

12 genius ways to turn your clutter into cash

Forget the hassle of selling your odds and ends at garage sales. FIRST found the simple ways to make money recycling your cast-offs—no selling required!



1. Recyclables

You already recycle—why not get something for it? Go to RecycleBank.com for a program that weighs your recyclables and awards you points toward gift certificates at 2,400 retailers (including CVS, McDonald's and Omaha Steaks). No location near you? You can earn points for green actions, like sending in old electronics. A sample reward: 2,500 points gets you a \$10 gift card.

2. Sporting equipment

Bring athletic gear the kids have outgrown to Play It Again Sports. (Visit PlayItAgainSports.com for locations.) The store offers cash for up to 30 percent of the resale value of the item, or you can opt for store credit to get an additional 20 percent return. For example, if they can sell your son's quality hockey skates for \$50, you'll receive \$15 cash or \$18 trade-in value.

3. Cosmetic containers

Estée Lauder's Origins stores accept tubes, bottles and jars from any cosmetic manufacturer at their retail counters for recycling. In return, you'll get a free sample of an Origins skin-care product. And if you love lipstick, consider this tip from Jamie Novak, author of *Stop Throwing Money Away* (Wiley, 2010): "When you return six used MAC Cosmetics containers to a MAC store, they'll give you a free lipstick of your choice."



4. Cell phones

With the ongoing advances in technology, a cell phone's average lifespan is now less than 18 months. But your outdated phones can make you money: CellforCash.com offers anywhere from \$4 for older versions (like the LG AX500) to \$140 for newer models (like the RIM Blackberry 9700). Just log on and type in the manufacturer and model number (found on the back of the phone) to learn its value, then print a prepaid shipping label. Once the company receives and processes the phone, they'll send you a check.

5. Video games

Is your smart little gamer always mastering his video games and asking for a new challenge? Trade his used games for store credit at your local GameStop store. Check GameStop.com for the latest trade-in bonus offers.



6. DVDs and CDs

SecondSpin.com will scoop up the discs collecting dust on your shelf (as long as they're in good condition). Cash-back amounts vary per item. Some sample deals: \$4 for a previously enjoyed CD like Taylor Swift's *Fearless*, or up to \$66 for a DVD box set like *The Sopranos: The Complete Series*.

7. Hobby equipment

Have a stash of old pastime paraphernalia you no longer need? Find a local activity club that might want the items on Meetup.com. For instance, if you have a slew of unused knitting supplies, locate a knitting group in your area and ask the club administrator to list your items for sale or make an announcement at their next meeting. "I had a client make \$2,500 from her late-husband's photography equipment that was sitting in the basement," says Novak. "A local photography club snatched the items up."

8. Unused gift cards

"Gather up your gift cards and log on to PlasticJungle.com," suggests Lisa Reynolds, "Mom-Saver-in-Chief" at RedPlum.com. The site will buy unused gift cards (minimum balance of \$25 required) for up to 92 percent of their original value. Plastic Jungle accepts cards from most well-known retailers, from department stores to restaurants and cinemas.

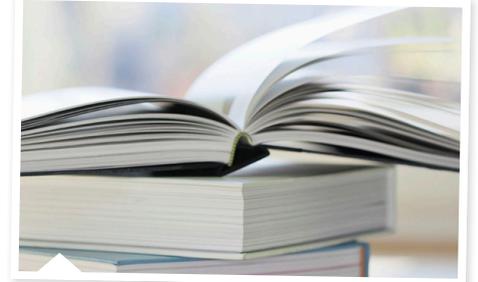
9. Jewelry

The popularity of stores specializing in cash-back for used jewelry has given consumers the upper hand in such transactions. For the best deals: "Visit a reputable local jeweler," advises David Craig Rotenberg, president of David Craig Jewelers in Langhorne, Pennsylvania. The dealer will offer you a percentage of the retail value for undamaged jewelry that can be resold. Any damaged pieces will be evaluated to determine the value of metal and gems that can be salvaged with resetting. For example, a 24" 14-carat gold chain weighing 6.5 grams could net you \$85 to \$95. Log on to AmericanGemSociety.org to find a certified jeweler in your area.



10. Electronics

As the nation's largest re-commercing service, Gazelle.com offers cash for any electronics that power on—even if they're a little beat up. A Samsung 30" LCD computer monitor in "poor condition" can earn you \$47. A Canon Powershot S230 camera that takes photos but is scratched beyond recognition will net you \$3. And for electronics in good-to-new condition, Gazelle's payout rates typically fare better than other websites FIRST checked. That's especially true for camcorders (\$298 for Sony HandyCam HDR-SR11), calculators (\$31 for TI-89 Titanium) and MP3 players (\$18 for an iPod Shuffle 2nd generation 2GB).



11. Books

If your shelves are overflowing with books, consider trading them in at Cash4Books.net. Just enter the ISBN numbers, and the site will list their offer. They'll even give you a free FedEx shipping label if you're selling five books or more. Prices vary depending on supply and demand—the popular Dan Brown novel *Deception Point* will earn you 50 cents, while the textbook *Conceptual Physics* will get you \$37.14. Think your books are worth more? Try amazon.com. There, you can list the same Dan Brown book for \$10.88 and the textbook for \$154. The drawback: You have to wait for the items to sell.

12. Memorabilia

"You can make a fortune just by watching the news," says Novak. After Michael Jackson's passing, Jackson-related collector's items went for five times their original price. (One dealer sold a sealed Thriller album for \$1,000.) Even collectible VHS tapes can be hot sellers, says Novak. For best results, package them in bundles—21 Disney tapes recently sold for \$30. For hassle-free online selling, try one of eBay's new registered drop-off locations. (Log on to EbayTradingAssistant.com to find one near you.) These stores take a photo of each item, write a description, set up a PayPal account and ship the items to buyers for a small fee and commission of the sale.