

15 GREAT DE-CLUTTERING TIPS

1. De-clutter for 15 minutes every day. It's amazing how much you can get through if you just do it in small increments like this.

2. Don't allow things into the house in the first place. Whether you've begun de-cluttering the living space, or you've just completed it, stop bringing in new stuff NOW. Even if that's ALL you do and don't start de-cluttering immediately, if you can only establish one habit at a time, establish the no-more-stuff habit first. This way, when you do get to de-cluttering the existing stuff, you've already stopped making it worse. Think of bailing out a boat with a hole in it. You can bail and bail, but it won't do anything for the leak.

3. Donate stuff you're de-cluttering, so you don't feel bad about wasting it.

4. Create a Joe's Goals chart with de-cluttering on it — either daily, or 3 times a week. Check off the days when you de-clutter, and you'll feel a great sense of accomplishment.

5. Start at the corner by the door and move your way around the room, doing the superficial stuff first - surfaces, empty the bin etc. Repeat, but do more the 2nd time around - i.e., open the cupboards.

6. Whenever you're boiling the kettle for tea, tidy up the kitchen. If the kitchen is tidy, tidy up the next room - it's only 3 minutes but it keeps you on top of everything (helps if you have an Englishman's obsession with Tea as well!)

7. Use the "one in, two out" rule. The rule: whenever you bring in an item, you have to throw away two other items. First you cheat, by throwing out two pieces of paper, but soon you will have to move to big stuff.

8. Make your storage space smaller and more minimal. If you have lots of storage, you'll fill it with stuff.

9. Clothing rule: If you haven't worn an item in 6 months, sell or donate it.

10. The One-Year Box. Take all your items that you are unsure about getting rid of (e.g. "I might need this someday..."), put them in a box, seal it and date it for 1 year in the future. When the date comes, and you still didn't need to open it to get anything, donate the box WITHOUT OPENING IT. You probably won't even remember what there was in the box.

11. De-clutter one room (including any closets, desks, cabinets, etc.) before starting on the next one. Spending time in that room will feel **so** good, and it will be so easy to keep clean, that it will motivate you to do more!

12. Keep a list in your planner labeled "Don't Need It - Don't Want It." When you're out shopping and run across some kind of gadget or other item you crave, note it down on the list. This will slow you down long enough to reconsider. Also, seeing the other things on the list that you nearly bought on impulse really helps.

13. Internalize that your value is not in your "stuff". It is just "stuff". And realize that your value grows when you share your "stuff". Hoarding is a selfish act.

14. Have someone else (who you trust!) help you go through things. They don't have the (sometimes irrational) emotional attachment that you might have, but can still recognize if something should be kept.

15. Gift everything. Books you've read immediately get recycled among friends, family or local libraries. If you buy a new gaming system, donate your old one – and all the games.