



Conquer Clutter

Decluttering is often associated with Spring cleaning, that annual ritual that finds us making way for new beginnings and fresh perspectives. But no matter the time of year, if you are struggling and stressed with more stuff than can fit in your space, it's time for action.

Catherine Roster at the University of New Mexico studied the relationship between clutter in the home and overall well-being. The study examined how clutter impacts an individual's perception of their home and compromises feelings of satisfaction in life.

The [study](#) identified that many in the sample group saw their possessions as an extension of themselves and being surrounded by those things created a sense of psychological comfort. Clutter, though, was negatively related to the psychological sense of home and, ultimately, to well-being.

Clutter's Affect on the Brain and Body

- The brain likes order. Constant visual reminders of disorganization drain cognitive resources, reducing the ability to focus, process information, and be productive. It can also reduce working memory.
- A cluttered home can lead to a chronic low-grade fight-or-flight response. This can trigger changes that affect immunity and digestion and increase the risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
- People who sleep in cluttered rooms are more likely to have sleep problems, including difficulty falling asleep and being disturbed during the night.
- Being in a messy room will make you twice as likely to eat a chocolate bar than an apple.
- People with extremely cluttered homes are 77% more likely to be overweight.

Tips to Conquer Clutter

Whether you follow organizing expert [Marie Kondo](#) or minimalist [Joshua Becker](#), here are some tips to help you start small to conquer the clutter in your home.

Control the Flow of Incoming Mail

- Immediately dispose of junk mail. Designate a basket for the important stuff you need to come back to later.
- Go paperless where possible.

In the Kitchen

- Tackle one cabinet/drawer at a time and donate duplicate and/or unused items.
- Store small appliances (toasters, blenders, etc.) out of sight. It will free up the counter for food prep and help reduce visual clutter.
- Don't pile dishes in the sink. Wash and dry them immediately after use or put them in the dishwasher.

Manage the Laundry

- Dirty clothes go in the hamper. Clean clothes get folded and put away immediately.
- Not enough space? Mindfully discard unused clothing. Sort into discard, donate, and keep piles. Immediately discard items, then put the donation items in your car for drop-off when you are near the donation center.

If You Have Kids

- Bedroom toys live in the closet, not on the floor.
- Pick up and put away toys every evening before bed.
- Laptops, tablets, and game gear are stored in their designated space unless actively in use.

Wise Use of Storage Solutions

Attractive and functional storage bins can help organize your space so that everything has a "place" to live. But even they have limits when it comes to decluttering.

"If you're not using the stuff in your home, get rid of it. You're not going to start using it more by shoving it in a closet somewhere." – Joshua Becker

