

Little Acts of Decluttering

FREE GUIDE



By Rachel Noakes

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The Basics

Before we get started, there are some key points I need to mention so that you are set up for success.

Donate, Sell, Keep and Trash

For the ease of working in a small area at a time. Having a dedicated box or bag for each of these four categories is going to make tidying up a doddle. If you have a box dedicated to items to sell, it will mean that it is contained at the point of decluttering and is ready to put onto selling sites at your earliest convenience. Trash should be going straight into a bin bag. Don't create extra jobs by creating piles that then need to be moved into a container or bag. Put rubbish straight into a bag so that when you have finished the area, you can take it straight out into the wheelie bin! Job done! Items for donating should be put into a container that can easily be taken to a charity shop. Any items being kept (depending on what they are) can either be put in a pile or put in a box and then put away at the end of the sorting process. This is an opportunity to organise your possessions in a way that is suitable for how you use each item. Make sure that everything has a home and that home needs to be thought about and represent how and where you use the item. This helps things become easier to find and more importantly, quick to put away.

Challenges

Little Acts of Decluttering

This is it! This little acts of decluttering book is precisely the challenge you have chosen to embark on. A small area to focus in on each day to help you make progress over time in a manageable, achievable way. For more support with this, I share a calendar PDF

(on my website, www.declutteryourlife.co.uk)

with suggested little acts of decluttering for each day of the month, for a randomised approach. Otherwise, you could choose a room at a time to focus on or pick randomly yourself.

Fill a Box

Each day you fill a box with items that could be removed from your home. You could put items that are broken, rubbish, or things you no longer use or need. But each day you have to remove it too. Don't let the box sit there too long before you donate it.

10 minutes-10 spaces-100 items

The maths has been done for you here. 100 items in ten days. Just set a 10 minute timer and see how quickly you can find 10 items. Game on! This game could be played with family members at the same time. First to find their 10 items wins.

5 Min Declutter Daily

Setting a daily timer is a fun way to chip away at an area without the pressure of knowing that it needs to be completed. Taking on a whole room can be daunting, so clearing what you can in 5 minutes becomes less of a daunting task and something that is achievable. This might cover clearing through a junk drawer or cutlery drawer.

15 Min Timer

If you want to get a bit more achieved you could up the timer from 5 minutes to 15 minutes. This will help you see a quicker impact and would work well on slightly bigger areas, like a bedside cabinet, or a small bookcase. You could get some music playing in the background to tune you in and make it more enjoyable.

Bin Bag

This is a great challenge if you are just starting in your decluttering journey. Grab a bin bag and go through your home or an area and find anything that is just rubbish, such as packets, receipts, broken items and put the bag straight in the main bin outside when you're done.

Find X Items

A great way to get the whole family involved is to get each person to find a certain number of items to declutter (items to be sold, donated or rubbish). First one to reach the number is the winner. This also works well as an individual task. You could challenge yourself to increase the number of items decluttered each time.

12-12-12 Challenge

This is a simple activity: find 12 items to throw away, 12 items to donate and 12 items to be returned to their proper home. This is a challenge that could be done as and when you choose, or daily to help declutter and tidy each time.

30 Day Minimalism Game

This is a great way to tackle a large number of items in a month. 465+ to be exact! For each day of the month you declutter the number of items for that date. On the first of the month, 1 item decluttered; for the second of the month, 2 items; the third day of the month, 3 items and so on. There are some strategies you can apply to make this manageable. For large number of items think small or cluttered areas of the home, such as stationary or the wardrobe. For smaller numbers of items such as 1-5 you may wish to focus on larger items such as furniture or appliances.

30 DAY *Minimalism Game*

DAY 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 item	DAY 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 items	DAY 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 items	DAY 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 items	DAY 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 items
DAY 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 items	DAY 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 items	DAY 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 items	DAY 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 items	DAY 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 items
DAY 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 items	DAY 12 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 items	DAY 13 <input type="checkbox"/> 13 items	DAY 14 <input type="checkbox"/> 14 items	DAY 15 <input type="checkbox"/> 15 items
DAY 16 <input type="checkbox"/> 16 items	DAY 17 <input type="checkbox"/> 17 items	DAY 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 items	DAY 19 <input type="checkbox"/> 19 items	DAY 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 items
DAY 21 <input type="checkbox"/> 21 items	DAY 22 <input type="checkbox"/> 22 items	DAY 23 <input type="checkbox"/> 23 items	DAY 24 <input type="checkbox"/> 24 items	DAY 25 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 items
DAY 26 <input type="checkbox"/> 26 items	DAY 27 <input type="checkbox"/> 27 items	DAY 28 <input type="checkbox"/> 28 items	DAY 29 <input type="checkbox"/> 29 items	DAY 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 items

Kitchen

The heart of the home, is exactly that; a center for everyone and everything. Counters and worktops quickly accumulate items from all around the home. Family members leave paperwork, newly bought items and any random item you can think of into the kitchen, dumping them on the side or dining table. The difference between a cluttered vs minimalist kitchen is calm and an easy to clean home. It's about creating a functioning space that works for everyone with easy to access items.

KITCHEN CHECKLIST

- wine glasses _____
- baking trays _____
- kitchen appliances _____
- sauce pans _____
- water bottles _____
- travel mugs _____
- cutlery _____
- food containers _____
- plates and bowls _____
- party supplies _____
- magnets / front of fridge _____
- use up food _____
- expired food _____
- washi tape strategy _____
- unused cook books _____
- mugs, cups and beakers _____
- take away menus _____
- kitchen sink _____
- shopping bags _____
- kitchen side clear _____
- tea towels _____

Laundry

Laundry is one of those areas within your home that can feel overwhelming. Too many clothes, mean piles of stuff everywhere. Simplifying clothing items as you come across them will help with this. Keep laundry ticking over each day, instead of letting it sit until the weekend. This will leave you time at the weekend for more enjoyable activities.

LAUNDRY CHECKLIST

- laundry _____
- washing away _____
- cleaning supplies _____
- washing supplies _____
- pegs _____

Bathroom

Nothing beats having an endless supply of towels in the closet. But realistically how many do you really use each week? Bathroom related items often get overlooked, but can easily clutter an area or fill cupboards. Focus on essentials and products you love. Get in the habit of using items up and streamlining the space.

BATHROOM CHECKLIST

- travel sized products
- expired bath / body products
- expired medicine
- old / used sunscreen
- toiletries / perfumes
- use up products
- under the sink
- sink area
- towels

Wardrobe

Have an overflowing wardrobe, but nothing to wear? I know that feeling. Often looking through it can feel like you have nothing, but also too much at the same time. But you have more gems hidden in there than you might think, you just can see the woods for the trees. There are some key starting points to work through. Get out each category at a time; all the t-shirts, all the jeans, etc. First work on grabbing favourite items that you love. Remove any items that don't fit or are damaged beyond repair. Variety is key, so ensure you don't have too many that are similar in style and fit. Consider letting go of any that you haven't worn in a while or that are not comfortable to wear. Any items that you do not reach for are items to consider donating or selling. If you want to clear you home quicker, focus on donating rather than selling. If you time you could consider selling items of value, such as occasion wear or items new with tags or new without tags.

Here is one of my favourite strategies when decluttering the wardrobe...

Hangers the Wrong Way

A trick, if you are not sure which items you wear regularly in your wardrobe, is to turn the hangers the wrong way round. As you use an item, you return it with the hanger facing the right way. After a period of time (of your choosing) you can see which items you wear regularly and which items are sitting there unused that could be donated or sold.

WARDROBE CHECKLIST

- spare buttons _____
- hangers _____
- hangers the wrong way _____
- coats _____
- costume jewellery _____
- jewellery _____
- don't let clothes pile up _____
- shoes _____
- socks _____
- underwear _____
- pairs of gloves _____
- hats and scarves _____
- swimwear _____
- pjs _____
- tops _____

- jumpers / sweatshirts
- trousers
- glasses / sunglasses
- workwear
- dresses
- belts and ties
- watches
- fancy dress
- slippers
- shorts
- skirts

Bedroom

It can be easy for the bedroom floor and bedside tables to become a dumping ground of clothes and bits and pieces. It is worth creating new habits of putting clothes away each night to avoid them piling up. It can also be a sign that there are too many items in your wardrobe if it feels like a chore putting it away.

BEDROOM CHECKLIST

- curtains _____
- bedside table _____
- bedsheets _____
- under the bed _____
- bedroom floor _____
- dressing table _____
- pillows _____
- duvets _____
- blankets _____

Living Area

Another critical space in the home is the living area. A clutter space can often feel like a clutter mind. It can be overwhelming and difficult to manage lots of stuff. Simplicity is key here for a calm and easy to maintain home.

LIVING AREA CHECKLIST

- vases _____
- candles and wax melts _____
- cushions and throws _____
- ornaments _____
- stairs / under the stairs _____
- hallway _____
- dining table _____
- pet toys _____
- bookshelf _____
- coffee table _____
- home decor items _____
- DVDs _____
- framed pictures _____
- CDs _____
- art _____

Children

Having children can often come with feeling a need for a vast array of items. Toys can take over your home and you are working through a never ending cycle of clothing as you child grows. I can assure you that children need much less than you think. In fact, the less the better. This is because from having little, comes creativity. Something that is essentially free. Regularly go through and remove any as they break or get damaged. Bundle up toys that are not played with very often and consider donating or selling.

Clothing should be checked through twice a year. I tend to do this in the new year and just at the end of summer. Bundle up sizes together to make it easy to sell or donate. They grow so quickly that twice a year is probably about right. Bundles of clothing will be easier to sell than individual items.

CHILDREN CHECKLIST

- toys _____
- clothes _____
- consoles & games _____
- furniture _____
- children's keepsakes _____
- children's books _____
- colouring/activity books _____
- colouring pens & pencils _____
- cuddly toys _____

Office

Paper clutter can easily accumulate due to working from home, bills through the post and junk mail. If you don't keep on top of it and have a clear system, it can easily become too much. Simplify as much as possible, download what you can from online accounts and store digitally. Have a simple system at home for sorting the paperwork.

OFFICE CHECKLIST

- ink cartridges
- notebooks
- magazines
- newspapers
- junk mail
- old calendars
- receipts
- stationary
- unused devices
- office desk / drawers
- old diaries

- utility bills
- invitations
- gift tags and bags
- manuals
- old phone books
- outdated reference books
- travel books/guides
- old school books
- business cards
- USB drives / sticks
- printers, laminators, circuit
- extension leads

Bags

I regularly have a check through of my purse. Once a month is a great starting point. Remove any expired cards or loyalty cards that you are unlikely to use. You may find some old receipts that need filing. Doing this once a month will help you keep on top of it.

There are two elements to this section. Firstly, do you have too many? Yes, I know many people collect these, but could you find a way to reduce down and keep favourites that you use all of the time? Secondly, regularly clear out your bag to make sure there isn't any clutter in there building up. It will help you to reset and put things back in the right place.

BAGS CHECKLIST

- purse / old cards
- hand bags
- keyrings / keys
- back packs / school bags
- beach bags
- travel luggage
- tote bags

Beauty

Beauty boxes and advertisements can make it easy for us to stock pile on a number of items that we don't ever use. Numerous palettes and creams can be overwhelming to look at. Consider donating any unopened products that you are unlikely to use.

Make up has a shelf life. Each item shows a little number on the packaging of how long they should be used for once opened. Use this as a guide. This is most important for any product that go near your eyes, such as mascara and eye shadows. Every 6 months is the norm for eye products to keep healthy and it's not worth taking any risks.

BEAUTY CHECKLIST

- old nail polish
- old products / expired
- unused items
- hair accessories
- hair styling tools

Garden and Shed

There aren't many gardening tools in my shed, just the basics. So why not keep it to that. Consider which tools you have used over the last year. If you haven't even looked at it or used it, then now is the time to sell these.

GARDEN AND SHED CHECKLIST

- bikes and scooters _____
- garden tools _____
- DIY supplies _____
- outside furniture _____
- paint _____
- plant pots _____
- plants _____

Car

Did you know that any extra weight in your car is going to use up more fuel? This is a great reason to get clearing out anything that is unnecessarily being stored in there. Keep it simple and keep only every essentials that you will use in there. For me, that's wellies, first aid kit and reusable shopping bags. Anything else is costing you more than you think to store it there!

CAR CHECKLIST

- car supplies / car care
- car boot
- inside of car
- glove box

Sentimental

I used to keep cards from every birthday and Christmas and I don't think I was alone in this. However, can you honestly say that you ever looked at them or why you kept them? When I looked through each card, it made me realise how generic they can be. Dear so and so, happy birthday, love so and so. They didn't mean anything to me. There were some that had a beautiful message, and those were the few that I kept. They are kept purely for me and my memory and they are items that I would happily have sent to the bin after I pass. They are personal. It is worth having an honest look through and keeping your favourites and disposing of the rest.

I love a photo album and putting photos into frames and displaying them in my home. It makes me smile. The best advice here is to regularly go through and get rid of duplicates, blurry shots and ones that don't have interesting subject matter in the shot. Organise the rest in a way that works for you, I like to store chronologically or grouped into occasions.

This could be another chapter in itself. Here I am referring to any item that is being kept because you think you might need it at some point. Ask yourself 'how long have I already kept this item?' and 'am I likely to use it in the next few months?'. If you have already been hoarding this away for a long time, accept that it may not be needed. Also dispose of any item that is really easy to get hold of again. These items are replaceable at any time.

SENTIMENTAL CHECKLIST

- old birthday and Christmas cards _____
- journals _____
- photos _____
- letters _____
- 'just in case' items _____
- memorabilia _____

General

To start clearing away the clutter, get in the habit of clearing surfaces around your home. There will be many shelves, counter tops, cupboards and tables where clutter might build up. Find a surface and reduce the clutter or clear it completely. Aim to either find everything a home, or dispose of what you no longer need.

GENERAL CHECKLIST

- storage boxes _____
- windowsills _____
- attic _____
- coins / change jar _____
- batteries _____
- light bulbs _____
- small appliances _____
- have a donation box _____
- duplicates _____
- full drawer _____
- clear a surface _____

- touch things only once
- 90 / 90 rule
- would you buy it again?
- limit space
- home for everything
- ask - does it make you happy?
- 1 in 1 out policy
- spare cables
- junk drawer
- furniture
- gift cards / coupons

Phone

Often, we can clutter our phones up with an array of different apps for a variety of reasons and for the most part, they are taking up valuable storage space. Consider which apps you are using and whether it is worth keeping the rest. This will reduce down the number of notifications (see next section), but also the visual aesthetics of your phone. If you want to improve this further, create folders for your apps to live within. I have affirmations as headers for mine; I am connected, I am healthy, etc. and the relevant apps go under each affirmation.

As a standard, notifications are automatically turned on when we download a new app. But when you start to have a larger number of apps notifying you of random things, it can become overwhelming. The noise can often cause stress and anxiety if it is overused and creates this added layer of noise that is unnecessary, for the most part. I agree that some notifications are important, like text and calls, but do we really need to have our phone alert us for every little thing on social media? Take control by only getting the notifications when already in the app. This makes it feel more manageable and gives you back control.

PHONE CHECKLIST

- contact list / friends
- apps
- notifications
- duplicate photos
- old phones
- phone cases

Seasonal

I love a Christmas bauble and if I see a nice one at the Christmas market, it will be the only thing purchased. I like to keep the same colour scheme so that each year I reuse the same decorations. Finding your comfort zone with this is key. Keep anything you love and donate the rest.

SEASONAL CHECKLIST

- Christmas decorations
- Halloween decorations
- Easter decorations
- unused gifts
- travel items / bags
- pool inflatables

Pets

Pet toys can easily clutter up the floor and often end up being unused. Pets are the love of our lives and often come with so many accessories and items to help look after them. Ensure you are regularly checking through what you have and use things up as you go.

PETS CHECKLIST

- toys _____
- bowls/feeders _____
- medicine _____
- collars/leads _____
- accessories _____
- bedding _____

Hobbies

I love a board game, don't you? But how many are just sat there unloved and unplayed. Could it be that some have become outgrown by your children and some may have been played to the ends of time and you're ready for something new. Whatever the reason, it's worth going through this section regularly.

Hobbies come with a whole new collection of supporting items. Be sure to trial a hobby in a limited fashion before embarking on a spending spree in your new area of interest.

HOBBIES CHECKLIST

- board games / puzzles
- fitness equipment
- half finished craft projects
- sports accessories
- digital cameras
- craft accessories
- art supplies

Additional Resources

Additional information can be found on my social media pages under the handle @declutter.your.life

For more details on decluttering, minimalism and my no spend year, check out my YouTube channel.
<https://www.youtube.com/c/RachelNoakes>

You can check out my website for blog entries:
www.declutteryourlife.co.uk

I have created a Little Acts of Decluttering Planner, diary and little acts of savings books, available on Amazon.



Goal Planner

GOAL

DATE DUE:

ACTION STEPS

BARRIERS

HOW TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

NOTES: