertia"

"As always, the hardest part of putting together a list of your valuables is just getting started. The best way to get the ball rolling is to break the task down into bite size chunks that aren't as overwhelming. Break it down so you are only focusing on one room at a time, and do maybe one item per day for the next 30 days. A great organizing tool is Buttoned Up's Valuables.doc, available at Target, which separates the lists by room (dining room, bedroom, kitchen, etc), and has pre-formatted pages for listing item descriptions, purchase information, and replacement costs."

Some valuable tips on cataloging your valuables.

1. Some Is Better Than None

Not only is it better to have an incomplete inventory than no inventory at all, but it's also a fair bet that your inventory will change over time- so a "perfect" list won't be that way for long. So ditch that devil on your shoulder; don't let the thought that you must have a totally comprehensive list stop you in your tracks.

2. Apply the 80/20 Rule

Get momentum working in your favor by focusing your energy on the most important items. There are likely to be a relative handful of items that represent a disproportionate share of the value of your cumulative items. Catalog those items first, You can always fill in the smaller items once you have the basic list in place. A good rule of thumb for selecting which items to catalog is to focus on those items worth at least \$500 and those items that cannot be easily replaced or have sentimental value.



3. Start a Master List

Walk from room to room and jot down all those items in each room that you would want to replace after a fire, flood, earthquake, tornado, hurricane or burglary. You can create one master list or one for each room, whichever seems more natural to you. You the list(s) as your own personal catalog of the items you need to catalog in more detail. To lighten the load, consider breaking the list in half and asking your spouse/partner to catalog half the items.

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We are the co-founders of Buttoned Up, inc., a company dedicated to helping stretched and stressed women get themselves organized (along with everybody else they're responsible for too!). We welcome your thoughts! Please send ideas and questions to us at: yourlife@getbuttonedup.com or visit us at www.getbuttonedup.com