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BY EDWARD MARSTON PUBLISHED BY ALLISON BUSBY

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BY EDWARD MARSTON PUBLISHED BY ALLISON BUSBY

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Mess making you stressed? Tackle it in minutes with these foolproof tips from decluttering expert **Diana Spellman**



GURU Diana

With lockdown firmly in place and everyone stuck at home, don't be surprised if you find clutter building up. But sorting it out is easier than you think. These days, it can seem like decluttering is an art in itself – but don't worry, there's no need to rearrange books into a rainbow or agonise over whether or not something "sparks joy" before sending it to the charity shop. In fact, bringing serenity to your home is simple and sustainable if you approach it in the right way, says decluttering expert Diana Spellman. "The ultimate goal is to get back to tidy every day, so you can sit down at the end of the day and feel relaxed because you are not staring at a mess," says Diana. "So if you're busy but stressed by the mess in your house, this is the perfect solution for you." Here's how you can go from chaos to calm in just a few minutes.

You have... Five minutes Set up your first "end home"

To get tidy for the long term, you need to be aware of what mess you are making. Choose one thing that's always lying around in your kitchen. This could be keys, your glasses or your child's school reading record. Designate an "end home" for that item – a place it belongs. This could be the corner of a drawer, on a shelf or in a cupboard. Now the crucial bit – the next time you use the item, put it into its end home rather than on the surface, and repeat every time.

You have... 10 minutes Be mindful of everyday mess

When you come into the house each day, think about what you do. What mess are you creating that you could completely eliminate? Do you put your bag on the worktop? Do you put your coat on a chair or kick off your shoes in the middle of the hallway?

Do this every day for the next five days and you'll really notice what mess you could

be eliminating from your life. Try to cut out the mess middleman and fast track these items directly to their end home and you'll soon remove the need to tidy at all.

You have... 30 minutes Create an end home zone

As you start to create more end homes for your mess-makers, you'll need end home zones. This is a whole drawer or shelf dedicated to a set of end homes in one place. This is where "serene space dividers" come in. Check out my recommendations for what to use to maximise the space you have.

“Designate an 'end home' for items lying around – a place where they belong”

CLUTTER HOTSPOT Kitchen



CLUTTER HOTSPOT Bedroom



CLUTTER HOTSPOT Bathroom



The no-fuss guide to clearing your clutter



You have... 60 minutes Take a cupboard from chaos to calm

The trouble with cupboard shelves is that we lose things at the back or can't reach them. Using space dividers, you can sort a cupboard to make it really usable.

Group things by task. For example, for the craft cupboard you could group by colouring, painting, general items and paper.

It means you can get the whole painting kit out, use the contents and put it back without having to pick up 10 things off the surface to tidy.

In a food drawer or cupboard, think about separating items into spices, oils, sauces, rice, etc.

MESS HOT SPOTS Chaos-free kitchen cupboards

Think about how you use things, so rather than piles of random tins and bottles, think Italian, Indian, etc.

For my spice cupboard, it's sorted into herbs, spices and big sizes. I used nifty holders from Aldi which means I don't have to take out individual spices to find the ones that are three-deep behind.

Pull out the holder and you can see everything. It means you know what you have and won't end up buying the same thing again.

Blissful bathrooms

My sink used to be constantly covered in make-up products. Now this never

happens. This is because I have set up a "use-in-one-move" basket which takes my make-up products from the drawer and back again – so my make-up never hits the sink. This saves so much time when I do the cleaning too as I don't have to pick up individual products.



NEAT Diana's spice cupboard

Hair-styling heaven

I used to lose hair brushes constantly. They would disappear into piles and handbags. Also I hated the cable of the hairdryer always hanging around, so I found a way to get this all inside my cupboard and created my hair styling end home which has everything I need, but then gets put neatly away in one swift move.

I've never lost a hairbrush again, and tangled wires on display are a thing of the past.

Toy tidy-up

Everyone has a different take on where they keep the piles of toys. In our house we have craft, games, Lego (in a handy drawstring bag) and grab and go bags in the living room for when we go out.

Grab and go bags are permanently packed rucksacks that have books, little games and toys etc to keep the children occupied in the car or if we go to the pub for lunch – when we're not in lockdown of course!

Any other toys can come downstairs beyond this but must go back to the bedrooms at the end of the day.

We have a basket at the foot of the stairs for this so they can be whisked back to their bedroom end homes as the children go to bed.

● For more info and online courses visit serenelysorted.com or follow Diana on Instagram @serenely.sorted

SERENE SPACE DIVIDERS

How to make your cupboards work to the max:



■ **Clear basket, £1 (poundland.co.uk):** My absolute favourite. I use these everywhere in my home – in kitchen drawers, cupboards, for craft, papers, Lego, food.

■ **Large basket, £4.50 (diy.com):**

These are great for shoe storage, gloves, small bags and toys.



■ **Small basket, £2 (dunelm.com):** Ideal for keys, batteries, receipts, hair stuff and sponges.

■ **Mini drawers, £7 (asda.com):** I love these for increasing usable space in cupboard shelves. Also you can take them apart if they are too tall – two sets of four drawers can create three sets of shorter ones.



GET THE FAMILY INVOLVED

Whether it's you or them with that inner messy person, if you show the benefits it helps persuade others to join in. My advice is to get started with one surface or cupboard and hopefully when they see the difference it makes, they'll come on board.

When I sorted out the spice cupboard my husband was delighted. He does most of the cooking and has found it so much easier to find things.

With the children, I won't pretend it's easy. We use the terminology all the time so they have got more into it.

When they come home from school we ask them to put coats or shoes in their end home. Constant reinforcement helps them remember.

And to earn their pocket money, on Saturday mornings they must do the same in their rooms.

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