

GET ORGANIZED, GET HAPPY

THE SIMPLE GUIDE TO DECLUTTER AND
ORGANIZE YOUR HEAD, HOME AND HEART



BY JANE ALAIS

DeclutterBeFree
living a little lighter

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weI come

Stuff is great, stuff is wonderful. It creates comfort, beauty and fun until it becomes too much work.

Hi, I'm Jane,

A few years ago I realized I had so much stuff I spent a lot of my day finding places for the things I owned. I had very little time for what I enjoyed in life.

To make things even worse I brought everything I had from Canada to Australia where I'm living now. I moved into a house with no basement, closets or garage. In a nutshell, no place to store anything. You can find out more about my story here- www.declutterbefree.com.

So I did a lot of decluttering and guess what, the clutter came back again.

I realized decluttering was only a temporary fix. I had clutter habits and beliefs that made me hang on to everything.

I delved deep. Read a lot, took organizing courses and received coaching. I worked on my head; how I thought about stuff; my heart, how I felt about stuff and then decluttered and organized my home.

My first clutter free goal was to have a relaxed hour with my kids when they came home from school. This meant I wasn't cleaning, cooking or thinking about something else.

It was pretty hard to do because at the time I was really disorganized, didn't menu plan and usually wasn't sure what to make for dinner.

But I stuck with it and organized work around having that hour free. The time with my kids was so wonderful, the reward was so great I felt really motivated to get the rest of my life organized.

My second and third goal was to make an office space for writing and an art studio in my garage (I'd moved out of the first house). Sounds simple but if your garage is full of stuff you can't have an art space can you?

Over time I got my studio and my writing space. As I decluttered I discovered essential concepts, methods and techniques to let go of clutter and get organized which I am going to share with you.

No matter how many kids you have or how messy your life is now you can do it. Taking that first step and then the next will get you where you want to go. So this is a teaching book of sorts where you get to shift your mindset, let go of clutter and get really organized so you can live a simpler life.

Here's to living a little lighter, Jane

1. The Clutter Busting Mindset Shift

Out of clutter, find simplicity.

Albert Einstein

I'd been decluttering for several months and had a pile of furniture standing empty in my carport. I decided to sell them on a local internet selling site. Sue the lady who bought one dresser online was a furniture refinisher.

In my carport I had a bookshelf, a standing lamp, a small table and some red butterfly chairs. Sue walked away with the lot and I was \$300 dollars richer.

As I was helping her load the stuff into her truck she turned to me with a huge grin and said don't you feel great when you get rid of stuff. I bet you feel 20 pounds lighter.

Boy was she right.

You feel lighter. The freedom it brings is the core of getting rid of clutter. You feel like you've lost pounds, you feel great, you feel energized. You feel focused and have the energy for what you are passionate about. Getting rid of clutter is fantastic.

Decluttering and organizing are simple when you declutter from the inside out. You get unstuck when you look at your beliefs and thoughts.

Five Tips to Start your Mindset Shift

If you really want to lighten up your life you need to do five things.

1. Figure out your big why- your most important reason.
Figuring out your why is like lighting a fire under your feet. It gets you started.
2. Be open to new ideas. New ideas will change your perspective. How you feel about your stuff will change, making it easier to let go.
3. Buy less, declutter more. Buying less means less stuff and you have to buy less, declutter more to get your stuff in balance.

4. Ask yourself different questions about your stuff. Asking questions if great. Questioning if you like it, need it or use it starts to change your world.

5. Take action. Get started. Be consistent.

Here are some new ideas to start that mindset shift in your head.

why simple small steps are powerful

Small incremental changes take you to your big goals. Making continual little improvements will lift your mood, get you motivated and bring the outcomes you want a lot quicker.

Become comfortable with being uncomfortable

Feeling indecisive doesn't indicate you should keep the item. You are changing your thinking, learning something new and going outside of your comfort zone. I often feel uncomfortable letting go of an item but feel relief when it is gone.

Figure out your big why

When I started decluttering my first goal was quality time with kids. Once this was accomplished it was a simple writing space and then art space. What is your first big why? This why is your reward, your motivator, what keeps you moving forward.

Identify your personal clutter traps

We all have clutter traps. These are the thoughts and excuses we use to keep the stuff we don't use. Knowing your clutter traps gets the clutter out.

Take action make "to do" decisions

Action is king when it comes to decluttering. Action will bring you results.

This means making decisions. Harv T Ecker says, decisions are habits. There are doing habits and there are non-doing habits. What are your habits? What do you need to do?

Add a Keystone Habit

A keystone habit is usually a small easy habit change to your routine. It creates a teeny tiny win. That win feels really good. The way our brains are wired, that one tiny win feels so good so we search out another feel good win. Then another and another.

A keystone habit triggers other positive habits which make widespread shifts.

One decluttering keystone habit is the one-in-one out rule. This mindset change makes you mindful of how you bring clutter into your life and what is clutter to you.

So what is the one-in-one out rule?

This sounds too simple. When I first heard about this rule I thought it would be easy. But it was hard to put it into practise.

I mean you need everything you buy. Right?

Wrong. Clutter means you have way more than you need or use.

Once I made the decision to put this into practise a new awareness happened. I realized:

I believed I needed more or better
I bought things I already had
I bought things I had no space for
I bought a lot of the same things again and again

I started to question every purchase I wanted to make.

The **one in one out rule** is a critical key to stop the flow of clutter into your home.

1. When you buy something new a similar item needs to be thrown away, donated or sold. Buy a new item of clothing, let go of an old item of clothing. Buy a book, let go of a book. Buy a toy, let go of a toy.
2. Pause before you bring anything into your home and ask if you can afford it. Do you have the space or are you going to get rid of a similar item you have at home.

Following the one in one out rule you cannot increase your clutter. It subtly reconnects you to what you own. You get in touch with how much you really have.

Try this for a few weeks and see your shopping patterns change as you start to question every item you bring into your home.

2. Clutter and Clutter Traps

Clutter Trap =Crap

Clutter traps are beliefs. They are the thinking loops that make you hold on to crap. One clutter trap is not knowing what clutter really is.

what is Clutter?

The best and simplest description of clutter I've come across is by Karen Kingston.

Clutter is:

1. Things you do not use or love
2. Things which are untidy and disorganized
3. Too many things in too small a space
4. Anything unfinished

You may think that describes your entire house but don't panic.

Once you begin decluttering you will be able to:

- Let go of the things you do not use or love
- Create a lot more space inside and out.
- Let go of unfinished projects or finish them.

More Head Stuff, Thoughts and Beliefs

Like I said before, clutter traps are a type of negative thinking loop which keeps you overwhelmed and stuck.

Here are three familiar clutter traps.

1. **You think you need things.** You believe it will make your life more beautiful, better or easier in some way.
2. **You think you are frugal** by keeping things you don't use.
3. You believe you **don't have the organizing gene** so you keep all your clutter.
4. **You are an all or nothing thinker.** Declutter perfectly or don't even start.
5. You keep something because **you paid a lot of money for it.**
6. You hang on to too many **sentimental items.**
7. **You use second best,** keep the nice things stored away.

Escaping Your Clutter Trap

Have you ever been on a plane that is on a holding pattern? You fly around in circles going nowhere until the plane finally lands.

Your clutter traps keep you in a holding pattern in a plane that never lands. You unconsciously repeat your clutter behaviour.

I like to say clutter traps make you keep crap.

Here are four steps to help you get out of your clutter trap.

How to get out of Your clutter trap

Identify your trap. First element of change is awareness. When you become aware of your clutter traps it is easier to change

Shift your focus to your goals. Focus on what you want. Focusing on what you want to keep makes letting go a lot easier.

Recommit to changing. Take a look at your vision and add a few more details. What do you want? More space, more money or more freedom? Create the outcomes you want.

Decluttering Action Tip: Let go of three items from your primary clutter trap. See www.declutterbefree.com for more tips.

3. Decision Making and Letting Go

*Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you
take your eyes off the goal.*
Henry Ford

Making decisions about clutter can be like a high wire act without a net. Making confident quick decisions about what to keep and let go is a skill to develop. You want to make the right decision and not throw away something you treasure.

The essential key here is empty spaces beg to be filled and creating a space to put specific clutter starts to move stuff out of your home.

The Magic of a Let Go and Maybe Clutter Box

Using a Let go and Maybe Clutter box gives that daily clutter a place to go and helps you feel you have a safety net under your high wire act.

It keeps decision making simple. Take two boxes, baskets or bags and label them **Let Go** and **Maybe**, put them in a closet and start filling them up.

When you come across an item you don't want put it in your **Let Go Box**.

The core idea is to remove the clutter from your living space immediately. You feel great about letting go of something and that feel good feeling makes it easier and easier to let go.

The second box is labelled **Maybe Box**. This is for the possessions that you don't use or love but feel attached to.

The core idea is the Maybe Box gets you to shift from making no decision to decision.

The “maybes” need to get out of your living space for emotional distance. You have breathing space. The fear of making a wrong decision lessens.

The rule here is, if you decide it is a keeper, don't store it use it.

Wear it, hang it on the wall, put it in the living room. If you love it use it.

The Five Clutterfree Decision Making Keys

The Clutterfree Decision Making Keys are a starting point for getting rid of clutter. You can fall back on these guidelines when the going gets tough.

As you get deeper into the decluttering process you'll discover your own guidelines and boundaries. The Keys separate the keepers from the clutter.

You can use one key at a time or all of them as long as it keeps the clutter going in the right direction.... out!

Clutter Free Key #1: Love It

Love your stuff. Love the design the color, the beauty and the comfort.

Live with what you love to use, look at, wear. There will be some things you just cannot live without. Think about color, style and design. What do you love? What inspires you?

When you declutter ask, “Do I love this?” It's an easy question with an instant answer. Toss the item if you don't immediately hear, “yes.” It's really that simple! Get rid of the unloved, the ugly the stuff that is not working for you.

Clutter Free Key #2: Use It

How much do you have stored away that you don't use? What is your time limit for these things? Is it one, two or five years or more? If you are serious about getting rid of clutter you want to use everything in your home.

If you haven't used an item in a year you probably never will.

I've found this to be true. Everyone needs to store items for seasonal use but things stored longer than a year end up sitting unused forever.

Do you store your best things and use second best. Consider getting rid of the second best and using what you love.

Questions to ask are: how often do I use this, how many multiples, is this second best?

If you don't use it lose it.

Clutter Free Key#3: Uplift Your Energy

Housework, cleaning, cooking and parenting are easier with less stuff.

Clutter is suffocating and tiring. Decluttering fills you with purpose and a feeling of lightness. Living with what you love and use in a spacious home is less stressful.

Every item helps or hinders, adds beauty or not. Live with less. Live with things that make life easier and uplift your energy.

When you declutter ask this question. does this object create a positive energy in my home? Does it make housework easier or harder? It's a simple question with a simple answer. If you say "yes" keep it, if you say "no" let it go.

Clutter Free Key #4: Set Limits Keep the Best and Get Rid of the Rest

If you watch decluttering programs you'll know that professional organizers always set limits. They will place four plastic bins on a lawn and say this is how much craft stuff you can have or this is how much clothing you can have.

Setting limits is crucial to getting rid of clutter. Sorting piles are piles with similar items so you immediately see how many similar items you own. This is an easy way to set limits.

Sorting piles and setting limits gets you logical instead of emotional about things. When you see the six teapots it is easy to let go of

four of them. When you see the twelve white blouses it is easy to let go of half of them.

Clutter Free Key#5: Let Go

If you have clutter you don't let go you hold on.

Now is the time to start letting go. Begin by using a Let Go or Maybe box. Throw your junk mail away the minute it touches your hands or set regular decluttering times. Start letting go every day.

Use any of the five Clutter Free Keys for quick decision making. Add your personal decluttering standards whenever they become clear. Remember you want to hear a strong instantaneous "yes" in order to keep anything. If there is any hesitancy out it goes

Decluttering Action Tip: Use the Clutter Free Keys to define your keepers and potential throwaways. Apply these Keys to everything you own.

Four keys to Confident Decision Making

Do you feel bad about getting rid of stuff? The secret to feeling good is to focus on your vision not on the clutter. Here are four more tips to help you out when you aren't sure or emotion is overriding logic.

- **Focus on what you keep**-Focusing on the one vase you keep makes letting go of the other three easier.
- **Use your maybe box**-When you have a worry about letting something go. Let it sit for a few weeks then take a look. If you want it, keep it, if you don't let it go.
- **The principal of keeping one**-This key works well when you are drowning in "too much stuff". Put these possessions in a sorting pile and keep the one you really love. Let the rest go.
- **Know your stuff is helping someone else**-It's hard to let go emotionally sometimes. Your excess stuff can will help someone else out.

4. The Five step Decluttering Planners

You don't have to see the whole staircase, just the first step.

Martin Luther King

Now that you have worked on your head and the clutter free mindset you can begin to work on your home.

The Befree Planners are your five step action plan. They re-boot your motivation and energy. They are your creative writing tool to mentally declutter a step by step outline so when you physically declutter you are motivated, energetic and on task.

This is your 5 step foolproof clutter-busting system.

- **Re-imagine** the area the way you want it.
- **Re-think** what you want to let go of
- **Re-do** you take action.
- **Restyle** the area so it is clean and looks good.
- **Reward** yourself

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Decluttering Planner

RE-imagine

<i>Wishlist</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>SAM Goals</i>

RE-think-Make your plan

<i>Decluttering Method</i>	<i>Sorting Categories</i>	<i>What to let go</i>	<i>Storage/Organizers</i>

RE-do/Schedule

--

RE-style- what to add, what to take away and Rewards

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Re-imagine: The Creative Decluttering Tools

Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success and our failure.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

Your imagination opens your mind to possibilities. It shifts your attention from clutter to what you want to create. When your vision and goals are bigger than your clutter, you are closer to having your clutter fly out of your home.

Wishlist

If you could wave a magic wand and make a wish how would your environment change? List the one thing that would make a difference.

Clarify Your Vision

Visualization is daydreaming with a purpose.
Bo Bennett

Write one visual that would make a difference. Pictures speak to your subconscious. They clarify your goals, get you to identify what you like and don't like. This helps enormously when you are stuck deep in stuff.

Clutter free Visualization

Creating a clear mental picture is really important so you can easily declutter.

Take a few minutes to relax, take ten deep relaxed breaths

Visualize the cluttered area exactly as it is, looking at the clutter.

- The **second time**, see the area without clutter even if you have to see the room empty
- The third time add the items that you would love to have. This may be an ordered closet full of great clothes that fit your dream sofa with designer cushions or your kitchen painted a

different color. Get creative and in your inner mind create all the things you would love to have.

- On your last circle of the clutter free, clean and beautiful area see yourself relaxed. Imagine how easy it will be to find things in the drawers and cupboards. Feel the space and order of everything you own being in the right place.
1. Visualize the space clutter free
 2. Visualize it with the colors and furniture you want
 3. Imagine the positive experiences you will have in this room

Decluttering Action Tip: Visualize the end result. What is the outcome you want? See www.declutterbefree.com for more tips.

Set Your Goals

Goals need to be simple, actionable and measurable. Small wins lead to big wins and chunking down a project into easy steps gets big things done.

Here is a simplified goal setting method I call SAM.

Simple- Your goal is three to five words

Actionable- You know you can do it.

Measurable- Use finite language like containers and numbers. I let go of 4 blouses. I will keep two plastic containers of toys. I can let go of twenty books.

- Simple makes it easy to do.
- Actionable means no excuses.
- Measureable means you make an immediate difference.

Re-think: The Five minute Planning Stage

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks and then starting on the first one.
Mark Twain

Re-thinking and breaking down a big complex task (a whole room) into a series of small actionable tasks makes decluttering much easier.

Filling out these four planning categories takes a few minutes. Writing down what you want is a powerful way to detail your goals and creates the energy to achieve them a lot easier.

Decluttering Method

Choose the method that would best suit your clutter. This may be a one a day, superficial sweep, timed declutter or the three or four box method. Deciding this before you declutter will save you time. You can also add a clutter free key to help you keep focussed.

Sorting Piles Category

Putting similar items together in piles so you sort through one category at a time. This speeds up your decluttering process because you see your multiples so it is easy to let go.

When I decluttered my son's room I was shocked what the sorting piles revealed. One sorting pile had over fifteen identical wooden trucks. We gave ten away and kept the five favourites.

If I hadn't used sorting piles to assess multiples of clutter I would never have seen how many trucks he had. After decluttering it was easy to remind him of all the trucks he had at home and that he didn't need another one.

Your sorting piles are the beginning of organizing your possessions. You now have groups of similar items that you can declutter, containerize or put back in the same place. This is the beginning of becoming organized

The Let Go Category

Every time you declutter there will be things you know you want to get rid of, things you definitely want to keep of and things you'd like to get rid of but are reluctant. It helps to brainstorm and write these things down.

The Storage/Organizer Category

This category is for the containers you need but also the containers you don't. As you declutter and live with less your storage ideas and needs will change. Don't be surprised if you end up donating a lot of containers and baskets to charity. For more storage information go to the storage chapter.

Redo: Action Time

Action is the fundamental key to success
Pablo Picasso

This is your commitment time. When are you going to declutter, how long will it take. Do you have your let go and maybe box ready? Have you got the garbage ready, do you know what charity you want to donate to? Are you clear on your Clutterfree Keys? Write the date and time here and take Action.

Choose one Clutterfree Key to Help You

This is where your new education kicks in. It's your new perspective, a different way of looking at things. What one Clutterfree Key or personal clutterfree guideline you are going to use when you find decision making difficult. Write it in your planner.

Action

Take Action. This is the time to roll up your sleeves and follow the planner step by step. You will discover that by mentally decluttering first, the physical decluttering is a lot easier.

Restyle and Rewards

Removing clutter instantly makes every space look better. If your things look tired and drab they will need a re-fresh. You'll also find you have too much furniture and way too many containers so start to let go of these items.

Having a vision board with styles you love makes re-styling much easier. You can also make a vision book with room styles you love from the internet.

Rewards are important. Feeling good when you declutter and giving yourself something special releases feel good chemicals in your brain.

A reward can be something new for the space you are clearing, quality time with friend or family or a treat for yourself. This makes you enjoy and want to declutter even more. Rewards are important.

5. The Art of Decluttering

You can have anything you want right now, as long as you begin having it right now in an abbreviated way.

Raymond Aaron

There is a right way and wrong way to clear clutter. Doing it the wrong way is like driving in a strange city without GPS. You are lost with no way to figure out your way out.

Not having a technique, not having a method and not having a clear picture in your head of your outcome, your big why, how you want to feel or how you want your space to look will sabotage any clutter clearing you do.

Techniques are a systematic formula or routine that helps you complete your decluttering task. The right decluttering technique is something you learn and do in the same way.

Methods are a physical process of doing something according a definite plan. Your decluttering method changes depending on time, amount and type of clutter. Picking the right method makes decluttering faster, easier and simpler.

Your Everyday Decluttering Technique

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an action but a habit.

Just like the Super Nanny who uses her child discipline techniques on TV successfully, there are techniques to decluttering.

The technique to successful decluttering is simple:

- Address one section at a time. Narrow your focus.
- Handle one item at a time and put it in your sorting pile
- When you have a sorting pile you then:
 - Handle one item at a time, make a quick yes, no or maybe decision
 - Decluttered sorting piles are now organizing categories to be neatly put back
- Repeat until you are happy with the amount of stuff you have

Five Decluttering Methods

Now that you are clear on the decluttering technique you need to choose a method. Each method has its own pros and cons.

The No Brainer Declutter

The no brainer declutter are the things you come across every day that you know need to go.

Examples of no brainer clutter is newspapers, magazines, clothes, books, toys kitchen appliances and utensils.

Getting rid of the no brainer stuff gives you the small wins that make you feel good, makes the house look tidy and makes tackling bigger decluttering projects easier.

One Item a Day Declutter

This method creates a routine around decluttering and is a time free easy way to get started. Combined with the one in one out strategy it will make a big difference in your home.

Imagine putting the one in one out rule in place and getting rid of 365 items by the end of the year. Would that make a difference in your home?

Timed Decluttering- Short and Simple

This method breaks overwhelming tasks into shorter manageable steps. Set your timer and declutter.

The method is:

- Set a timer for 10, 20 or 30 minutes
- Have a garbage bag, put away bag and give away bag
- Declutter quickly make a decision with every item you touch
- When timer rings stop
- Put away

This method is useful for one drawer, one shelf, kids toy boxes, getting rid of kids clothes, decluttering a part of the pantry.

The Superficial Sweep

This method removes large amounts of clutter quickly and gets rid of the garbage that is lying around. This method is the one to use when you are utterly fed up and your house is a disaster. You get rid of junk quickly and have a small win that makes you feel better.

Grab a bag and walk around every room looking on the floor, behind doors, under beds, in closets, drawers, cupboards and corners for those easy throw away items and any garbage that has been taking up space. This is easy decision making at its best as you put unwanted items in a **charity bag** or **throw them away**.

You can theme the superficial sweep by focusing on specific clutter problems. Some themes are clothing, things that need repair, paper clutter, books that you no longer use, any item that is broken.

The Four Box Method

The Four Box Method is a formal planned method to extract larger amounts of deeper and hidden clutter.

This method requires four boxes or garbage bags. Each bag has a different purpose. One bag is for garbage, the next give away, the third charity and the fourth is for those pesky homeless items.

Usually with the four box method you are wanting to do a whole room and take several hours to make a massive change.

Decluttering Action Tip: Feel frustrated? Want to give up? Don't. You are just getting to the more difficult clutter. Review the keys, shift your thinking and fill out a BeFree Planner and take action. See www.declutterBefree.com for more clutter free success.

The Befree Five Room Decluttering Plan

Everything you want is just outside your comfort zone
Robert Allen

Here is a five room plan with the example BeFree Planner filled out. It's just like having a professional organizer hold your hand. Don't over think the planner. Take a few minutes to fill them out. What is important is every time you fill out a planner you replace old programs with new clutterfree attitudes and ideas.

The Active Rooms: Kitchen and Living Room

The Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of your home and can be a cheerful room where cooking is a joy and cleaning up is a snap. If your kitchen is bursting with clutter, cooking can be dreary and the cleaning up never finished.

You can have a kitchen that feels spacious with home wares you use and love. So take a few deep breathes and psyche yourself into the attitude of letting go.

The Benefits of a Clutter Free Kitchen are:

- Super quick clean up time
- Less utensils
- More drawer space
- Everything at your fingertips
- Time and energy for quality mealtimes
- Save money
- Plan ahead
- Efficient food shopping

No Brainer Throwaways

- Excess mugs, plates, glasses, bowls, glasses and platters
- Cracked, chipped or mismatched dishes
- Doubles of same size pots or pots that are damaged
- Long term unused or broken appliances
- Redundant cookbooks
- Excess plastic bags, containers, jars, potholders

If you find you are the victim of multiples that eat up space, declutter the extras, set limits especially with bags, potholders, serving plates and utensils.

Your first sorting pile is items for food preparation:

- Cutting boards
- Mixing bowls
- Spices
- Blenders and mixers
- Measuring cups and spoons

Place these items in a sorting pile, let go of the extra and store what is left together in the same location for easy food preparation

The next sorting pile is made up of items for daily cooking:

- These items are stored around your oven and stovetop
- Pots and pans
- Bake ware
- Cooking utensils

Declutter your pantry and get rid of:

- Anything old or rotten
- Any doubles
- Anything you haven't used in six months

Put everything in sorting piles and place items in the same category on the same shelf. For example place canned goods together, baking goods together, dry goods together and spices together.

10 Tips for an organized kitchen

1. Put your Befree grocery list on your fridge door, fill out as you need to
2. Start menu planning one week at a time
3. Base your grocery list on your menu plan
4. Wipe fridge once a week before you grocery shop
5. Eat leftovers within 24 hours to save wasting food
6. Empty dishwasher every evening after dinner so you start the next day with an empty dishwasher
7. Empty garbage and compost every evening
8. Clean tea towels and dish cloths daily
9. Wash, dry and put away
10. Get kid's to set and clear table

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Decluttering Planner: Kitchen

RE-imagine

<i>Wishlist</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>SAM Goals</i>
Clean uncluttered surfaces	Everything visible in cupboards Clean neat surfaces Good work space	Clear 10 items out of pantry Get rid of old dish set Get rid of 5 similar size pots,

RE-think-make your plan

<i>Decluttering Method</i>	<i>Sorting Piles</i>	<i>Let Go</i>	<i>Storage</i>
4 Box Method to get rid of appliances and dishes I don't like. Then 20min timed sessions for pantry and shelves.	Jars Plastic containers Bags Bread boards Utensils Unused kitchen Gadgets Salad Bowls Platters Condiments Glasses Tea cups	1 drawer of utensils Old glass set Dull knives Old Tablecloths, Half of the platters Broken Containers Chipped/damaged dishware	Blender, scale and one utensil jar on counter Put nice dishes lower cupboard Put plastic containers in bigger drawer Reuse jars to containerize dry goods

RE-do/Schedule

2 hours Sat morning 20 min declutter on Tuesday 20 min declutter on Thursday
--

RE-style what to add, what to take away - Rewards

New tea towels Flowers for kitchen Bake cookies and sit down with the kids
--

Living Room

Is your living room multipurpose? Is it where you entertain guests, read, watch TV, listen to music? Or do you have an open plan design where homeless objects, kids' stuff, knickknacks and sentimental items tend to accumulate. Whatever you use your living room it can become a clutterfree hub for family.

Benefits of a Clutter Free Living Room:

- Looks better, can develop preferences for color and design
- Space to relax
- Minimal picking up

No Brainer Throwaways

- Excess and unwatched DVD's and CD's
- Furniture that is no longer liked or functional
- Paper: newspapers, magazines, TV guides books no longer liked
- Games with missing pieces or those that are no longer used

Sorting piles can be:

- Books, magazines and newspapers
- TV DVD's
- Music CD's
- Knick knacks and decorative items
- Comfort items, pillows, blankets

Start thinking about:

- Storing items near where they are used
- Storing similar things together
- Closed cabinets for games or things with small pieces
- Having one basket to store newspapers and magazines

Maintenance Routine

Daily- Clear Clutter-Put TV remotes back, tidy cushions, throws
Weekly- Dust surfaces; tidy bookshelves, surfaces vacuum floors
Monthly- clean windows- declutter- vacuum under furniture

Decluttering Action Tip: Visualize your clutter free living room. List 10 items you can let go of right now to get to your vision. See www.declutterBefree.com for more easy tips

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Decluttering Planner: Living Room

Re-imagine

<i>Wishlist</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>SAM Goals</i>
Living room is fresh and tidy Everything has place	Relaxing Warm and cheerful Happy socializing Always Tidy	Let go of 20 books, 20 DVD's and a box of Knick knacks Get rid of painting I don't like Let go of extra old cushions

Re-think-make your plan

<i>Decluttering Method</i>	<i>Sorting Piles</i>	<i>Let Go</i>	<i>Storage</i>
Timed Decluttering Twice this week	Language books, Novels Old books Damaged and old games Broken Knick knacks anything small Chipped vases or ones I never liked	20 Books 3/4 of the games Picture frames, small vases 8 Knick knacks Old cushion 4 damaged baskets	Only books on shelf Games go inside the cabinet Store CD's in the drawer Shawls in basket One box of kid's toys

RE-do/Schedule

This Saturday morning. Get my husband to help go through the books. Children will declutter games. Get rid of anything drab. I want to change the furniture around. Everyone will help with a clean.

RE-style what to add, what to take away - Rewards

Add white and bright colors, perhaps a red flowering plant

Add some bright cushions

Remove small storage furniture, put CD's inside cupboard

Workspace/Office Space

Your workspace may be an entire room or a small corner table. Whatever the size of this space, everyone thrives in an uncluttered and organized area. This area can radiate a pleasant focused energy so you will love working here and be inspired and productive.

Benefits of a Clutter Free workspace are:

- Increase your productivity
- Can declutter and organize finances
- Have a home for mail, bills and work from the office
- Have a place for creative personal projects

No Brainer Throwaways:

- Outdated information
- Old receipts, bank statements, insurance and car records
- Dated Reports
- Newspapers and Magazines
- Damaged, multiple or excess office supplies
- Redundant files

Decluttering Action Tip: Discard unwanted mail daily, tidy your desk, write three priority to do's at for the next day. See www.declutterBefree.com for more workspace organization tips

Bulletin Boards

I love bulletin boards and use them not only as a practical tool but as something to express my creativity and artistic side. A pin board is a great asset in your workspace. It can serve several functions. You can use it for:

- Enhancing your creativity by displaying pictures, designs
- A vision board
- A focus board to map out steps to achieve your goals
- Pin up reminders
- All of the above

The secret to having your pin boards look great is to space what you pin up and declutter regularly.

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Decluttering Planner: Workspace

Re-imagine

<i>Wish List</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>SAM Goals</i>
Stylish, comfortable workspace	Vintage Steel lamp Research materials in A4 boxes New Office Chair Vision board	Resources A4 holders Decrease paper by 50% Bills decluttered Get rid of one filing cabinet Discard two shelves of books

RE-think-Make your plan

<i>Decluttering Method</i>	<i>Let Go</i>	<i>Sorting Piles</i>	<i>Storage</i>
4 box method for one day Then I will book in a few 20 min sessions to fine tune where things go	Old information, Brochures, Old travel doc. Multiples of same things Shred bank statements that are over 7 years old Discard old resources and course work	Files Financial Travel Redundant Info Bills by year Paper Stationary items Books	One filing cabinet Inbox for bills One jar on desk, one shelf for stationary Archive necessary and old information Buy archive box from post office

RE-do/Schedule

One day. Tons of small stuff to throw and put away. This room is all piles! Use binder for this year's financials. Give room a good clean. Declutter files June and January.

RE-style what to add, what to take away - Rewards

Remove old bookshelves make more space

Add new lamp and colourful rug

Add vision board paint it white to match the wall

Get rid of old blue chair

The Relaxing Rooms: The Bedrooms

Master Bedroom

Imagine walking into your bedroom to find your bed as neat as in a five star hotel, no junk anywhere. You open your closet filled with beautifully ordered clothes.

Imagine a retreat that soothes your senses. Think comfort, beauty and luxury. Take a look around you? How would you rate your bedroom? Is it a cluttered chaos or a sanctuary of clutterfree comfort that lets you rejuvenates from your busy day?

Benefits of a Clutter Free Bedroom are:

- It takes seconds to put away since every item has a home
- Getting ready is quick and easy
- Becomes a space that soothes your senses
- You sleep better, read more and relax more deeply

No Brainer Throwaways

- Newspapers and any paper clutter
- Excess furniture /exercise equipment
- Unworn clothes
- Worn and unattractive linens

A bedroom that is more storage area than restful is neither rejuvenating nor attractive. Declutter the stuff stored under the bed or behind doors.

Decluttering Action Tip: Declutter and clean your side tables to start your new clutter free look in your bedroom. See www.declutterBefree.com for more valuable information.

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Decluttering Planner: Bedroom

RE-imagine

<i>Wishlist</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>SAM Goals</i>
Space Space in wardrobe Books have a shelf	Plump pillows Space No clutter Blues and white Luxury Comfort	Let go of ¼ clothes Get rid of old linen, 1 box Remove Knick knacks 1 box

RE-think-make your plan

<i>Decluttering Method</i>	<i>Sorting Categories</i>	<i>Let go</i>	<i>Storage</i>
I will use the four box method as I have a lot to let go of.	Dresses Shirts Pants Jewellery Scarves, Perfume Books Sheets Blankets Knick Knacks	Pants, blouses, scarves, dresses at least 20 items Jewellery I no longer wear Books Shoes	Store similar items together in closet One wooden box for small things Only books I am reading Basket next to bed with books and glasses

RE-do/Schedule

A lot of redundant clothes and things stuffed in the closet. Need to get rid of 25% of clothes.

 Need a whole day to declutter and clean plus some small 20 min decluttering. Day one jewellery, Day two perfume and makeup. Day three magazines after that one drawer a day. Donate good stuff to charity.

RE-style what to add, what to take away - Rewards

Add new lamps

 Take away exercise equipment

 Clean bedroom, look for new duvet cover

 Day I declutter dinner out

Children's Rooms

Children's bedrooms are a combination playroom, workroom and sleeping room especially in small homes and apartments. These rooms require regular decluttering to let go of outgrown and redundant items.

Since children's rooms are the centre of many different activities smart storage choices are a must. Less clutter facilitates faster clean up and more creative play. It's also the time to ask yourself how many toys does my child need and do they need any more?

Benefits of Children's Clutter Free Bedrooms are:

- Less picking up as everything has a home
- Room looks better
- Children learn responsibility by putting away
- Less stress

No Brainer Throwaways

- Outgrown or never worn clothes
- Toys, workbooks notebooks that are damaged or redundant
- Unusable art supplies and books

Sorting piles in children's rooms may be:

- Toys sorted in different categories such as dolls, blocks, trucks
- Sleeping items such as blankets, pillows, stuffed animals
- Schoolwork, paper notebooks, pens, pencils and reference books
- Games, puzzles
- Arts and crafts which will include paper, crayons, markers, watercolours, brushes, paste, and tape
- Dressing and grooming items

Several years ago I told my kids they could keep the money from any toys they didn't want at our garage sale. I have never seen their rooms cleared out so fast. What a great motivator.

Decluttering Action Tip: Use sorting piles to quickly make more space See www.declutterbefree.com for more easy tips

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Decluttering Planner-Children's Rooms

RE-imagine

<i>Wishlist</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>Goals</i>
Minimal daily pickup Space	Simple Reading Corner Art Table Everything fits on shelf neatly	Half art equipment All books fit on two shelves Donate small clothes about two bags full

RE-think-Make a plan

<i>Decluttering Method</i>	<i>Sorting Categories</i>	<i>Let Go</i>	<i>Storage</i>
4 box method Anything too small and tatty goes	Toys Cars Balls Dolls Shirts Shorts Pants Books Outgrown/damaged books	Stuffed animals, puzzles, doll stuff,cars,trucks one large box Clothing, two bags full Two boxes books	Toys in three baskets and two shelves Hang clothes up or in dresser Two shelves of books only

RE-do/Schedule

Clear out outgrown and redundant items. Need three hours. There are a lot of homeless and put away items. Need temporary containers. Think about garage sale. Do this on a Sat. morning and the kids can help.

Declutter clothing twice a year June and January

RE-style what to add, what to take away - Rewards

New table for art

Re-paint bookshelf

Sew bright cushion covers

Reward- Read new book with kids tonight

The Bathroom

The bathroom is the room where control over the small things gets a little crazy. Empty bottles of shampoo, hand lotion, mouthwash, makeup, and hair products seem to multiply. These spaces often have limited storage space and clutter can contribute to a grubby, unpleasant feel.

Simplifying all the products you use will save your money and time. A clutter free bathroom is easy to clean and a lack of clutter contributes to a feeling of spaciousness.

Benefits of a Clutter Free Bathroom:

- Easy to clean and organize
- Save money/less products
- Use what you have

No Brainer Throwaways:

- Unneeded duplicates
- Yucky, mouldy or empty containers of anything
- Out of date medicine
- Old towels

Your sorting piles will include:

- **Bathing Items:** This will include shampoo, soap and bubble bath, shower cap, towels and robes. These products need to be put back in a shower caddy or a storage space near the shower.
- **Grooming items:** These are dental care, shaving gear, hair products; nail care and cosmetics can be placed near where they will be used.
- **Medicine and Prescriptions:** That includes first items, ointments, cold remedies, and prescriptions. Items used frequently can be stored in the medicine chest or infrequently used items can be stored in a labelled box in the linen closet.
- **Cleaning products** can be put under the sink and they include cleanser, sponges, tile cleaner, and spare toilet paper.

Make it a place to be pampered. Add beautiful soap, scented candles, and aromatherapy or thick towels.

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Decluttering Planner: Bathroom

RE-imagine

<i>Wishlist</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>Goals</i>
Clean spacious shelves and drawers	Small things containerized Thick Towels Lovely soap	Everything is used No clutter Get rid of 25% of grooming products medicine Get rid of old towels

RE-think-make your plan

<i>Decluttering Method</i>	<i>Sorting Categories</i>	<i>Let Go</i>	<i>Storage</i>
One Superficial Sweep Sorting piles	Make up Products Bath Towels Hand Towels Medicine Grooming products	Make Up 50% Family grooming Products 15 towels are too old Over due date: Cold and Flu Med Pain Relief Med Bathroom and Cleaning Products I don't use	Make Up in small white basket in cupboard Family grooming separated in containers Medicines in categories, containerized and labelled Bathroom cleaning prod. Bottom shelf

RE-do/Schedule

A lot of small clutter that I can work on for ten minutes at a time as 70% of stuff can be thrown out and the rest is easy to organize. I will do this for 10 min when I come home from work every day.

RE-style what to add, what to take away - Rewards

New towels
Plants
Get rid of old towels

The Garage/Basement

Garages, attics and basements often become dumping grounds for all the hidden clutter you no longer want. If you have been stockpiling your stuff in these spaces for years you may need to do multiple decluttering.

Benefits of a Clutter Free Garage/Attic/Basement:

- You can locate any item easily
- You know when you need to replace things
- You can park your car
- You can store items safely so they will not be damaged

No Brainer Throwaways

- Unused furniture
- Anything mouldy, wet, damaged, broken
- Old rusted garden equipment
- Old paint and paint brushes
- Redundant sports equipment
- Redundant camping equipment
- Things you have shoved in the garage and forgotten about
- Broken or unusable tools
- Multiples of anything

As you throw away damaged goods you will come across things you want to keep. Use your sorting piles to determine what to keep and then get rid of your multiples.

Sorting piles may include:

- Sports equipment
- Automobile stuff
- Gardening supplies
- Holiday/camping equipment
- Off-season clothing
- Seasonal decorations
- Cleaning equipment
- Tools

Decluttering Action Tip: Take action now. What three things from your garage can you get rid of this week. For more action tips see www.declutterBefree.com.

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Decluttering Planner: Garage/Basement

RE-imagine

<i>Wishlist</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>SAM Goals</i>
<p>Empty garage</p> <p>Everything on shelves</p>	<p>No loose items</p> <p>Gardening Equipment on wall</p>	<p>Let go of 5 sport equipment</p> <p>Old bikes</p> <p>Gardening equipment that is rusty, 10 pieces</p> <p>Get rid of stuff in 3 boxes</p>

RE-think-Make a plan

<i>DeclutteringMethod</i>	<i>Sorting Categories</i>	<i>Let Go</i>	<i>Storage</i>
<p>4 boxes</p> <p>May need to hire a tip</p> <p>Get rid of anything rusty and not used in 2 years</p>	<p>Tires</p> <p>Tools</p> <p>Paint</p> <p>Garden Tools</p> <p>Hoses</p> <p>Sort things in boxes</p> <p>Outgrown sports equipment</p>	<p>Garden Tools</p> <p>Other Tools</p> <p>Sports Equipment</p> <p>Camping Equipment</p> <p>Damaged containers</p>	<p>Tools on pegboard</p> <p>Gardening Tools on middle shelf</p> <p>Camping equipment in plastic boxes</p>

RE-do/Schedule

This is a BIG job clearing hidden and deep clutter and a lot of big stuff.

I am going to schedule next Saturday and Sunday and get help with lifting and garbage.

Get everyone to lift and carry things

RE-style what to add, what to take away - Rewards

Store similar items in plastic stackable boxes. We can do this with our sorting piles

Kids can decide where to store their stuff

Go out for pizza when we are finished

6. Projects and Clutterfree Routines

Tackle the Small Things First

Many cluttered homes have a mish mash of small things here and there taking up space and getting lost. The key to success here is to group similar things together, containerize and label.

For small clutter:

- Use **Sorting piles** to separate small items into same or similar groups
- **Declutter** by getting rid of multiples and redundant items
- **Organize and Containerize**
- **Label** the container

Tour your home and make a list of all the small items you could organize, declutter, containerize and label.

Your list may read something like this:

- DVD and CD'S
- Toiletries and grooming products
- Jewellery
- Craft
- Sewing stuff
- Stationary and paper items
- Office supplies
- Children's toys
- Electrical manuals
- Kitchen utensils
- Art supplies
- Spices
- Pantry items
- Medicine cabinet

Treat this as a series of small projects that will clear out the clutter from the inside out. You will find once you start on decluttering the small stuff the magic of knowing where everything is and where it belongs starts to happen.

Clothes and Closets

I haven't got a thing to wear simply means nothing matches our mood or offer a just reflection of our current lives.

Kennedy Frazer

Closets are where the past, present and future hang out. Time to get back to the present and let go of clothing that is unloved, unused. Time to re-think your wardrobe and make space.

Clear out the Junk

If you are using your closet as a storage space for all sorts of junk, now is the time to purge and make space. Get rid of wire hangers ineffective organizers and any miscellaneous items you have stored out of sight and out of mind.

Do an Inventory

You need to do this.

An inventory reveals what you wear and don't. Without any stress, just as an information gathering exercise sort your clothes into four categories. So you have four piles of clothing.

- The clothes you love but are tired of wearing.
- The clothing you haven't worn for over a year
- The clothing that is damaged or no longer fits
- All the clothes that your wear often

Purge Your Clothing

Take a look at the clothes you love but are tired of wearing.

Is there anything in the category that has done it's time and needs to be replaced? If that is the end of the journey with you, if it is in good condition put it in a charity bag. If it is too worn put it in the garbage.

Clothing that is damaged or no longer fits.

Are you willing to spend the money to have it repaired?

Fat clothes, thin clothes, pregnancy clothes and are not keepers if you have lost weight, finished having children or your thin clothes

are from 20 years ago. You want a closet of wearable attractive clothes that work for you now.

Next take a look at the clothing you haven't worn in over a year

What is the reason? Is it the wrong cut or color? Was it bought only because it was on sale? Is it too hard to match to the rest of your wardrobe? Is it now outdated or an impulse buy that never really worked? Or when you put it on you just don't feel good.

Plan an exit strategy for these clothes.

If the 'I might need it someday' energy is louder than get clear energy hang these clothes in one section of your closet with the hangers facing opposite to the clothes you wear. If they haven't been turned around in three months make an agreement with yourself to let them go.

All the clothes that your wear often

Do you still love them? Are they the right color? Are there any pieces that need repair or replacement?

Organize these clothes by category, blouses, sweaters, trousers, skirts, jeans, t-shirts and jackets. Take another look at what clothing qualifies as keepers.

Round up Your Organizers

Organizers are key to good closet organization and really help with those small closet problems. Here are seven of my favourite closet organizers.

- Wooden Hangers don't bend or twist and give breathing room between your clothes. Pinklily has the hangtastic hangar which makes more room in a small closet.
- Shoe Boxes come in transparent colors and store shoes dust free. They are stackable and keep all footwear in order.
- Skirt hangers can hang up to six items in the space of one and keep like items together.
- Stackable boxes store delicate or less worn items. They make use of vertical space. A label on the box makes clothing easy to find.

- Hooks are great for those often worn clothing. But keep one item per hook. They can add order to your closet and make every day items a second to find.

Re-organize Your Closet

Now that you have decluttered you can re-organize your closet. Here are a few tips to help you get that boutique look at home.

- Hang like with like
- Put outfits you wear together on one hanger. So if you have a favourite blouse with a skirt, hang them together.
- Hang short items on one side, longer on the other
- Hang the same colors together
- Create separate sections, work wear on one side and leisure on the other.
- Leave space to move hangers so you can see into your closet

Evaluate and Get Inspired

Look at your favourite pieces. What colors do you love to wear? What styles and shapes suit you the best? What do you need to add?

Reassess your staples. Do any of them need repair or need to be replaced. Look at jeans that are worn out, tees that have lost their shape cardigans with holes.

Make a List

Now that you have evaluated what you have, what you love and what gaps need to be filled in your wardrobe?

Do you need to upgrade your exercise clothes, work clothes or fun clothes? What basic staples do you need and what unique one offs attract you?

Special help Sorting Kids Stuff

Kids come with their own clutter and it can soon overwhelm the house. There is a three steps strategy to organizing any kids stuff. Use sorting piles so you can see multiples, let your kids help you make decisions and communicate your limits as to how much or how many.

Organizing Kids Rooms

Creating order in kid's rooms means every item has a home. Organizers and labels help keep things visible and accessible. Organizing in zones makes it easy to put away. Having a home for everything makes pick up quick. Here are a few extra tips for those area that can get out of control.

Organizing kids closets

- Limit the clothes your child has. One or two outfits per day may be enough. How many outfits do you need in a week? Anything more than this-donate.
- Store out of season clothes.
- Bag the clothes that no longer fit and donate
- Use vertical space, with a higher or lower hanging rod or hooks for most often worn clothes.
- Twice a year declutter, clothes you don't want to keep, wrong size, bad color or too worn.
- Only keep what is in use in the closet.

Organizing Toys

- Use organizers: bins, baskets or stackable containers
- Label bins by category or child
- Have a building block or leggo area. Can be a corner of a room or use a play rug as a boundary. This way you don't have to pick up every day

- Declutter and live with less. Can you decrease the amount of stuffed animals, dolls and large toys your child has.
- Use zippered folders for puzzles and games with little pieces

Organizing for school

- Use different colored binders for each subject
- Have a plastic folder for assignments and projects
- Have a basket or designated place for school info that needs to be signed
- Use a household binder to store school and sport information
- Have a study calendar to write down important dates

Organizing a positive learning environment

- Have table space, comfortable chair, good light
- Use baskets or drawer for learning materials
- Know child's learning styles so they can study quietly, have room to move or listen to music without bothering anyone
- Keep space clean and organized
- Stock with study and stationary supplies

Organizing an evening routine

A good evening routine will leave you with little to organize in the morning

- Backpacks packed for school and left near the door
- Clothes laid out
- Regular lights out time
- Reading time with or without parent
- Tidy room
- Organize schoolwork for the next day
- Lunches organized night before

Organizing a Morning routine

- Preplan breakfast lay it out
- Let kids know the schedule
- Get up 15 min earlier to get yourself ready before the kids wake up
- Defrost anything for dinner, or put washing on

7. Seven-Second Keystone Habits

Success- attainment of a desired end
webster Dictionary

Keystone habits are triggers for transformative changes. It's what I call the Domino effect. A small habit change leads to more positive changes. It starts with a small win that makes another small win.

Charles Duhigg author of the Power of Habits says initial shifts start chain reactions that help other good habits take hold.

Seven Second Keystone Habits for Every Day

These habits take around 7 seconds to do. They are the corner stones to making clutter free changes in your life.

Make Beds-Make beds every morning- Gretchen Rubin of the "Happiness Project" states making the bed is the number one most impactful change that people brought up over and over again.

There is even research that has correlated making your bed every morning with better productivity, greater sense of wellbeing and better skills at keeping a budget.

Making a bed can make you crave organization and sets up a picking up mentality for the rest of the day.

Throw Away Junk Mail-Throw away junk mail and paper clutter daily. Every cluttered home I've been in has mail all over the place. Put mail in one box. The feeling of order you get when you do this is contagious.

Put Clothes Back-Put clothes back where they belong. If your problem are multiple piles on chairs and floors make a daily routine of putting away. This is energizing removing clutter from your home.

Clear Table Tops-Clear table tops. Looking at a clean clear space helps with motivation.

Tidy Desk-Tidy desk at end of day to increase your productivity. This is an energizer for work. You are ready to go.

Write 1 Thing-Write 1 thing you want to achieve tomorrow. Focus on the lifestyle you want without clutter. What would you do if you had time and energy?

Pick Up as You Go-If something is out of place put it back, hang it up, put it away. Don't let things pile up.

Ten Minute Organizing Routines

Housework is a recurring fact of life. Once you declutter one extra ten minute organizing routine a day can stop the laundry monster from moving in and keep your kitchen and workspace uncluttered and organized.

- Sit down and write out a menu plan for dinners
- Organize your grocery list
- Put away dishes/tidy kitchen
- Put away laundry
- Pack lunches and bags night before
- Declutter and organize one shelf or drawer
- Tidy a room for ten minutes
- Declutter and organize children's clothes
- Wipe down and declutter the fridge
- Tidy and clear your entrance way
- Declutter a drawer
- Organize and pay bills

Overwhelming tasks can stay simple and run smoothly if you can start one extra organizing routine a day.

What routines can you start this week to manage your house workload?

8. How to Win the Paper Clutter War

Tidied all my papers. Tore up and ruthlessly destroyed much. This is always a great satisfaction.

Katherine Mansfield

Paper clutter is very expensive. Lost and forgotten bills, unpaid taxes and late fines cost money.

Wasted hours looking for documents, misplaced paperwork and sorting through paper piles cost you time.

Worrying where information is, what has been paid and procrastinating because of a disorganized office costs emotionally.

Then there are those naggers, those things you know you must do but don't because with clutter it seems all too hard. Soon this turns into a procrastination habit.

You save money because late fees, extra charges and missing those discount deals are a thing of the past.

You save time because every piece of paper is in its home and it takes seconds to locate. There is no more sorting and resorting.

You have more peace of mind because you know where all your information is, you pay bills on time and you fill out forms and send them where they need to go. Your tax and budgeting is in order. Everything is where it needs to be and under control.

Five Step Paper Clutter Control Program

This seven step program creates a routine around the incoming paper so it doesn't pile up and become overwhelming.

- **Make a mail zone.** So you can discard junk mail, open and read your mail daily. You are now in control of incoming mail.
- **Put incoming paper in one place.** Choose a convenient location so every incoming piece of paper gets put there. This is the spot for bills, renewals, school and work info. This can also be your mail zone. Now you have one spot for incoming paper.

- **Empty the in-tray daily.** Throwaway, schedule or put away. Now you have a routine. Piggy back this routine with something you already do daily.
- **Organize your most common five recurring paper work topics** that you face weekly. Some recurring actions are Bills to Pay, Items to file, School Information, Calls or e-mail.
- **Make paperwork homes.** Create a home for each type of information. You may need a home organizational notebook for school info, a bills binder for current bills and bills to pay and a file folder for info you need to keep.

Must have Paper Organizers

When you organize your paper you will find there will be a little shopping to do. A4 magazine holders for research, binders to organize information and file folders all are useful. Choose good quality that will last and think of a color theme that will make the inside of every cupboard look good.

Make a list of the paper information you want to store and select how you will contain it.

- Five labelled call to action files for recurring paper information. Your recurring information will be actionable and at your fingertips
- Large folder to place children's artwork. Make a large art size folder with two pieces of colored cardboard. Use a one hole punch to make holes and basket stitch it together. Put all incoming art in it. Every few months let go of the less loved artwork. At the end of the year you'll have a reasonable amount of best artwork to keep or let go of.
- A4 magazine holder for magazines or research notebooks. These can be stacked on shelves or in a cupboard. Put the category on the outside and all your research is at your fingertips.

- Basket for magazines. Keeps the clutter under control and you can empty when it is full or carry to the recycle bin once a week.
- Receipt spike or box for receipts. This stops those lost receipts from scattering everywhere.
- Place for coupons which can be pinned on your pin board or filed with your grocery list.
- Binders with plastic sleeves for recipes or for bills. A recipe binder gives you easy access when you need it and a paid bills binder gives you a place to store current bills and they are in order when you need to archive them or check on tax
- Stationary box for items such as paperclips, stapler, tape and pens

Decluttering and Organizing Files

I used to think that files were a place you kept things forever and it seems many people think the same way I used to.

Consequently files become full of useless information that will never be referred to again and become another cluttered area to avoid. So make your files work, consider the following new ideas:

- Use the **80/20** rule. 80% of your information you don't need. So yes you can declutter and discard about 80% of your paper information and never miss it.
- Files need a limit. Consider keeping the last two years of paper information in your files and archive the rest.
- Archives are your files you need to keep previous to the last two years
- Cull files twice a year such as New Years and tax time

Sorting your files

Declutter your files the right way and it can be an easy time efficient job.

Brainstorm a master list of what you want to keep.

The keepers are bank and credit card statements, tax documents, identity documents, and mortgage, rent, car and utility bills and documents.

Brainstorm what can go. Out dated travel information, reports, bank statements from the previous decade, ancient receipts and redundant information can all go.

Once you have your master list made decide on your broad categories and make your plan.

For example you are working on finances. Separate credit card bills, utility bills and bank statements. Separate into years. Discard any statement dated more than five years ago. Archive the last four and file the most recent one.

Keep a garbage can handy with the thought that 80% of the information you keep you will never read or use again.

Guidelines for labelling and organizing files

- Label your files with the broad category and then the sub category. An example of this is:
 - Work-pay,
 - Work-reports
 - Work-current projects
- A rule of thumb is a sub category needs at least three pieces of information to make its own file
- Give each category its own color

Guidelines to Create Archives

- Any information you need to keep previous to the last tax years can be archived. This can be house or identity documents, old bank statements, credit card and electricity bills
- Store archive information in large envelopes that are labelled or labelled plastic folders and write the year they

can be discarded. File them in an archive box and store in a less accessible place.

Here is my favourite very simple filing system originally from Robert Allen's book, *Multiple Streams of Income*. I've modified it to suit my needs and you can too. This system is suitable for most households so modify it as you need.

This system can be used with files, separate plastic folders or in binders. It is up to you. Binders are great when you live in small spaces without storage. Some people love files and filing cabinets and others hate them. Putting information in colored A4 plastic folders works well too.

This filing system has eleven categories. You need eight different colored files and two binders.

If you have a home business use one file or binder for all business information. That is all! This system is simple, efficient and very low maintenance. I guarantee it will create clarity and streamline your workload.

- The first category is **Giving**. Keep any information about the charities you support in this file.
- The second category is **Savings**. This is for investment information only.
- The third category is **Taxes**. This is the place to put last year's income tax and any income tax deductions. It is so easy. Business Tax goes in the Business Expense Binder.
- The fourth category is **Home**. Any expenses related to home repairs, decorating or shelter can go in this file.
- The fifth category is **Household Expenses**. If you don't use files household expenses can be housed in a binder with plastic A4 sheets. Each bill is put in a separate sheet and labelled.
- **Auto** is the sixth category. All receipts for repairs and insurance for the car are kept in this file. If you ever need to check what you have paid or what repairs were done to the car look no further.

- Category nine is **Insurance/Medical**. You can file any necessary documents related to medical or dental in this binder or files.
- **Business Expenses** is the tenth category. Any items related to your business such as tax, expenses and information can go in this binder.
- **Receipts** quickly become unnecessary paper clutter. It's a good idea to spend a few dollars at a stationary store and buy a receipt spike. Empty your wallet of receipts and put them on a spike daily.

The key to make this work for you is to organize and declutter when your paper is in the broad categories. Sort by type and year and clip it together. Discard what you don't need. Archive what isn't current and file what is current. Make each category a different color with sub-categories.

Organizing Action Tip: Power sort your paper clutter. Use 5 big fat categories. Glance at the paper and put in the right category or discard. Then sort into smaller categories. For more paper free tips see www.declutterBeFree.com.

9. How to Organize What You Keep

If home doesn't make sense, nothing does

Henrietta Ripperger

The best way to organize is to declutter. If you don't keep stuff you don't have to organize it. But with the things you keep the Befree Organizing Keys will restore order to everything you own.

The Five Befree Organizing Keys

Organizing Key#1: Find a Home

Finding a home for the things you own is a challenge when the clutter you own is filling up valuable storage space.

The key is think in categories and theme your shelves and drawers. This is re-think and restyle as to where you put things.

The good news is if it is apparent where every item in your life lives, everyone in your life will be able to put things away effortlessly.

Organizing Key#2: Like with Like

Always work in categories. Clutter is many things lumped together.

Separate your possessions into broad categories and then separate them into smaller categories. For example, you may pile all your craft items together and then separate sewing stuff from knitting stuff from scrap booking stuff. To continue the theme you may select a cabinet and place the different craft items on separate shelves instead of stuffing them on one shelf.

A key to designing functional storage space is separating similar items and organizing them in a spacious and visually pleasing way to give you easy access and visibility. If you do this you will be surprised how easy it is to find and put away.

Organizing Key#3: Identify the Zones

A zone is an area+activity+things+storage. Defining your zones makes you rethink and restyle the space.

Storing items close to where they are used makes them easy to put back and creates a sense of order in the room.

Organizing Key#4: Be Accessible

The things that you use the most often need to be accessible. If they are stored in inconvenient places you spend valuable time looking for them, get frustrated and even re-buy.

The idea is to lay your hand on whatever you need in seconds. Yes, this can be done. Take a long slow look at where you store things.

The easy to find places are between eye and waist level and at the front of cabinets. So put the things you rarely need up high or low and at the back of wide cupboards. Think obvious, easy and simple and remember you want everything you need daily at your fingertips.

Organizing Key#5: Be Visible

The old saying out of sight and out of mind can be changed to out of sight unable to find.

If every item is visible it is easy to see and easy to put away. The impulse to cram things together is a habit that is hard to let go of.

Visibility is an essential key here. Every item in a space needs to be easy to see. If items are not visible you have too much in that space.

The BeFree Organizing Planners

Whatever you can do, or dream you can...begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.
Goethe

Organizing is simple when you declutter first. You can see what you own.

The BeFree Organizing Planner leads you through the Organizing Keys so you have an easy organizing plan laid out in minutes.

The first category is **Like with Like**. Grouping similar items together makes sorting piles which makes categories, which make things visible, which make things easier to find and put away. This makes designated places for everything you own.

Containerize/Label section is where you identify what items need to be in a container. Containerizing sets boundaries and keeps your organizing system in place. Use labels to identify what items are contained.

Designated Place lets you choose a home for your possessions.

The **Zone** category is where you match the function of the area with possessions. This makes a functional space where activity, storage, and items are congruent as much as possible. Reading corners, play areas, office areas are all a result thinking in zones.

The next category is **Storage**. This includes closets, dressers, cabinets, cupboards, shelves, boxes, baskets and any container that is filled with stuff. Storage is meant to make daily life easier, not harder. This section lets you rethink your storage and analyse if it works for you.

What to add to make the room more pleasant is a restyling step. What accessories, colors and furniture would make this room better? What do you want to remove to make it look better?

The final step is listing the **organizing and clutter free habits** to maintain the order and function of the space. Any of the Clutterfree, Organizing and Storage Keys will help you create order but it is the habits and routines of your family that will maintain it.

Organizing Action Tip: Fill out a decluttering and organizing planner at the same time. See more tips www.declutterBefree.com.

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Organizing Planner

<i>Like with Like</i>	<i>Containerize and Label</i>	<i>Designated Place</i>

Zones

Storage

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What to change to make the room more pleasant

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Clutter Free Habits/Organizing Routines

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The Five Room Organizing Planners

*What you get by achieving your goals is not as important
as what you become by achieving your goals*
Zig Ziglar

Organizing has nothing to do with DNA but everything with what you think, believe and act. It is just another learnable skill that you can incorporate into your life.

Organizing the Kitchen

The kitchen is the hub that needs to be organized and functional so you can easily meet the preparation, cooking and cleaning workload that is required when you have a family. A well-organized kitchen can be a dream to be in, a disorganized kitchen can be a nightmare to function in.

The five main zones in the kitchen are:

- Where and what you use to prepare food
- Where you cook it
- The pantry zone
- Eating zone
- The last category is the clean-up zone

Items used in the food preparation zone are:

- Utensils such as knives, mixing spoons, spatula, garlic crusher, kitchen scissors, juicer, grater and anything else you use to prepare food
- The bigger items such as mixing bowls, food processor, mixer, or a blender, toaster, bread board.

The key elements in your food preparation zone are space and accessibility. Put the more frequently used items at the front and the less frequently used items at the back of a cupboard. This area functions best when it is easy to clean with a section of empty counter space for chopping, stirring and mixing.

The next zone is the cooking zone. This zone is most functional when it is next to the food preparation and is based around your stove top and oven.

Items in the cooking zone are:

- Pots and pans
- Baking and casserole dishes
- Oven mitts
- Oven baking sheets
- Aluminium foil and baking paper

This area usually houses bigger items and needs deeper and bigger cupboards. Everything you use for cooking can be stacked with least used items farther back in the cabinet. Organize your kitchen around these zones and finding things for cooking and cleaning will be easier and more efficient.

The **clean-up zone** is near the sink and dishwasher. This area needs to be uncluttered so washed or dirty dishes can be stacked.

Your **eating zone** whether it's in the dining room, kitchen or breakfast nook works best if you make it straightforward to set and clear the table and store dishes nearby. Energize the area by keeping it spotlessly clean and attractive. Make eating dinner a pleasurable event rather than something utilitarian that blends into the day.

Simple Routines for the Kitchen

Daily-Wash, dry and put away dishes

Empty kitchen bins

Sweep the floor

Clean sink and benches

Change tea towels and dish cloth

Wipe oven

Tidy fridge

Weekly –Wipe appliances

Clean stovetop and oven

Check contents of fridge and

Wash floors

Plan Meals and update grocery list

Organizing Action Tip: Spend an hour re-organizing your kitchen into zones for easier meal preparation. Get excited when a great organizing idea comes to mind. See www.declutterBefree.com for more great ideas .

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Organizing Planner

<i>Like with Like</i>	<i>Containerize and label</i>	<i>Designated Place</i>
Pantry items need to be grouped together	Dry goods Pantry items spices	Want a baking cupboard with flour, baking soda, measuring cups in one place Lunch cupboard for kids

Zones

Storage

<p>Cleaning area needs to be uncluttered. Put a plastic matt for dishes that need to be washed</p> <p>Prep area needs knives cutting boards near clear counter space</p> <p>Need bigger area for pots and pans organize area below stove</p> <p>Cooking area put pots pans, oven mitts</p>	<p>Counter space is generous, but many things on it. Organize small things in categories and put in cupboards</p> <p>Pots and pans can be put in wide cupboard under the stovetop</p> <p>Glasses, plates and bowls can be put where children can reach them</p>
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What to change to make the room more pleasant

<p>Use my best dishes</p> <p>Add flowers</p> <p>Beautiful jug to hold my spoons</p> <p>Replace old potholders and tea towels</p>
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Organizing Routines/Clutter Free Habits

<p>Put similar things together so it is easy to find and put away things.</p> <p>Only have items that make my work load easier</p> <p>Throw away used items regularly</p> <p>Complete wash/dry/put away cycle, get help with this</p>

The Pantry

A functional pantry zone has visible categories with items in containers. Put baking items together, cans on another shelf and bottles on yet another. You want to see everything at a glance and have every item easy to find and put away. Use labelled stackable containers or revolving trays for bottled items.

The Refrigerator

Have you ever calculated the cost of a disorganized fridge? Even a small amount of wasted food costs you around twenty dollars a week. Add it up and it is over one thousand dollars a year. That could be a nice holiday you are throwing in the garbage every day. Multiply that by ten years. I think you can see where I'm going with this.

Organize Your Grocery shopping

Decluttering your kitchen, taking an inventory of what you already have and organizing your kitchen cupboards so you can create a really usable grocery list will save you so much time and money.

Do an inventory-What products do you need to replace, what products do you need to top up and what products do you need to stop buying.

Stop buying different brands of the same product and look at what you are doubling up on. Bulk buy on sales especially food that can be frozen. Make a meal plan, especially for dinner so you can stop all those extra runs to the grocery store.

Check out sales flyers and if you collect coupons use them.

Organizing the Living Room

The Living Room is a magnet for just about any type of clutter. Open games from the week before, stacks of newspapers, scattered toys, unfinished sewing projects and all the bits and pieces from everyone's life.

Your organizational zones are:

- Socializing/Relaxing
- Watching television
- Reading
- Playing games
- Play area

Make a quick map of your living room and match activity to zone to items needed.

- TV Area- Store DVD's, remote controls
- Music Area-Store earphones and CD's together
- Reading Zone- Stack books neatly on shelves
- Area to socialize- Leave space between furniture
- Use shelves/ storage units for books and decorative items
- Do you need double function furniture? Stools that have storage space inside, coffee table with shelves below it

Play Area

- If you have small children having a corner play area can keep toys contained but give the children the space to play they need.

Organizing Action Tip: Edit your collections and decorative items. Keep what you love. For more tips see www.declutterBeFree.com

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Organizing Planner for the Living Room

<i>Like with Like</i>	<i>Containerize and Label</i>	<i>Designated Place</i>
Magazines	All reading material	Put magazines in a rack
Newspapers	Toys	Newspapers in a basket
Toys	CD's	One box toys in corner

Zones

Storage

<p>Socializing-cushions, table for coffee</p> <p>TV-Music- Put DVD's near TV and music near stereo</p> <p>Reading/sewing comfy chair and good light</p> <p>Playing with games- need floor space and closed storage</p>	<p>Too many books still need to declutter</p> <p>Cabinet, large wide shelves, store games, sewing and CD's in here and clear out clutter</p> <p>Kids could use a drawing table in living room and space to store homework</p>
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What to change to make the room more pleasant

New bright cushions for the sofa
 Add a large plant
 Containerize and label kids' stuff and store in cabinet
 Get rid of the big painting I have never liked

Organizing Routines/ Clutter Free Habits

Everything must have a home
 Keep what I love
 Living room is not a storage room. Use it or lose it.
 Newspapers out daily

Organizing Your Workspace

Your workspace is where your correspondence and financial planning takes place. It is where things get done and completed and where you think, dream, plan, and get inspired. A clearly defined work area that is comfortable and attractive will make it a pleasure to get these tasks done.

The organizing zones may be:

- Bill paying
- Files, current/archive
- Reading and studying
- Computer work
- Opening mail
- Creative

Organize items in this area according to your zones. You may consider:

- A bookcase for books
- A cabinet with drawers for files and storage space
- Space savers for research items
- Adequate sized table, comfortable chair, good lighting

Tips for organizing your workspace:

- Open bills, record when the payment is due and file
- Consolidate addresses and phone numbers
- List most used phone numbers on a piece of paper and hang them on a pin board or inside the door of a cupboard in your kitchen
- If you like to collect articles on any topic use a magazine file in an attractive color to file them
- Take a few minutes to clear your desk at the end of every working day so you can come back to a spacious, inviting workspace
- Only keep stationary items that work

Organizing Action Tip: Add an object of inspiration. It could be a painting, a quote, a photograph. Feel happy and productive in this space now. For more tips see www.declutterBefree.com

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Organizing Planner for your Workspace

<i>Like with Like</i>	<i>Containerize and Label</i>	<i>Designated Place</i>
Stationary items Research materials Files and resources	Loose paper in files Stationary items Bills	Theme shelves in storage cabinet so anyone can see at a glance where things go

Zones

Storage

Work zone-computer, paper pens Resources/library- files, books Planning/schedules-calendar, diary-bulletin board Storage-office supplies, information	Jar on desk for pens Filing cabinet, bookshelves On wall on front of desk Does not have to be near desk in storage cabinet
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What to change to make the room more pleasant

Add a plant and lavender aromatherapy
 Cushion for my chair
 Inspirational thoughts on my pin board
 Find a few attractive containers for stationary items

Organizing Routines/Clutter Free Habits

Clear desk every evening and put things back
 Consolidate small notes onto my to do list, fill in calendar
 Throw away junk mail
 Five minute check and file of bills

Getting Your Finances Organized

Each mess is a lock on the gate that keeps abundance out

Raymond Aaron

Receipts and Bill Paying

Clutter and disorganization can cost thousands of dollars a year. Part of this problem is lost receipts, late fines and overbuying. Paying bills on time and keeping on top of receipts is simple when you declutter and change a few habits.

Receipts/Shopping

- Look at your receipt to make sure it is correct
- Put all receipts in the same place in your wallet or clip them together

Daily Clutter Free Money Habits

- Declutter wallet of daily receipts
- Use a receipt spike or throw out the receipts you don't need

At the end of the month you can reconcile your receipts to your credit card, save the receipts you need for warranty and throw out the rest. Mark your credit card receipts with a colored marker for easy identification.

Organizing Bills

- File unpaid bills in a "bills to be paid file"
- Stack your unpaid bills in the order they need to be paid
- Choose two days a month to pay bills to cover all due dates
- Write your payment number on the bill with the date paid and refile it under paid bills
- Get a binder to file your paid bills

Learning new habits for bill paying and developing efficient systems for clutter free money management can give you peace of mind. Once you are organized it just takes a few minutes a day.

Organizing Your Bedrooms

Bedrooms are the place where you can indulge yourself and unwind from the day's stresses. Spending time in a room littered with clothes, and unfinished work isn't conducive to creating a relaxing atmosphere.

Your bedroom zones are:

- **Sleeping:** Your sleeping zones contain pillows and bedding that create a luxurious and comfortable space
- **Reading:** Your reading zone will have books, magazines and a small table with a good reading lamp
- **Relaxing:** If you like relaxing in your bedroom, a candle, soft light or aromatherapy or music may help create that feeling
- **Clothes:** You need to have enough storage for all off season clothes and space in your closet for hanging and folding clothes

Once you have decided on the zones in your bedroom any item that does not fit the purpose can go. Any laundry, ironing, toys or other items that get dumped here can be returned to where they belong.

Your wardrobe can be organized and uncluttered. Store out of season clothing. Use wooden hangers to leave space between your clothes. Use drawer dividers to separate clothing.

If space is at a premium and your bedroom is multi-functional try camouflaging what doesn't blend in. Files and office items can be stored in a closed container or a cupboard with drawers. Exercise equipment can be hidden behind screen or draped with fabric.

Tips on Creating a Luxurious Bedroom:

- Dress your bed. Use 100 per cent cotton sheets with a double set of pillows and cushions. Make the bed look as comfortable and inviting as you can
- Choose a color you love and begin to introduce it into your bedroom with soft furnishing
- Get rid of the T.V. and exercise equipment. Create a space for rest, rejuvenation, and romance
- If you have to have your workspace in your room make sure it fits into your décor and put your work away at the end of the day

Organizing Action Tip: Remove any items that do not support beauty, comfort and function. For more tips see www.declutterBefree.com

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Organizing Planner for your Bedrooms

<i>Like with Like</i>	<i>Containerize and Label</i>	<i>Designated Place</i>
<p>Books/Magazines</p> <p>Clothes/ organize closet and drawers like with like</p> <p>Jewellery in one place</p> <p>Extra pillows and blankets</p>	<p>Books on bookshelf, magazines and newspapers in basket</p> <p>Seasonal clothing in plastic boxes</p>	<p>Seasonal Clothing in upper shelf of closet</p> <p>Clothes in closet</p> <p>Jewellery in drawer</p>

Zones

Storage

<p>Sleeping-pillows, blanket</p> <p>Relaxing-music, books magazines</p> <p>Dressing- dresser near closet and jewellery in top drawer</p>	<p>Extra pillow and blankets can be stored on high shelf of closet along with seasonal clothes</p> <p>Jewellery I wear often can be put in a special container</p> <p>Put newspapers and magazines on narrow shelf</p>
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What to change to make the room more pleasant

<p>Fluffier pillows and new pillow cases</p> <p>Candles and aromatherapy</p> <p>Clear all the surface clutter and make the tabletops empty</p> <p>Change walls to a pastels color</p>

Organizing Routines/Clutter Free Habits

<p>Put away small things immediately</p> <p>No more cramming things into a space too small</p> <p>When I buy a new article of clothing, a similar article goes out</p>
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Children's Rooms

Children's rooms are often disorganized havens with toys, books and art on the floor with crammed shelves. Decluttering and organizing can change this to an attractive room that gets tidied in minutes with a home for every item.

Here are some of the things that belong in these zones:

- **Sleeping:** Cosy pillows, fresh bedding and favourite animals that make bedtime something to look forward to
- **Reading:** A bookshelf, reading lamp and a comfy chair
- **Storage:** Spacious drawers and shelves make it simple to put things away
- **Art:** this is the area for messy play and small things can be separated into jars or containers and tidied every day
- **Homework:** A clear and clean desk facilitates good homework habits with pens and pencils that all work. A good light is a must.
- **Craft and music:** These things can be stored near the homework or reading zone
- **Playtime space:** This may be an area for games and puzzles to be spread out but need some closed storage so they can be put away when your child is finished with them

Enlist your children's help in deciding zones in their room and where things go.

Kindergarten rooms have every item separated, visible and contained. If they didn't everything would fall into chaos. They also have regular pick up after activities. Follow this model when organizing your kid's room.

Tips for organizing your child's room:

- Use storage containers that are bright and cheerful
- Group like items together on shelves
- Keep toys with small parts in labelled containers
- Begin a clutter free habit of clearing tabletops at the end of an activity and picking up things from floors
- Store clothes that are too big higher in the closet and keep current clothes in dresser and closet

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Organizing Planner for Kids' Rooms

<i>Like with Like</i>	<i>Container/Label</i>	<i>Designated Place</i>
Shoes	Toys in labelled Colored boxes Shoes in shoe bag on door	Toys stacked in cupboard
Toys	Large books and comics in dividers on bookshelf	Shoes in closet
Books		Books comics in bookcase

Zones

Storage

<p>Sleeping, naps-bed area</p> <p>Reading-bookcase and chair good reading lamp</p> <p>Play area on floor near shelf of toys</p> <p>Clothing closet and dresser-clothes</p>	<p>Extra blankets in closet</p> <p>Favourite books near chair</p> <p>Mat for play area</p> <p>Hangers and laundry bin for closet</p>
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What to change to make the room more pleasant

Display loved toys on shelves
 New coat of paint or a cheerful color theme to uplift the bedroom
 Pin board to display artwork rather than putting on the walls
 Add big pillows in beautiful colors
 Containerize toys to keep visual clutter to a minimum

Organizing Routines/Clutter Free Habits

Make beds in morning
 Ten minute pick up before dinner
 Art materials put away after use
 Re-organize clothing monthly and clear out any redundant clothing

Bathroom

You can't make your bathroom bigger or smaller but clearing the clutter and organizing will make it more spacious and comfortable. It's a place to relax and refresh but this mood can easily be ruined by clutter and mess. A disorganized dysfunctional bathroom makes it difficult to get ready in the morning and is difficult to clean.

Identify the zones. Activities such as bathing, shaving and putting on make-up need separate storage solutions. Containerize and work out better storage. The basic rule of thumb is to store what you use in the zone it is used in.

Here are the zones with the related items:

- The **Bathing Zone** includes all items related to washing. These can be stored on a shelf or caddy hanging from the shower near where they are used. These items will be soap, shampoo, conditioner, shower cap any washcloths or loofah. The wet items need to hang to dry.
- **Grooming** needs can be stored near the sink and mirror. These items include make-up, hair brushes, toothbrushes, nail care and any creams that are used.
- All **Medicine and Beauty Supplies** need to be up to date and clean and placed in a cabinet
- **Cleaning supplies** such as sponges, tile or window cleaner and toilet paper can be located under the sink
- **Get creative** and use small containers that really appeal to you to store small things in your medicine cabinet
- **Energize** your bathroom with plush towels, scented candles and beautiful soap. Add lemon or cloves aromatherapy to your cleaning products.

Organizing Action Tip: Containerize and label small items for instant organization. See www.declutterBefree.com for more beneficial tips.

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Organizing Planner for Bathroom

<i>Like with Like</i>	<i>Containerize and Label</i>	<i>Designated Place</i>
Shampoo and conditioner Hand and nail products Medicine Individuals products	Individualize grooming products in small colored baskets Medicine in cabinet Nail in separate container	Shampoo and conditioner in shower caddy Grooming on shelf in cabinet Medicine in high shelf

<i>Zones</i>	<i>Storage</i>
Bathing-shampoo and washing products Grooming-toothpaste, hair and skin care products, shaving and makeup Medicine- ointments, prescriptions, cold medication Cleaning- cleaner, sponges, rags,	Shampoo and conditioner on shower caddy Dental care in drawer, grooming on shelf Medicine can be stored higher up

What to change to make the room more pleasant

Add new white towels and bathmats get rid of tatty towels
 Add aromatherapy for cleaning
 Paint white

Organizing Routines/ Clutter Free Habits

Use everything in the bathroom and if I no longer like a product throw it out
 Keep things in their zones
 Separate and label small things

Linen Closets

Tips for organizing linen closets

- Arrange sheets and towels on separate shelves and create short stacks of towels so they won't tip over
- Stack sheets within matching pillowcases to instantly find the complete bed linen
- Use the top shelf for seasonal items such as wool blankets or down comforters and keep the linen you use near eye or waist level
- The space near the floor can store baskets and smaller items
- Make every item in your linen closet accessible and visible

How much linen do you really need? A simple rule of thumb is two sets of sheets per bed.

Laundry Room

An organized laundry room makes the repetitive task of laundry easier.

Zones for the laundry room are washing, drying, and ironing and these zones function better if they are clearly separated. Regularly used products can be stored near at hand with other items in less accessible places.

Tips to organize your laundry room:

- Have a good sized shelf for all your laundry storage needs
- Separate laundry and cleaning products in clear or mesh baskets
- A drying rack is handy for the clothes
- Have a designated place to put laundry that needs to be folded. Kids are great at helping with this. Delegate this job.

Organizing Action Tip: Remove any multiples and doubles from your laundry space. See www.delutterBefree.com for more helpful tips

Organizing Your Garage/ Basement

Once you have decluttered your garage/basement and identified what you want to use this space for, you can begin to organize your zones. You may decide to use this space primarily for storage or a combination of storage and activity.

Possible organizational zones may be:

- Sports equipment including bikes
- Gardening Equipment
- Camping equipment.
- Laundry zone
- Workbench
- Tool Storage

Mark these areas with signs. You can pile things in the zones until you arrange appropriate storage or recycle what you have. Use vertical space as much as possible in these areas.

Great garage/basement storage is floor to ceiling utility shelves, plastic labelled boxes, peg boards for storing tools and gardening equipment. Focus on full visibility and easy access.

The goal is to have an organized, functional, space with a home for everything you need to store and use.

Tips for Organizing your Garage are:

- Assess what can be stored vertically, with lighter objects higher up
- Assess what needs to be accessible
- Box and label similar items together
- Keep everything easy to see and easy to put back.
- Have a let go box in the garage and declutter every day

Organizing Action Tip: Accessibility is key to keeping your garage organized. The things you use the most often need to be the easiest to locate. See www.declutterBefree.com for more storage ideas.

DeclutterBefree.com Printable- Organizing Planner for the garage

<i>Like with Like</i>	<i>Containerize and Label</i>	<i>Designated Place</i>
Sports equipment	Sports equipment on or next to large shelf	Sports equipment on wall and shelf
Camping Equipment	Camping Equipment in clear plastic boxes on shelf	Gardening stuff on table
Tools	Paint in a labelled box on table	Tools hung on wall and on bench
Paint		

Zones

Storage

<p>Sports- bikes, tennis racquets, balls</p> <p>Camping-tent, sleeping bags and cooking gear</p> <p>Gardening- gardening tools and supplies</p> <p>Tools</p>	<p>Camping equipment is seasonal can be stored on large shelves on back of garage</p> <p>Have a sports area for kids, but they need to access it easily</p> <p>Tools on tool rack</p>
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What to change to make the room more pleasant

<p>Sweep and clean windows</p> <p>Space things farther apart</p> <p>Put in a brighter light.</p>
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Organizing Routines/Clutter Free Habits

<p>Store like with like, label boxes, keep garage spacious not a dumping ground anymore</p> <p>Make let go box easy to access and declutter and recycle on the 15th of every month</p> <p>Kids put their equipment back when they are finished</p>

More Storage Tips

The Five Befree Keys for Creating Great Storage

Do you remember the nursery school toy that had different shaped holes in it? One hole was shaped like a star and another square. The idea was to find the right shaped block to fit in the same shaped hole.

Choosing storage is a little bit like that. Good storage solutions keep your possessions easy to see, easy to access and easy to put away. Bad storage solutions make your possessions invisible and difficult to find and put away. So you need to find the right peg for the right hole.

Check out your storage by applying these five universal Storage Keys when you organize your possessions.

Storage Key#1: Choose what You Love

Adopting this key will restyle your home. When I was first decluttering there was such a difference when I removed the a few things I didn't like. The objects that I liked seemed to shine. The room felt sunnier, cleaner and it was much easier to relax.

Don't struggle or make second best choices with storage. It never works well. This applies to storage containers as well as furniture. Choose a style, color or fit you love and stick with that.

Storage Key#2: Choose the Right Fit

With this Key it is measure, measure and measure.

Rethink the volume and shape of the items being stored because you want every item to be visible.

Look at the size and space of your storage. Does what you want to store fit well or do you need space savers to make this storage work?

If you have furniture with poor storage capability, it may work in another room or you may want to sell it and buy storage that works for you.

Think back to your kindergarten days. Learn your storage skills from there. Don't try and put a square peg in a round hole but experiment and play till you find what works for you.

Storage Key#3: Separate and Contain

The best organized storage can turn into clutter if there is too much in a drawer or shelf.

There's one easy solution and that is to separate and contain.

When you separate items you can see them. When you containerize them you set boundaries. Visibility is a key to staying organized.

Storage Key#4: Choose Labels

Without labels you may be playing hide and seek with your things. Unlabelled boxes beg to be stuffed with miscellaneous items.

Label contents on containers and put an end to rummaging around to find things. Your label needs to be clear with a photo or list of the boxed contents. This will make it a snap to find things or have any one in the family put things away in the correct box. Make life easy, label your containers.

Storage Key#5: Rethink, Recycle and Reuse

Looking at how you function in your home means rethinking your storage. You may find some of your furniture just doesn't fit your storage needs.

Rethink, look at what you own one piece at a time and rethink size, shape, and color and function. Ask does this piece fit my storage needs.

Recycle, what you have before you go shopping. Shoeboxes, jars, and odds and ends around your home can be used to separate and contain so you can see what works and what doesn't

Reuse, what you own. That cupboard in the living room that doesn't work may be perfect in the office. The table that has no use

in the corner may be perfect in the living room. Trial and error will show you some of your storage will work better in other areas and other storage just needs to go.

Using these five Organizing and Storage key will help you double your storage space without spending a cent. Disorganization eats up space. As you clear out your clutter and get organized you won't need all those boxes baskets and containers.

10. Simplify Your Life/Organize Yourself

Focus on being productive instead of busy
Timothy Ferris

Fifteen Simplicity Tips

Or how to simplify when you are totally fed up.

Simplifying your life means something different for every person. For me it is streamlining and asking is there a better way. These tips will help you simplify no matter how frazzled or fed up you are.

Simplify choice: Choose less. Simplifying the amount of products you buy. Work with the principal of two. Have two different cereals, two cheese and two salad dressings to choose from. If your family is used to having a lot more choice, with your next grocery shop select two different choices.

Simplify choice in other areas.

Make menu plans: Breakfast and lunch are relatively the same so, to start concentrate on dinner. Make a menu plan from what you have on hand and plan meals from the weekly sale items at your regular grocery store. See the extra section for more tips on this.

Make a grocery list: Write everything down and do not buy one thing that isn't on your list. This could save you a lot of money in a year!

Simplify Your Things: Purge regularly. Make sure you have a let go and maybe box set up. Start with one drawer or one shelf at a time. Think about reducing the small things in your home that just make you work harder and pick up more.

Get the financial clutter under control: Allocate 15 min in the evening to organize your finances. Start with a budget, move to decluttering financial files and decide on weekly systems to keep finances organized.

Make simple systems: Brainstorm systems, no matter how small that save you money, energy or time that will work with your family and lifestyle. I found one small change can often give you an extra 15 min or half hour in the day.

Batch to do's together: This may seem counter intuitive but doing a group of similar things together actually is more efficient. If you have errands, wait a few days until you have several things to do at one place. Return phone calls at one time during the day. When you cook make doubles and freeze one meal. Single tasking feels relaxing and unrushed.

Single Task: Do you know the brain can only concentrate on one thing at a time. So single task. Take the time to focus on getting one thing at a time. When you have to switch tasks focus on task 2 completely. Our brains love to focus. It's relaxing even if you are doing a challenging task.

Do the hardest thing first: Brian Tracy calls this eat the frog first. What action do you need to do that will give you the biggest relief and the most satisfaction. Is there anything hanging over your head, nagging at you inside that you need to do?

Have a good morning routine: Getting up a little earlier to get organized, for the day not being rushed can change creates a positive attitude that can transform your day.

Make your bed every day: I mean make it beautifully and mindfully. As ridiculous as it sounds there is research that shows people who make their bed are happier, calmer and even save money better. Making beds is the first routine to start to make changes in your home.

Complete Task Cycles: Housework is cyclical. It goes in cycles. Laundry, wash, dry, fold and put away, dishes, wash dry and put away. A lot of mess and clutter comes from not completing cycles. Start with completing one cycle and see if it makes a difference in your home.

Set your Priorities: What are your priorities? Is it to spend quality time with your children, get some exercise, read that business book or get a project done? What action can you take?

Clean up One Big Mess Every Month: What big mess can you get cleared up this month. Plan to tackle a big decluttering project. Use the planners, get organized. That will mean at the end of the year you will have twelve big messes cleared up. Make a big decluttering project every month.

Make a Master List: A master list is a brain dump. It is getting every to do, must do, want to do out of your head onto paper. Once you make your master list you put your to do's into separate categories with their own headings. It outlines your bigger picture decluttering and organizing plan.

Adding Heart to Your Home

*I don't think you have to chase success but I do think you
need to slow down enough for it to catch you*
Richard Carlson

Adding heart to your home is two things.

It is about learning how to de-stress and re-boot no matter what is happening around you.

Here are ideas to feel calm in the midst of chaos

1. Go for a walk get some fresh air
2. Drink water, dehydration causes our brains to stress
3. Clean one counter top, spend 10 minutes putting things away.
Taking action makes you feel in control
4. Fill out a Befree Planner. Connect to a vision
5. Spend an hour just cleaning
6. Breathe
7. Focus on the good things you have now

8. Talk to a friend, see if you can get a decluttering buddy

Adding heart is also simple subtraction and addition. Get rid of the clutter the junk and the ugly. Clean well and add beauty comfort and function. Do this and the heart energy of your home will shine through.

Add things that make you feel cheerful and happy. Set aside time to create special moments and memories with friends and family.

Be creative and do what you love every day. Set it as a priority. The better you feel the more motivated you will be the more energy you will have.

Here is a list of heart-warming home ideas.

- Slow down
- Add fresh flowers
- Add plants
- Spend time talking
- Display what you love
- Style moments of beauty
- Make a reading corner
- Make an art corner
- Make a display for your children's art
- Add bright happy cushions to your sofa
- Play music
- Have craft time with your kids
- Have a coffee morning with friends
- Add your personal touch
- Make a vision board
- Have quality time with those you love
- Add some beautiful lamps
- Bake, cook and share
- Bake bread
- Use aromatherapy
- Have dinner with your family using your best dishes
- Make space around things

Clearing clutter reveals what you treasure. Living with less gives you more time for family, relationships and So live a little lighter and follow your heart.

what happens when you declutter?

You are aware of your clutter traps and know how to let go

Every item has a place; everything is at your fingertips: saves time

You let go of things you no longer need quickly

Become a better money manager, reduce financial waste

Create a prosperity and abundant mind set with everything you do

More organized thinking- more organized at home and work

Better time management skills and write goals and to do's down

Sense of order ripples out with everything you do

You prioritize, hard things are easier, become more efficient

You step out of your comfort zone and try new things with confidence

Increased creativity- more light bulb moments

Improved problem solving skills-confidence and lateral thinking

Organized practical planning-ability to make decisions

Organizing Systems- that become effortless habits in your home or work

Better Follow through-You walk your talk, integrity, congruency

Increased self-esteem, confidence and self-belief, new self-image

Quick decision making- inner knowing- intuition-being more in the present

Big picture thinking with the ability to chunk down big goals into smaller manageable steps

Clutter free-Can do mind set, increased wellbeing, happiness, satisfaction

DeclutterBefree.com Printable-Shopping Organizer

<i>Breakfast</i>			
<i>Lunch</i>			
<i>Dinner</i>			
<i>Vegetables/Fruit</i>	<i>Meat</i>	<i>Bread/ Cereals</i>	<i>Snacks</i>
		<i>Beverages</i>	<i>Baking</i>
<i>Dairy</i>	<i>Canned</i>	<i>Frozen</i>	<i>Miscellaneous</i>
		<i>Pasta</i>	
		<i>Deli</i>	

Extras

Menu Planning and Grocery Shopping

If you want to make big changes fast and are up to the challenge I suggest you start by getting your grocery shopping and menu planning organized first.

How to start

If you have a family getting your kitchen, grocery shopping and menu planning done will have the biggest impact on your time and even save some money too.

I suggest you take a whole morning to get your kitchen in order. Use the decluttering planner to purge the space gobblers and timewasters in your kitchen.

Empty the fridge of food and jars of stuff you need to throw out and give every counter, cupboard and the inside of your fridge a good wipe.

Then using an organizing planner organize everything like with like so you can see how many of the same item you have.

Do an Inventory

Take an inventory. How many meals can you make from the food you have in your cupboard now? Write it down in your menu planner.

Simplify breakfast and Lunch

Simplify breakfast to two different kinds of cereal or eggs and toast. Have pancakes at the weekend.

Simplify lunch to two or three different sandwich filling and fruit.

Menu planning for **dinner is easier** if you organize around a protein or type of dish every day. Monday-chicken, Tuesday-pasta, Wednesday-beef or lamb, Thursday-fish, Friday Pizza. Whatever suits your family?

Once you have your menu plan then you write your grocery list. The idea you go to the grocery store less.

Once you have your menu plan in process you can twist and tweak it to suit your family. It's a really good idea to have two weeks of recipes that everyone in your family likes.

I usually have one day on the weekend where we make a new recipe or do something spontaneous, and one day where we eat leftovers and clear out the vegetables in the fridge. If leftovers are scarce we have a BLT and salad. That only leaves 5 meals to plan.

Stop running to the store all the time. Write out your menu plan and put it on the fridge. Twist and tweak it so a weekly shop becomes a two weekly shop and then a three weekly shop. Once a week get your perishable food.

Grocery Shopping

The bigger your family the more organized you need to be around shopping. There are a few tips and tricks to make this easier and save money.

Keep your grocery list on the fridge. If you run out of an item it can be written down immediately.

Decrease the amount of products you buy and stick to the favourites. One type of pickles, mustard, chilies, or two types of cereal. This makes a lot more space and simplifies your list. The next grocery shop you can always change the product.

Look a sales before you menu plan. This can save you money with every shop.

When you shop check out the products that are on the high shelves and low shelves. You can often find the same thing different brand for half the price.

Calculate price per unit. Sometimes the bigger items are actually costing more.

Bulk bake. Freeze cookies and muffin to save money and time during the week.

With meals such as bean dip for nachos, spaghetti bolognese, shepherd's pie and chili con carne you can make double and freeze. Having a menu plan and meals in the freezer really saves time and effort.

Start a Cleaning Schedule

Even if you have outsource a cleaner if you have a couple of kids cleaning is just a part of a mom's daily life. Working full or part time it can be the last thing you want to do. But if you schedule it in your house will feel better to live in, nothing will get too out of control and you will be able.

Make a master list for your house of cleaning that needs to be done daily, weekly and monthly. Look at your weekly schedule. Where can you fit it in?

For some having a one day cleaning blitz works well. Other families prefer to focus on one cleaning task per day or several a week. You will find if you can do this consistently, nothing piles up or gets out of control.

With your daily cleaning task work on completing task cycles. With the kitchen wash dry and put away dishes.

With laundry it is much the same, wash dry and put away.

Start a five minute tidy up every day and your cleaning tasks will soon feel a lot more under control.

Keeping Motivated

Here are a 10 tips to keep motivated during your decluttering journey. Try them out and see how they work. Making progress and moving forward towards your goals is important.

1. **Figure out your big why.** Everyone wants a cleaner tidier house. But on a deeper and more personal level what is your big why. Figuring this out will give you more motivation and longevity on your decluttering journey.

My first motivator was having a stress free hour when my kids came home from school. I didn't want to be thinking about dinner or laundry or anything I needed to do around work. I wanted to relax and enjoy my children. I needed to organize my kitchen, menu plan and organize grocery shopping to do this.

2. **Keep those rewards coming?** Rewards are really important when are making those mindset shifts and clearing clutter. Giving yourself a reward actually releases the natural feel good

chemicals in your brain so you associate clearing clutter, getting organized positively.

3. **Have a break do something fun.** Getting some exercise or fresh air, having some fun, meeting a friends gets you inspired to make a better life which is what decluttering is all about.
4. **Declutter when you feel energized.** Don't declutter when you are tired.
5. **Connect with other declutterers.** Go to the declutterbefree.com face book page and see what others are doing.
6. **Get a declutter buddy.** Having a friend on the same journey helps with those difficult decisions. It makes you schedule time and look at what you own with new eyes.
7. **Take before and after pictures.**

40 Things You Can Live Without Right Now

1. Hobbies supplies for hobbies you are not working on
2. Old invitations
3. Bags of plastic bags you have stashed in places
4. Utensils you don't use or doubles and triples of utensils you don't use
5. Any unidentified old foil wrapped things in the fridge or freezers
6. Anything you got for free that you don't like
7. Small Paper piles, this means ticket stubs, old transit passes and concerts and movies.
8. Any receipts or junk that has accumulated in your purse
9. Envelopes you are saving because they have an address on them, add them to your contacts list
10. All your post it notes and pieces of paper that have old messages on them

11. Any item you are keeping out of guilt
12. Expired coupons and saving passes
13. Writing pads ,notebooks that are that have old information
14. Old textbooks
15. Paperback Novels you find uninspiring
16. Any old VHS cassettes and DVD's that you've watched and will never watch again
17. Recipes you've ripped out of magazines and haven't made.
18. Expired medicines
19. Old makeup
20. Office supplies you never use
21. Cheap accessories you have bought which are a mess in a drawer
22. Any plastic storage container that doesn't have a lid
23. Old batteries
24. Instruction manuals for appliances you know you no longer own
25. Near empty condiment bottles in your pantry
26. Stacks of magazines you haven't looked at in months
27. Boxes of half used tea that hasn't been used in months
28. Miscellaneous cables, cords and wired, (match them first)
29. Stashes of ketchup, mustard and soy sauce from takeout
30. Shoes that pinch your feet
31. Old bed linen that is threadbare or no longer washes well
32. Old bath and hand towels

33. Extra boxes or bags you have stashed away
34. Clothes you have not worn in years
35. Pictures you cannot hang on walls
36. Pictures you no longer like
37. Things that have needed repair for over a year
38. Furniture you have stored
39. Old sports equipment
40. Unused and old bags, suitcases and backpacks

Jane would love to hear your success stories, please e-mail jane@declutterbefree.com