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# The 5 principles of Decluttering and having an organised life

## 1. THROW OUT THE RUBBISH

The first principle of decluttering and getting organised is to get rid of the rubbish you've been storing.

## 2. SORT OUT WHAT'S LEFT

This principle sounds totally logical, but you'll be tempted to stop once the rubbish has been sorted. Or worse still - hang on to stuff that is not adding anything to your life. Don't.

## 3. START SMALL

Starting small gives you some quick wins. The beauty of a quick win is it makes you feel good and sets you up for success.

## 4. ASK YOURSELF IF SOMETHING DESERVES TO TAKE UP SPACE

If you want the peace of mind that comes from having space and freedom from clutter, you have to think about if you really need, use, or love the items that are cluttering up your home.

## 5. FOR EVERY ITEM YOU STRUGGLE TO PART WITH ASK THESE QUESTIONS

1. Do I really need this thing?
2. Do I ever use this item?
3. Is this something I love and/or enjoy?
4. Is this something I'm prepared to give space to?

## THROW OUT THE RUBBISH

The first step for any space is to sort out the rubbish from the stuff you want to keep.

Having a space that's full of 'stuff' is daunting. You probably got to this stage because you've put off the job of sorting out the things you really want to keep from those you don't want, need or use.

That can make starting your decluttering seem so much worse than it really is.

With the rubbish put to one side and sorted into piles of things to be sold, recycled or trashed you'll have made a great start. And - you'll immediately feel that you're making progress and creating space.

Simply grab yourself a roll of trash bags and make a start. The space you'll make will give you the momentum to move to the next step.

## SORT OUT WHAT'S LEFT

This step sounds obvious I know. But you may be tempted to stop once the trash is gone.

Look at the things left after the rubbish has been removed and sort it into piles.

The aim is to be left with only those things that belong in this space. Many areas of our homes get messy simply because we don't put things back where they belong. It's easier to open the nearest cupboard or spare room door and put them in there to be moved later.

Later never came.

Now is the time to get back on track.

What should be stored in this space?

The guiding principle for this step of your declutter is to designate a place for everything and make sure you put everything in it's proper place.

## CHOOSE A SMALL SPACE TO START

The beauty of a quick win is that it makes you feel good because you realise you can do this.

If the thought of tackling a big decluttering task right off the bat is putting you off, then try something simple to get you going.

For example. We all have that cupboard under the sink that looks like something bad happened in there. Washing-up sponges piled on top of bottles of cleaning products.

One hand from a pair of rubber gloves ring any bells?

Clear it out.

Sort everything into piles and throw out the rubbish, the abandoned rubber glove, the bacteria harbouring sponges, the empty spray bottles (unless they're refillable? Then you know what to do!)

Get a couple of plastic trays you can use to organise the things you're keeping – maybe by reusing some that once held other products.

Place all the things you're keeping into the trays in a logical order that will make easy to find stuff when you want it, and you're done.

That's one space done and you're already starting to feel like you can do this!

So. What space/cupboard/drawer will get the declutter and organise treatment next?

# IT'S TIME FOR THE SPACE THAT REALLY DRIVES YOU ROUND THE BEND

In my home the space that really was bothering me as I used it multiple times a day was the pantry.

Our pantry is really just a tiny walk-in room with shelves at one end to store packets and tins of long-life food. The electric meter box is also in there with the timer for the outside lights underneath it.

That room had become a dumping ground for shoes, coats and other things we couldn't be bothered to put back where they belong.

The result was a space crammed with 'stuff' making it next to impossible to get to the ironing board or vacuum without major effort. The food on the shelves was even harder to reach

By clearing the space and laying everything out on the kitchen floor it was possible to sort everything into categories. Things to keep; things to give to charity; things to trash.

With the pantry cleared, it was possible to think about maximising the storage. The shelves were good but with a little imagination I found I could add to it using wire baskets that hang below the existing shelves so I could store more food products.

Adding a shoe rack underneath the shelves got all those walking boots and shoes off the floor.

A good clearout of coats that haven't been worn in years added to the space available.

Now the space works for us and it's made a huge difference but not only to our ability to find the things we want. It's also saved us money.

We can find the food we have stored so we spend less. And one major benefit is having easy access to the electric meter to give our supplier an accurate reading instead of estimates.

We got a refund on overpaid electricity bills!

That alone is a great reason for decluttering **and** keeping it that way.

## FEELING OVERWHELMED? TRY SORTING ITEMS INTO CATEGORIES

When you're tackling a large space or an area that has just become full of lots of different things, it helps to put everything into categories as you work through the sorting process.

For example, if you use the space under the stairs to store pretty much anything you'll quickly lose sight of what's in there.

### **Out-of-sight, out-of-mind**

Create piles of similar items as you sort such as children's clothes, throws, shoes, exercise equipment. You get the picture.

Then take one category at a time. Run through the key questions for those things you'll keep as you sort each pile into things to keep, sell, recycle or trash. Next move each category to the place or room it should be stored.

It may take a little longer to complete the task and you may have to live with some of the clutter for a short time as it's waiting to be dealt with. But setting yourself a realistic timescale to finish the task will help.

## WHICH ONE AREA DO YOU REALLY WANT TO GET ORGANISED?

If there's a space in your home, be it a drawer, wardrobe, home office desk, whatever, that you'd

love to start with – make that a priority.

In the same way that every home has an area you'd rather leave until later to declutter, there's going to be one that you simply can't wait to have organised, tidy and a pleasure to use.

That's one to tackle early on to give you that feeling of satisfaction, space and mental peace that comes from a good job well done.

The feeling of being in control you'll get from being free to get on with your day, your work etc. in that organised space will inspire you to tackle more decluttering as you'll quickly start to realise the benefits.

## SECOND PRIORITY IS THE AREA THAT WILL MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER

**Decluttering and organising my wardrobe was transformative for me.**

I used to spend a lot of money on clothes. It was stupid really. I was the classic person who would open the closet door and say I had nothing to wear.

### **The truth?**

I just couldn't see what was in there.

Another downside was the time it took for me to choose an outfit and get out of the door on time in the morning.

A major decluttering and organisation session later and I've rediscovered clothes I'd forgotten I'd even bought.

Shamefully, some still had the tags on.

Now I have a clear view of the clothes I own and I've been able to benefit others through donations to charity shops, or give a boost to my bank account by selling the better quality and unworn/unwanted items for others to enjoy.

## A FINAL SUGGESTION TO GET YOU STARTED

**Try putting 30 minutes a day aside to do some decluttering.**

Start small with your declutter and organise planning and you'll reduce the risk of running out of steam before you've made any major inroads.

Starting with a small amount of time each day will give quick results and those results will start to pay dividends.

When you begin to realise the benefits of being organised you won't want to stop.

*Wishing you an organised, relaxing and comfortable home.*