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**FROM CHAOS TO
CALM: A GUIDE
TO
DECLUTTERING
YOUR HOME**



ABSTRACT

From Chaos to Calm: A Guide to Decluttering Your Home provides a comprehensive approach to transforming your living space from cluttered and chaotic to serene and organized. This guide emphasizes the importance of decluttering as a foundational step toward achieving a more organized and peaceful home environment. It begins by explaining the psychological and practical benefits of decluttering, including reduced stress and increased efficiency. The guide outlines effective techniques such as the KonMari Method, the 4-Box Method, and the One-Year Rule to help you tackle clutter systematically.



Each room is addressed with specific strategies for sorting and organizing, from living areas and kitchens to bedrooms and bathrooms. Special attention is given to managing sentimental items and digital clutter, ensuring a holistic approach. Additionally, the guide offers tips for maintaining organization long-term, including daily habits and periodic check-ins. It concludes with advice on seeking professional help if needed and utilizing resources for further support. This guide is designed to help you create a calm, clutter-free home environment, ultimately making your living space more enjoyable and functional.

LET'S GET STARTED

"From Chaos to Calm: A Guide to Decluttering Your Home" is a practical and insightful resource aimed at helping individuals transform their cluttered living spaces into organized, serene environments. This guide explores the critical benefits of decluttering, including enhanced mental clarity and increased productivity, and provides actionable steps for achieving a clutter-free home.

The guide begins by outlining the psychological and practical advantages of decluttering, setting the stage for a more organized lifestyle. It introduces various proven techniques such as the KonMari Method, the 4-Box Method, and the One-Year Rule, each designed to help users effectively sort and manage their belongings.

Detailed strategies are provided for tackling clutter in specific areas of the home, including living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, and bathrooms. Special emphasis is placed on handling sentimental items and digital clutter to ensure a comprehensive approach to organization.

WHAT IS DECLUTTERING?

Decluttering is the process of removing unnecessary or unwanted items from your living space to create a more organized, functional, and aesthetically pleasing environment. It involves sorting through your belongings, deciding what to keep, donate, sell, or discard, and then arranging the remaining items in a way that maximizes space and minimizes disorder.

1. **Assessment:** Evaluating the current state of your space and identifying areas that are cluttered or disorganized.
2. **Sorting:** Categorizing items into groups such as keep, donate, sell, or discard. This often involves making decisions about the usefulness and value of each item.
3. **Organization:** Finding efficient storage solutions and arranging the remaining items in a way that promotes easy access and minimizes clutter.

4. Maintenance: Implementing systems and habits to keep the space organized and prevent clutter from accumulating again.



THE MOST VALUABLE DECLUTTERING LESSONS

1. Guilt is a sign something needs to go

Guilt was something I really struggled with when it came to decluttering – and it wasn't just when decluttering sentimental items either, it was for everything I had ever spent money on, be it decluttering my closet, or clearing out my kitchen.

One of the most important things I learned from organizers is that this feeling of guilt that I haven't used something or that something doesn't fit is a surefire sign that it needs to be decluttered. After all, the item will only continue to make me feel guilty and remain unused.

After starting to stick to this rule and forcing myself through the difficult moments, I feel a lot happier with what I do keep around me.

2. The memories are more important than the object

Sentimental items are one of those home items people never want to declutter but need to – and I certainly used to be guilty of hanging on to every ticket and travel map with the intention of putting it in a scrapbook but never did.

These items are hard to let go of, but experts reminded me that I can still reminisce on those trips and events without having to have a physical item to remind me of them. Besides, the fact I never put it in a book or digitized the memory suggests I would never look at it again if I had anyway.

The memories stick with me and don't take up space in my essential home storage – making letting go of stuff easier.

3. A reliable system is life-changing

When it comes to the process of decluttering, I used to wait until I got overwhelmed by a space or physically couldn't use a storage unit before I gutted it out as a matter of necessity. This is the furthest thing from a practical solution imaginable.

When I started talking to the experts, I discovered that every one of them has a system that they depend upon and works for every space in every home. I have tested out a fair few of these around my space for work but settled on the ski-slope organizing system as my ultimate favorite for reestablishing order around my home and decluttering without making a mess.

4. Planning might be boring but it is essential

I never used to be a big planner when it came to cleaning and decluttering my home, opting to dive in head first instead. This was a huge mistake, however, as it meant I frequently got distracted and never ended up getting rid of very much at all.

It turns out that, while it may be time-consuming, planning where I wanted to tackle and writing out my goals (be it on paper or my phone) does set you up for a successful decluttering session – and not much else beats it.

STRATEGIES TO DECLUTTER YOUR HOME

1. The KonMari Method

- Overview: Developed by Marie Kondo, this method focuses on keeping only items that “spark joy” in your life.

- Process:

- Categorize, Not Room-by-Room: Sort items by category (e.g., clothing, books, papers) rather than by room.

- Tidy by Category: Collect all items of the same category in one place, then assess each item’s value and joy factor.

- Thank and Let Go: Show gratitude for items you decide to discard and then let them go.



2. The 4-Box Method

- Overview: A systematic approach to sorting belongings into four categories: keep, donate, sell, and discard.

- Process:

- Set Up Four Boxes: Label each box according to the categories.

- Sort Items: As you go through your belongings, place each item in the appropriate box.

- Act on Decisions: Immediately handle items in the donate and sell boxes. Discard or recycle items from the discard box.

3. The Minimalist Approach

- Overview: Focuses on keeping only essential and meaningful items, inspired by minimalist living principles.

- Process:

- Assess Necessity: Evaluate each item's usefulness and emotional significance.

- Reduce Excess: Aim to keep only those items that serve a clear purpose or bring significant joy.

- Embrace Quality Over Quantity: Invest in high-quality, multifunctional items instead of accumulating many possessions.

4. The One-Year Rule

- Overview: Based on the idea that if you haven't used an item in a year, it's likely you don't need it.

- Process:

- Identify Infrequent Items: Check items that haven't been used in the past year.

- Decide on Disposition: Consider donating, selling, or discarding these items.

- Create a “Maybe” Box: For items you’re unsure about, place them in a box and revisit after six months.

5. Room-by-Room Approach

- Overview: Tackle one room at a time to manage decluttering in smaller, more manageable segments.

- Process:

- Start with One Room: Focus on one room and complete it before moving on.

- Sort and Organize: Use sorting methods and organizational tools specific to each room’s needs.

- Evaluate and Maintain: Regularly check and maintain the organization of each room.



6. The Digital Declutter

- Overview: Focuses on organizing digital clutter such as files, emails, and apps.

- Process:

- Organize Files: Sort digital files into clearly labeled folders. Delete or archive unnecessary documents.

- Manage Emails: Unsubscribe from unwanted newsletters and categorize important emails.

- Clean Devices: Remove unused apps and clear out old data from your devices.

By following these expert strategies, you can tackle clutter in a systematic and effective manner, ultimately creating a more organized and peaceful home environment.

BEST ROOM-BY-ROOM DECLUTTERING METHODS

Living Room

Assessment and Planning:

- Identify Clutter Hotspots: Common areas include coffee tables, side tables, and entertainment centers.

- Set Goals: Decide what a decluttered living room should look like—fewer items on surfaces, organized shelves, etc.

Decluttering Steps:

1. Start with Surfaces: Clear off coffee tables, side tables, and other flat surfaces. Sort items into keep, donate, sell, or discard.

2. Organize Media and Electronics: Arrange DVDs, books, and gaming systems. Use bins or shelves to keep everything tidy.

3. Sort Furniture: Evaluate whether each piece of furniture is necessary and in good condition. Consider removing excess pieces.

4. Evaluate Décor: Keep decorative items to a minimum. Display only those that you truly love or that serve a purpose.

Final Touches:

- Storage Solutions: Use baskets, shelves, or cabinets to organize remaining items.
- Regular Maintenance: Establish a routine for tidying up regularly to prevent clutter from accumulating.



Kitchen

Assessment and Planning:

- Identify Clutter Zones: Focus on countertops, cabinets, pantry, and drawers.
- Set Goals: Aim for clear countertops, organized cabinets, and an efficient pantry.

Decluttering Steps:

1. Clear Countertops: Remove all items from countertops. Sort and decide what to keep based on usage and necessity.
2. Organize Cabinets and Drawers: Empty cabinets and drawers. Group similar items together (e.g., baking supplies, utensils). Use drawer dividers or organizers.
3. Sort Pantry Items: Check expiration dates, discard expired items, and group similar foods. Use clear containers for easy access.
4. Evaluate Appliances: Keep only those you use regularly. Store infrequently used appliances away or consider donating.

Final Touches:

- Label Storage Containers: Use labels for pantry items and containers.
- Regular Maintenance: Implement a system for keeping countertops clear and regularly review pantry and cabinet contents.

Bedroom

Assessment and Planning:

- Identify Clutter Hotspots: Focus on closets, dressers, nightstands, and under the bed.
- Set Goals: Aim for a restful, organized space with minimal clutter.

Decluttering Steps:

1. Closet Organization: Remove all clothing and accessories. Sort by season and frequency of use. Donate or discard items you haven't worn in a year.
2. Dresser and Nightstand: Empty drawers and surfaces. Organize items into categories like socks, underwear, and personal items.
3. Under the Bed: Clear out items stored under the bed. Use bins to keep things organized if needed.
4. Sentimental Items: Evaluate keepsakes and memorabilia. Keep only those that bring you joy or have significant value.

Final Touches:

- Use Storage Solutions: Implement closet organizers, drawer dividers, and under-bed storage bins.
- Regular Maintenance: Keep your closet and drawers organized by returning items to their designated places.

Bathroom

Assessment and Planning:

- Identify Clutter Zones: Focus on countertops, cabinets, and under the sink.
- Set Goals: Aim for a clean, functional space with organized toiletries and cleaning supplies.

Decluttering Steps:

1. Clear Countertops: Remove all items from countertops. Keep only essentials like hand soap and a toothbrush holder.
2. Organize Cabinets and Drawers: Empty cabinets and drawers. Sort and group items such as medications, toiletries, and cleaning supplies. Use small bins or drawer organizers.
3. Sort Towels and Linens: Assess the condition of towels and linens. Keep only those that are in good condition and discard worn items.
4. Check Expiration Dates: Discard expired medications and beauty products.

Final Touches:

- Use Storage Solutions: Install shelves or use bins for organizing under the sink and in cabinets.
- Regular Maintenance: Perform regular checks to keep counters clear and restock supplies as needed.

Home Office

Assessment and Planning:

- Identify Clutter Zones: Focus on desks, filing cabinets, and office supplies.
- Set Goals: Create an organized, functional workspace free from unnecessary clutter.

Decluttering Steps:

1. **Clear Desk Surface:** Remove all items from your desk. Sort through papers and office supplies. Discard or file documents as needed.
2. **Organize Filing Cabinets:** Sort files into categories like personal, work, and taxes. Use labeled folders for easy retrieval.
3. **Sort Office Supplies:** Group similar items (e.g., pens, notebooks) and store them in organizers or drawers.
4. **Digital Declutter:** Organize digital files into folders, delete unnecessary files, and back up important documents.

Final Touches:

- **Implement Organizational Tools:** Use desk organizers, filing systems, and cable management solutions.
- **Regular Maintenance:** Schedule periodic decluttering sessions to keep your workspace organized and efficient.



Garage/Basement

Assessment and Planning:

- Identify Clutter Zones: Focus on storage shelves, workspaces, and any storage bins.
- Set Goals: Aim for a functional space with organized tools, seasonal items, and minimal clutter.

Decluttering Steps:

1. Empty and Sort: Remove items from shelves and bins. Sort into categories such as tools, sports equipment, and seasonal decorations.
2. Organize by Category: Group similar items together and store them in labeled bins or on shelves.
3. Discard or Donate: Remove items that are broken, expired, or no longer needed.
4. Assess Storage Solutions: Implement shelving, pegboards, or storage bins for better organization.

Final Touches:

- Label Storage Bins: Clearly label bins for easy identification.
- Regular Maintenance: Keep the garage or basement organized by regularly reviewing stored items and ensuring everything is in its place.

By following these detailed room-by-room methods, you can efficiently declutter each area of your home, creating a more organized, functional, and peaceful living environment.

WHAT IS DIGITALLY DECLUTTER?

Digitally decluttering involves organizing and streamlining your digital environment to enhance efficiency and reduce unnecessary clutter. This process includes several key activities aimed at improving the management of your electronic data.

Firstly, **organizing files and folders** is crucial. Create a logical folder structure to group similar documents, images, and other files. Use clearly labeled folders and sort items into these categories. Regularly review and delete outdated or duplicate files to keep your primary folders uncluttered. For older files that you don't frequently access, consider archiving them to maintain an organized and accessible workspace.



Secondly, **managing emails** is an important aspect of digital decluttering. Start by unsubscribing from unwanted newsletters and mailing lists. Organize your email inbox using folders or labels to categorize and sort messages efficiently. Set up filters to automatically direct incoming emails into the appropriate folders, and regularly clean up your inbox by deleting or archiving old messages.

Additionally, **streamlining your digital devices** helps in maintaining an organized digital space. Remove unused or unnecessary applications and software from your devices to free up resources. Clear storage by deleting cache files, old downloads, and temporary files. Organize home screens on your devices by grouping apps into

folders based on their purpose, ensuring quick access to frequently used tools and reducing visual clutter.

Digital clutter is as real and distracting as a chaotic countertop or a disorganized closet. But unlike most types of jumbled messes, it's nearly impossible to leave your digital disarray behind for even a few hours since our phones are always by our sides, ping-pong, dinging, and ringing all the time. In fact, we're willing to bet you're reading this on your phone right now.

One of the cutest and most effective home hacks for digital decluttering involves creating a "Digital Declutter Kit". This playful and practical kit combines organization with a touch of creativity to make managing your digital life both fun and efficient.

HOW TO CREATE YOUR DIGITAL DECLUTTER KIT:

1. Design a Cute Storage Box or Jar:

- Find or decorate a small box or jar to serve as your "Digital Declutter Kit." Choose a design that makes you smile, like one with a fun pattern, vibrant colors, or motivational quotes.

2. Include Handy Tools:

- Cable Organizers: Add cable clips or ties to keep your charging cables and cords neat and tangle-free.

- Flash Drives: Include a couple of cute, high-capacity flash drives for backing up important files or transferring data.

- Mini Notepad and Pen: For jotting down quick notes or to-do lists related to your digital organization tasks.

3. Create a Checklist:

- Inside the box, include a laminated checklist of digital decluttering tasks. This might include steps like deleting old emails, organizing files, and updating software. You can use colorful markers to make the checklist visually appealing.

4. Add Fun Labels:

- Create or print out cute labels to stick on your digital storage devices, folders, or file categories. Use fun fonts and colors to make organization feel more enjoyable.

5. Incorporate a Reward System:

- Add a small jar of treats or a gift card to your favorite coffee shop. Set it aside as a reward for yourself once you complete your digital decluttering tasks. This creates a positive association with your decluttering efforts.

Using the Kit:

Whenever you need to declutter your digital space, pull out your "Digital Declutter Kit." Use the tools and follow your checklist to methodically organize your files, emails, and devices. The visual appeal and interactive elements of the kit make the process more engaging, turning a mundane task into a more enjoyable and rewarding experience.

By integrating this cute and functional hack into your routine, you can make digital decluttering feel less like a chore and more like a creative activity!

HOW TO MAINTAIN A CLUTTER-FREE HOME?

1. Reduce the Inventory

In most areas of our lives, we have “more” than enough. More clothes, more food, more toiletries, more home decor, more books, more technology. More, more, more! But the reality is that more isn’t always better.

More also means more to clean, more to organize, more to store, and more mess created by all that stuff. By reducing the inventory to an amount we can easily manage, we will not only give ourselves more space, but more time and energy as well!

2. Set boundaries

Our homes are pretty awesome in that they give us pretty defined boundaries as to how much will comfortably fit in a space. However, sometimes we can stretch

those boundaries a bit more than we should. Sometimes we need to step in and be more intentional about the boundaries and limit the amount of stuff we allow into our home.

For example, I've given myself a very defined boundary for clothing. I keep all 4 seasons of clothing in my closet and within those 4 seasons, I only allow myself to have 100 hangers total. This amount can comfortably fit in my closet without it feeling too full or overwhelming. I feel like that's more than enough clothing for me to have plenty of options in all four seasons. Plus I really love that I know when it's time to purge. If I'm out of hangers and I buy something new, then something old must go.



We can set boundaries on the amount of food we store, the amount of toys our kids have, or the amount of craft supplies we keep on hand. Whatever your struggling with, clear out the old and then give yourself defined boundaries so you won't go overboard!

3. Have a PURGE BIN

A purge bin is a great tool for those of us who are in the maintenance stage. You might not need to do major overhauls of different areas of your home. But as you come across clothes your kids have outgrown, items you're no longer using, shoes you're no longer wearing, home decor you're no longer loving, or books you're no longer reading, they need to make their way out of your home.

But if you're anything like me then those items do one of two things. One, stay right where they are only causing your home to feel more cluttered and not being used to their fullest potential. Or, two, they become a pile in a spare room, basement, closet, or attic of things "you need to get rid of someday." Instead of waiting for someday, create a purge bin.

Put it in an easy to access location. Then as you come across things as you go about your day, week, or month that you no long want or need, toss them in. When the purge bin is full, remove the items to a large bag or box and place in your trunk to drop off at your local donation center the next time you are out running errands. This will make regular decluttering a part of your every day life.

4. Live on a Budget

When we live on a budget, we are basically forcing ourselves to reduce the amount of inventory we are bringing into our homes each day, week, or month. I encourage you to give yourself a budget particularly in areas where you struggle to maintain simplified.

Maybe that's books, home decor, craft supplies, kitchen items, kid's toys, or clothing. Give yourself a set amount you can spend in that area each month and DON'T exceed it! Make sure it's a challenging number. So if you're used to buying 10-15 books a month from Amazon, try giving yourself a budget of \$40 for books. Once that money is gone, you'll have to utilize your library for books you want to read the remainder of the month.

If you struggle with over-buying home decor, give yourself a \$25 budget each month. Once that money is gone, get creative! Rearrange the items you already have, swap decor with a friend or neighbor, or simply live with the already beautiful home you have for awhile.

5. Follow daily routines

This does NOT have to be complicated. Spend 20 minutes each morning making your bed, getting laundry started for the day, and tidying up your kitchen. Get your kids involved and take a task or two off your plate. These simple routines will go a long way to make your home feel less cluttered.

The reality is, a messy room feels cluttered. But daily tidying can really make a difference in how our space feels. And when our home feels calm, peaceful, and relaxing, we are less overwhelmed.

But when our home is cluttered, studies have shown that our Cortisol levels rise. That's the stress hormone that causes us to feel anxious and fatigued. High Cortisol levels can cause you to gain weight, have high blood pressure, and even depression. We have enough other things in our lives causing us stress right now. Our homes shouldn't be one of them.

6. Perform Regular Maintenance

Just because you've decluttered once, doesn't mean you're done forever. Be the gatekeeper of your home. You control what comes in and what goes out. Regular maintenance in different areas of your home will go a long way.

Once you've done the deep, dive purge of your home, these regular maintenance projects only take a few minutes. I recently went back through my linen closet and bathroom cabinets and the entire project took me less than 20 minutes.

When you have systems in place, you've reduced your inventory to only the things you use regularly, and you're living on a budget and not allowing yourself to impulse purchase items, the regular maintenance becomes much easier.

KEY REASONS ON DE-CLUTTERING BEFORE AN END OF LEASE CLEAN

Are you running at the end of your tenancy? This can be the most stressful phase for every tenant/renter in Sydney due to the varied responsibilities on their shoulders. According to the Residential Tenancy Laws in NSW, tenants must

return the property in a clean and well-maintained condition- as they received it in the beginning.

This clearly means that they have to perform a professional end of lease cleaning Sydney to secure hard-earned bond money. However, before that, it is good to reduce the clutter and other potential distractions to target dust-laden spots more effectively. This will save you cleaning hours and of course efforts.

Moreover, sorting out household belongings makes it easy to pack and prepare for the move-out at the end of your tenancy.

So, here are some key reasons for de-cluttering a property before a thorough end-of-lease clean. Follow the right approach and a proper checklist to achieve desired results.



1. De-cluttering Simplifies the Cleaning Process

Cleaning a cluttered home can be overwhelming and time-consuming for renters. Trapping dust, grime, grease and stains becomes difficult when your rooms and storage cabinets are flooded with unnecessary things.

On the contrary, a well-organised and clutter-free space makes it easy to access dirt-laden surfaces. This will help you clean the entire property more efficiently.

So, take responsibility and inspect all your rooms, cabinets, cupboards, drawers, kitchen pantry, fridge and other areas to purge unnecessary things.

Ensure you complete the process before the arrival of experts for a professional end of lease cleaning Sydney. With proper de-cluttering, they can easily target visible dust, dirt and stains and return the premises in a spick and span condition.

2. Saves a Lot of Cleaning Time

Preparing a rental property is crucial before getting into the cleaning process. Remove the piles of clothes from the couch, toss unnecessary paperwork, old electronics and other knickknacks to remove distractions.

This allows cleaners to reach the kitchen's toughest spots or quickly tackle stubborn stains and accumulated dust. They don't have to work around your belongings or remove furniture to wash walls.

In fact, it is good to empty the room so that professionals can come, do their job efficiently, and help you pass the rental inspection.

3. Eliminates Allergens from the Property

Woman in white top and mask holding a spray bottle and cleaning window.

There is no denying that clutter harbours harmful allergens, such as dirt, pet hair, and pollen. Unused or unwanted stuff sitting in your home tends to accumulate dust and pollute the indoor air.

So, it is essential to get rid of clutter from all rooms and prepare a property for a deep cleaning, which includes nooks and crannies, air filters, carpets, bathroom fixtures and other areas as per the pre-approved cleaning checklist.

4. Reduces Stress Levels

There are many things to do when vacating a rental property. Most tenants are concerned about their hard-earned bond money, which can leave them anxious throughout the process.

However, de-cluttering a home can alleviate your stress levels as it can be therapeutic. The best part is that it allows you to remove the trash and make the property look more appealing and manageable.

You will also have peace of mind knowing that you only have the necessary items to move after the tenancy period.

5. Alleviating the Moving Load

Removing unwanted household items before moving out of a rental property makes a huge difference. Toss broken, empty, or worn-out items or donate pre-loved belongings when preparing your rental property for a deep cleaning.

Packing and relocating fewer items becomes easy, especially in a metropolitan city like Sydney, NSW. It is wise to throw away things you no longer need (personal belongings only).

This will lighten your moving load while saving you money, energy and stress when vacating a property.

6. Helps you Earn Extra Dollars

Hiring professionals for quality end of lease cleaning Sydney can be expensive. They provide you with an estimated quote after evaluating the size and condition of a house. Furthermore, homes with limited items look comparatively clean, reducing the overall cleaning cost and saving you money.

On the other hand, donating pre-loved items can help you earn extra money. You can sell unused items via a garage sale or an online platform. Use that money to make necessary repairs or complete other important tasks before the end of a tenancy.

Quick Tips to De-clutter Before an End of Lease Clean

Here are some quick hacks to help clear the clutter and prep your property for a professional end of lease cleaning Sydney:

- **Begin De-cluttering As Soon As Possible-** It is good to start the process at least 4 weeks prior to the cleaning day to avoid last-minute chaos.

- **De-clutter by Category:** Inspect each room and sort items by category, such as electronics, books, tools, & equipment, etc.
- **Divide Items into Three Categories:** It is good to divide your items into three major categories: keep, toss, and donation/sale.
- **Check Perishable Items:** Make sure you clean your fridge and use or dispose of perishable food to ensure food safety. Do this before the arrival of professionals.
- **Delegate Tasks:** Include other family members in the process so that you can complete the task before the deadline.

Tenants or renters should take responsibility to clear all the mess and get rid of unnecessary items before the arrival of professional cleaners. The main objective is to prepare the property for an attention-to-detail cleaning and help pass the rental inspection without any complexity. This will increase the chance of securing full bond money at the end of the tenancy.



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, "From Chaos to Calm: A Guide to Decluttering Your Home" provides a comprehensive roadmap to transforming your living space from cluttered and chaotic to serene and organized. By employing expert strategies such as the KonMari Method, the 4-Box Method, and room-by-room approaches, you can effectively tackle clutter and create a more functional environment.



The guide emphasizes not just the physical act of decluttering, but also the mental clarity and enhanced quality of life that come with an organized home. Embrace these strategies to foster a peaceful, efficient living space and enjoy the profound benefits of a decluttered home. Start today, and let calm and order redefine your surroundings.

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