



Spring cleaning 2019 – Decluttering top tips

1. Rome wasn't built in a day – set realistic goals

It is best to break up the overall task of decluttering into achievable mini tasks e.g. decluttering and organising (1) the kitchen drawers (2) the under stairs cupboard – that way you will be able to see immediate results which will help keep you motivated and feeling good about what you have achieved so far and what you can continue to achieve. Take before and after photos to remind yourself of your journey.

2. Don't fall into the trap of redistribution

Redistributing or repositioning items to other parts of the house is not the same as decluttering unless you need, use or love the item and it makes sense to store it elsewhere. Whilst it might be easier to avoid making decisions now about which items to keep, a decision will ultimately need to be made at some point.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to let things go out of fear of guilt or the thought you might need it in the future. Don't let your items own you. Be bold and keep three things in your mind, do I need it, use it or love it? If not then set it free.

3. Don't jump the gun

Whilst your storage may currently be overflowing, by the end of your decluttering journey you may find you have more than enough storage for all the items you want to keep. Most of us probably have furniture dotted round the house that is (a) taking up space (b) not fit for purpose i.e. it doesn't have enough drawer/shelf space to store the items we have (c) rather wobbly / beginning to deteriorate because it has been overfilled with heavy items (d) half filled therefore not maximising the space or (e) an inherited piece that we don't particularly like / doesn't fit with the style of our home. Furniture culling or upcycling should be considered as part of your decluttering journey.

4. Think outside the box

There are a lot of clever storage ideas around nowadays, furniture that doubles up as storage e.g. dining benches with storage inside, ottoman beds where the mattress lifts and the storage area is underneath, dressing table stools with storage under the cushioned seat etc. The internet is full of amazing ideas to ensure you fully maximise your space – Pinterest is my favourite go to for inspiration.

5. What lives where

When decluttering, keep in mind the purpose of each space to ensure that the items you are keeping make sense to be in that area. It can be helpful to play out a day in your life e.g. when I walk in the door, I want to be able to hang up my coat, have somewhere for my gloves, scarf, shoes, bag, keys, post, mobile phone etc. The challenge is then to train the rest of the family to remember what things live where – labelled storage boxes can help with this process.

6. Change your mind set

View decluttering as a cleansing journey of not only your things but also your mind – almost like a detox, that feels tough when you are going through it but by the end you feel so much better!

7. Think before you buy

Clutter starts with bringing items into the home that, if consciously thought about, there is no need or use for them. Before buying anything, ask yourself three questions; do I love it, do I need it, and will I use it? If you get into the discipline of doing this, you will not only save money, but you will also save yourself time and effort from having to clear the build up of clutter.

8. Think long term

By decluttering now and periodically in the future, it does mean that if your circumstances change, e.g. arrival of a baby, selling your home, downsizing etc. it does away with that dreaded task of sorting through years of accumulated clutter. There's no time like the present!

9. Be kind to yourself

Everyone has a different view as to what they consider a calm space. Remember this is about you and your possessions; don't compare yourself to others who may have different standards. The main objective of decluttering is not about making things look pretty; it is about making things work for you so that your spaces bring you happiness and make life simple, safe and stress-free.

10. Need some help on your journey?

If time or energy are obstacles to your decluttering journey, consider hiring a professional. Whilst some may feel this is extravagant, this is no different to seeking help from a personal trainer or nutritionist for our physical wellbeing. A professional organiser will offer support, focus and direction to help you achieve your goals, will put simple tailored systems in place to help keep you and your spaces organised, will provide space saving solutions and help facilitate the disposal of unwanted items in a responsible way. Visit www.apdo.co.uk to find a consultant in your area.