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# Clear Your CLUTTER

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March Day 2016**

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Make money for the summer

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# CLEAR YOUR CLUTTER GET LIVING!

Jasmine Birtles



# CLEAR YOUR CLUTTER

*By Jasmine Birtles*

Hi there!

Your peaceful, organised, richer life starts here!

I set up the National Clear Your Clutter Day in 2016 in order to help the UK free itself of the imprisoning, burdensome and money-sucking **clutter** that holds so many of us back nowadays.

We know we live in a consumerist age, but do we realise what these spending habits are doing to our happiness our freedom and our wealth? Only slightly.

I want everyone to have more freedom, more happiness, more spare cash and more life, and you can have these - at least in some measure - by de-cluttering your life of burdensome belongings, frightening financial clutter and morbid mental mess that not only pulls us down day-to-day but also often stops us seeing and experiencing the genuinely good stuff in real life.

So, take the tips in this eBook, join the **Clear Your Clutter Day** campaign and choose life!"

Love Jasmine



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## Chapter 1

# EASY AND QUICK WAYS TO CLEAR YOUR CLUTTER

There are different ways to attack your mess and one or more of them will be right for you.

One thing you can do to keep yourself motivated as you sort and tidy is to make a list. A list of priorities means you can spend less time thinking about de-cluttering and more time actually doing it. Don't forget to break it down into smaller 'doable' tasks, instead of huge ones, i.e. you could write 'sort top drawer in the kitchen' rather than 'de-clutter kitchen'.

### One thing a day

If the idea of spending a whole day or even just a whole hour de-cluttering your [home](#) feels like a terrible burden, try doing one thing each day to tidy and sort.

It could be that...

- You give one thing away every day...maybe you give it to a friend or a neighbour or you drop it off at the [charity](#) shop on your way to work, but every day you have to chuck one thing (at least). Do it for a whole year and that's 365 items you don't want, out of your house. Colleen Madsen at [365 Less Things](#) has some great before and after pictures to show how this can work.
- You give yourself one shelf or one cupboard or one drawer to sort/tidy/clear each day (or each week if you can't do more). Make sure you get rid of at least something in that cupboard/drawer/shelf each time.

One good aspect of clearing one thing a day (and I've done this) is that it means you could put one item every now and then [online](#) to sell.

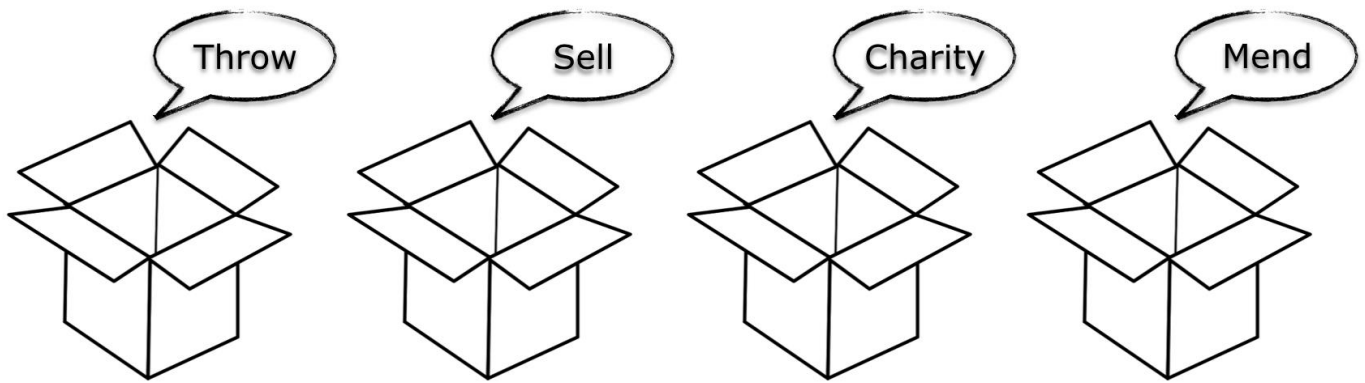
Doing it that way is a lot less of a 'job' than putting a lot of things on at once. If you have one thing to upload then it's something you can do while you're waiting for the dinner to cook or you're watching the news. When it sells it's just one thing to wrap or put in an envelope and sell rather than having to spend an evening wrapping, labelling and sending off.



### Marie Kondo method

Marie Kondo, author of the best-selling '[The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing](#),' writes that you should only keep items that 'spark joy', whether they be clothes or cutlery, books or bath salts. It's a good concept, as once you've finished you will only be surrounded by items that give you joy.

She also recommends going through your possessions in types. So rather than taking a drawer or cupboard at a time she suggests doing all your books, perhaps, followed by your clothes, then your [CDs](#) and so on.



## The Four Box Method

This is a very handy way to motor through your sorting and clearing.

As you clear your clutter, have with you four boxes – or bags if that’s what you have – and put anything you don’t keep into one of them, depending on what you want to do with them. The boxes should be:

### Box 1: Things to throw in the bin

Nice easy one this. If something is beyond repair, broken, mouldy or so full of holes there’s no point, throw it away. You could, of course, have a double box/bag here with one for stuff that could be recycled (paper-based, metal, glass or fabric items) and the other one for the bin proper.

### Box 2: Things to sell

This box will need to be divided later into ‘Things to sell at auction’, ‘Things to sell [online](#)’, ‘Things to sell at a [car boot](#) sale’ and more. In fact, you might end up with so many things to sell that you could have a garage sale and get rid of a load in one go. See page 8 for more info on how to do all of these.

You could also put here things to swap with friends. Cosmetics, clothes, bags etc could be added to this list.

### Box 3: Things for charity

This is another nice easy one. The lovely thing about giving items to charity is that, like throwing things away, it’s quick and can be done now, giving you free space immediately. It also gives you the feel good factor of knowing that you have effectively given to [charity](#) and done some good to society without spending any money. Of course, you can’t give everything to charity. On the whole they won’t take certain items such as furs, electrical goods or cosmetics (see more on page 16) but those can either be offered for free on [Freecycle.org](#) or put aside to swap with friends.

### Box 4: Things to mend

So next time you’re watching TV, take one of these items out (socks that need darning, jeans that need mending) and gradually give them new life. Also, though, in this box you could have items that could be recycled and made into something more exciting. They could be recycled into presents for friends and family. See page 13 for more ideas on how to recycle and upcycle things for profit.

*"The minor goddess of Things That Stick in Drawers, Anoaia is praised by rattling a drawer and crying "How can it close on the damned thing but not open with it? Who bought this? Do we ever use it?" (Terry Pratchett)*

## Chapter 2

# GETTING STARTED – A FEW MANTRAS

*Keep these principles in mind as you sort, tidy and throw...they pull you back from those "oh but I might use it, read it, wear it" thoughts!*

### Only keep what you love, and what you need

If you're serious about making a positive change in your home, you have to be ruthless. Tell yourself that there's only a place in your [home](#) for things that are:

- Useful
- Beautiful or...
- Seriously sentimental (and I mean, stuff that would make you really unhappy if you didn't have them around)

Don't just rearrange...declutter.

It's no good tidying up a drawer or cupboard and keeping all the same stuff. Each item has to earn its place there. If it's been there for years and you know it's neither useful nor something that gives you joy, then it's time for it to move on.

Pull out everything in your cupboard or drawer and lay it out so you can see it clearly – this will help you make a decision as to what you want to lose and what you need to hang onto.



When you're holding your item ask yourself:  
"Do I really need it? Do I use it? Do I like it?  
How many of these do I need?"  
Be ruthless!

De-cluttering is meant to make you feel good. Make room for the future and don't get too caught up on the past.

### Could this be mended, recycled or reused?

Having said everything has to go, there are some items that could give you joy if they were just altered a bit.

Now, don't use this as an excuse to put something back in the drawer, meaning to mend it later, but some things have life left for you if they get a bit of TLC.

Put socks and tights that need darning, trousers that need a button on and anything else that is easy to mend in a box or bag next to the sofa so that you can do them next time you watch the TV.

### Do I really need it?

### Do I use it?

### Do I like it?

Other things that need professional mending can go in a box by the door, or in the car, so that you take them next time you go to the high street.

If you're creative then all kinds of things from old jars to old furniture can be upcycled and either used by you or given to friends as gifts.



**(Good for paperwork) Could you find this information online or somewhere else?**

A lot of offices are pretty much paperless now and homes could be too if you wanted.

A lot of information that we keep in paper could easily be sourced online if you need it and that goes for directories and other factual books.

Not only that but although you need to keep receipts for purchases for seven years, ideally, you can now scan them and store them online to free up shelf space. It takes a bit of time initially but once it's done you can just top it up as you go along, scanning receipts and bills with your mobile phone or an actual scanner and then disposing of them.

**Even though this item has sentimental value, is it time for someone else to use it?**

This is a tough one but sometimes having too many things that remind you of people, places and events can hold you to the past and clog up the present.

No one can tell you what you should keep and what you shouldn't. It's your life and your decision but just ask yourself if this piece of whatever really enhances your life or does it make you nostalgic for the past, regretful and sad?

Again, as Marie Kondo says, if it gives you joy then keep it but make sure it's not so tinged with sadness that it's not proper joy.

## Chapter 3

# HOW TO SELL YOUR STUFF

If you've had a really good old clear-out you will probably have items that need to be sold in different ways for the best cash. You can sell a lot [online](#) now through a variety of sites, not just eBay. You can also sell for quick cash at local second hand shops (not so many of them around now) and at [car boot](#) sales. For potentially valuable items it's worth going to a local auction house or even one of the big ones in London like Christie's, Sotheby's and Bonham's.

### Sell online

If you want to sell your clutter, the best place to start is online. Here are a few of the best sites to make the most money.

**Ziffit** – If you're looking to get rid of games, CDs, DVDs and books, a site worth checking out is [Ziffit](#). This a free service and easy to use via its website, or free app which scans barcodes on any book, CD, DVD, Blu-ray or game. Ziffit then arrange and pay for the collection of any items and pay customers within a few days of the items being received. We have a whole article on how to [make money](#) selling your used items on Ziffit.

**[ziffit.com](#)**

**Facebook** - Local community Facebook selling pages are becoming a very popular choice to sell or simply giveaway unwanted clutter. The best bit is there are no fees, so you get to keep the profit. There are hundreds of Facebook buying and selling groups in the UK and all over the world.

To get started, search for your area or postcode in the main search box, alongside words such as 'selling', 'sale' or 'buy'. It's also considered a safe and trustworthy selling option as most people only have friends and family on Facebook.

However, just be aware that, as with all [online](#) offerings (and offline for that matter) fraudsters are all about so make sure you check out the seller's or buyer's profile and be very suspicious if it looks too good to be true or they ask you to send money by Western Union or similar. You can find out about Facebook selling pages near you on our [Clear Your Clutter Day](#) page.

**facebook**

Also, **ASOS marketplace** – If you're looking to sell clothes then ASOS marketplace is the place to go. ASOS Marketplace is not an online auction site – you set the price for your item of clothing and it will be listed for three months. Basic sellers don't have to pay any listing fees (unlike eBay). You do however pay a flat 10% commission fee on any sales you make. For more information check out our guide on how to make money selling clothes on [ASOS Marketplace](#).

**asos**

**eBay** - We kind of have to mention eBay but increasingly the amount they charge - and the Paypal fees - make selling through them less and less profitable. It's **free** to register – but you will have to pay fees for your listings when you start selling. Check out our article [20 Handy tips for making more money on eBay](#)

**ebay**

Don't forget to come and say hi over on [MoneyMagpie Facebook page](#) and like us for daily money saving and money making tips.



## Sell old gadgets online

Even broken items can sell for parts or to enthusiasts. Sometimes if you sell a bundle of broken electronics you can make good money that way.

**Mobiles** – you can [make money by recycling your mobile phone](#) as you can see in our article. Even battered, ancient ones can be recycled for parts. You can make up to £200 for good ones, particularly iPhones. **Use our mobile phone recycling tool to get the best deal.**



**Printer cartridges** – A few companies will pay you for your printer cartridges. Cash for Cartridges for example will pay you £4.50 per item. **Find out more [ways to make money by recycling these and other junk items.](#)**

Happily, it's not just old phones and ink cartridges you can recycle – as we place more and more importance on recycling, plenty of companies have started offering to recycle just about any old gadget and electrical item you can think of. Take a look at this article for the best places to [sell your unwanted gadgets](#)



## Selling at a car boot sale



A great way to earn some quick cash, especially during the summer months, is to go along to your local [car boot](#) sale and sell everything you don't want. It's also a fun way to get the whole family involved in clearing your home.

Schedule in two times a year to go, once in the beginning of spring/summer around May or June to get rid of all your unwanted autumn/winter items. Then go again before the summer is over to de-clutter before the school holidays finish.

Car boot sales are quick cash but they're not necessarily the best place to get top prices for things so don't take valuable items that you could sell well [online](#).

Perfumes (even half used), furniture, plants, toys and children's clothes always do well, as do [books, vinyl, CDs](#) and the like. Also remember to keep the pricing simple, people love haggling and they love a bargain. It might be worthwhile marking items up slightly so that if people want to haggle you'll feel more inclined to lower the price.

To find a car boot sale local to you use a search site like [onlinecarbooty.com](#), Car Boot Junction or Your Booty or you can simply check the local papers or notice boards. For an in depth guide check our seven step guide on [how to make the most of car boot sales](#)





## Selling at auction

An auction is a good place to sell rare or otherwise valuable items. Think about any [antiques](#), jewellery or [vintage](#) items that you've had around for a while.

Here are a few tips on how to get started:

- 1. Get your item valued** - Most auction houses have on-site specialists who can advise on a myriad of collectibles and will usually provide free verbal valuations.
- 2. Pick an auction house** - There are auction houses in every major town or city – often several of them. Pick one or two that are close to you and see what they offer. If you think you have something very valuable, email a picture and description of it to Sotheby's, Christies or Bonhams in London. They will come back to you quickly with a valuation.
- 3. Package bits up** - sometimes, a few items aren't worth selling on their own at an auction house but they might be if they're sold in one lot. Ask the auctioneers what they think.
- 4. Get advice** - If you need more advice on selling a piece of [vintage](#) jewellery or an antique ornaments, check out our article on [how to get it valued and possibly sold](#)

## Sell your stuff through local ads

This might seem outdated, but you would be surprised how many people still buy and sell items through classified ads in local newspapers.

Although it may seem like you're limiting your potential to sell to a wider market, selling through local ads is usually quick and relatively cheap or even free. It's also a great alternative to [online selling](#) for those who aren't the most technically savvy.

If you have no luck through local ads then you might consider free local classified sites, where buyers collect in person and pay you on the spot.

The most popular local classified site is Gumtree, which covers fifty big UK cities and lets sellers list for free. Preloved is also a popular choice with local bargain hunters and sellers.



## Chapter 4

# LOOK AT IT ROOM BY ROOM

Here are a few tips for getting each room into better order than before:

### The Bedroom

For the bedroom one easy way to keep it sorted is to make use of [storage space](#) under the bed and on top of wardrobes. Keep linen or out of season clothes neatly tucked away in closed baskets or boxes.

Use shelves to display books and photographs. This will give them their clear place and keep them from cluttering up other surfaces.

Clean Queen Anthea Turner suggests that you store your bedding in the pillowcase when you put it away in the cupboard. Brilliant and as with all good ideas so simple and logical because it means you don't have to go hunting around for matching duvets and pillowcases as it's all there in the one case.

Marie Kondo says that with the things you have left, you should store them in a way that they can be seen. If they're in drawers they shouldn't be in piles.



So T-shirts and socks are rolled and arranged to look clear and beautiful, like sushi in a bento box. Cupboards are reorganised to fit everything from electric fans at the bottom to spare blankets and pillows at the top. Papers and documents – there won't be many of these as they generally hold so little joy – are filed rather than stacked.

### The Kitchen

This is a place where you should be ruthless. Take out all the gadgets you have and ask yourself sternly if you really use them. Has the breadmaker sat in the cupboard for three years untouched? Is the sandwich toaster crusted with age? If so then get rid of them. Clean them up and stick them online or put them in the 'car boot' box for when you and the family do a [car boot](#) sale to sell [junk](#).

Also, go through all the food in your cupboards and freezer. Give yourself the task of only buying perishables to go with the food you already have for the next month so that you use up what you have before buying more.





## The Bathroom

If you're running a busy [home](#) you'll need to get things done fast so multiple washing baskets can be useful. Maybe have one for whites, one for dark items and one for coloured then washing is faster.

If you have lots of half-used bottles of shampoo, conditioner, moisturiser and make-up keep them in separate bags or boxes in a bathroom cupboard. Put all the hair products in one bag, all the teeth-related products in another, face in another and so on. That way, when you finish one bottle of shampoo you can check the 'hair' bag to see if there's another one to use before you buy a new one. Same for make-up. Don't buy another lipstick until you have checked the half-used ones in the bag. It's amazing what we forget we have!

## The Living Room

Getting rid of [CDs](#), [DVDs](#), [books](#) and magazines can empty out shelving systems and give you a whole new area in your living room that could be used for something else. Aim to create a whole space that could be a dining area or [home office](#), just by de-cluttering and re-ordering the room. An attractive magazine rack can help keep papers, magazines and catalogues tidy and

out of the way.

Also, if you're tired of your coffee table, think of getting one that has [storage](#) inside it - maybe even a chest that doubles-up as a coffee table. That way you have storage inside and out.



## Chapter 5

# HOW TO RECYCLE AND UPCYCLE YOUR JUNK

Last year, we spent an average of £89.38 replacing mendable items, footing a collective bill of over £4.6bn, according to glue makers Sugru. YouTube is full of videos showing people how to mend everything from socks to sockets, so put a box next to the sofa full of items needing mending and do them one by one as you watch TV of an evening.

Also, much of the stuff languishing in your cupboards and drawers right now could be painted, altered, decorated and otherwise 'upcycled' to become attractive items around your home or things to give to others, saving you a packet in presents and ornaments.

### Clothes

If, like me, you have a few items in your cupboard that you can't wear because it has holes/needs altering/isn't a good colour, put these into a bag or box next to the sofa and get on with darning and mending while watching TV.

You can also give them extra life by:

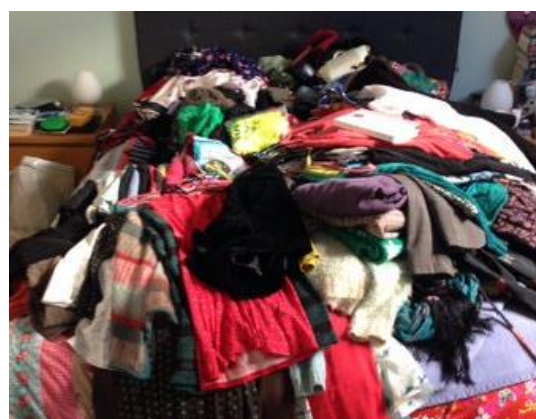
- Changing the buttons or adding ribbons or other clever bits
- Dyeing them in the washing machine (Dylon does a good washing machine dye and it's very easy to do)
- Turning them into something else: denim shorts into a handbag; old socks into children's toys; old jeans into shorts...and so on. Let your creativity take over!

### Household goods

Again, if you're a creative sort there are all sorts of things you can do with odd bits:

- Keep nice boxes, wicker baskets and even plant pots in your presents cupboard. Put food or smellies or kids toys into them and cover in cellophane for birthday or [Christmas presents](#).
- Anthea Turner says: 'Baked bean tins are brilliant for storage in sheds, garages or work rooms, just take the wrapper off and spray paint them any colour you want, it's a novel way to store stationery and any bits and bobs you have floating around. Jam jars are also fabulous and can store a million and one things such as drawing pins, buttons and clothes pegs.'
- Paint flower pots bright colours, plant them and put them around the patio or garden to make a bright display.

We have lots of other ideas for you at [www.clearyourclutterday.co.uk](http://www.clearyourclutterday.co.uk). Also, of course, remember that simply giving stuff away to people who can use them is proper recycling. This is where Freecycle.org is a great boon. People trawl that site every day for things they need so you can know it's going to a good home.



## Chapter 6

# HOW TO GIVE YOUR STUFF AWAY

Huh? Do I need information on how to give things away,“ you ask??

Well apparently so because 100 million tonnes of rubbish and junk are put in bins and on the local dump every year...and some of this is stuff that could be used by someone else.

### What a waste!

So here are some quick and easy ways you can just give stuff away...

### Give it to the charity shop

Obvious, but you'd be amazed how many people don't do it.

There are some things that [charity shops](#) won't take on the whole – although you should ask your local ones as they often have different rules in different places. Generally they won't take:

- Electrical goods (hairdryers, heaters, tongs etc)
- Animal fur items
- Medicines, food, cosmetics
- Large items of furniture and appliances

This doesn't mean that those items have to be thrown away, though. If you can spend a bit of time on it, pretty much everything you have that you're willing to give away could be gratefully accepted by specific charities.

Here are some of them:

**Bicycles:** surprisingly, many charity shops do accept bicycles, otherwise contact [Re-cycle](#) which sends second-hand bikes to Africa.

**Computers:** you can give these to [Computeraid International](#) , [Donate a PC](#) or IT specialists in the [Furniture Reuse Network](#).

**Food (non-perishable):** give to [Global Hand](#) , which can also take goods as varied as relief supplies, vehicles, textbooks, construction equipment and boats.

**Medical equipment:** give these items to [Mercy Ships](#).

**Sewing machines:** give to [Tools for Self Reliance](#).

**Spectacles:** many opticians run charity programmes with second-hand glasses, including [Dolland & Aitchison](#) , [Eyesite](#) , and [Vision Express](#)

**Tools:** Tools for bicycle repairs, blacksmiths, carpenters, engineers, mechanics, and shoe repairs are all welcomed by [Tools for Self Reliance](#) .

**Furniture:** Go to the brilliant [Furniture Re-use Network](#) and find local charities in your area that will take your items and give them to people in need.

**Towels:** I've been told by some [charity shops](#) that they don't want old towels but apparently [The Salvation Army](#) regularly need towels to help with the homeless.



Don't forget to give the shop your name and postcode so that they can claim back Gift Aid on the amount they make on your items. It all helps and makes your gift even more valuable to them.

Also, stop and think, as you come back from the charity shop, of roughly how much you have given in financial terms. It's hard to put a figure on it but do acknowledge to yourself that you've given so that it doesn't just feel like you've thrown stuff away.

With most potential donations, the key thing to consider is "would someone else want this?". Broken items, or those missing vital pieces – like jigsaws – will not be sold. However, all clothing – be it unfashionable, holey or torn – can be used to raise funds for the charity.

Almost all charity shops which sell clothing have an arrangement with a textile recycler, who buys any unsold items from them, including bed linen and curtains. Such goods will then be recycled, or exported and sold overseas. You can label a bag of donations 'for rag' if you so wish.

### **Give stuff to family and friends.**

Before you give it away to all and sundry, maybe send a Round-Robin email to friends and family with a list of items to give away, a few pics perhaps and tell them it's first come, first served. Keep it in the family.

You could even do a [swap shop](#) with friends and neighbours. Invite them round for the afternoon/evening, get them to bring stuff they don't want and then swap around. You might not completely [de-clutter](#) this way (swapping isn't the same as throwing of course!) but at least you could end up with things you actually want as opposed to stuff you don't need....I hope...

## Give it away on the internet

There are a few places you can give stuff away online. There again, you can get people to come and pick your stuff up, whatever it is. One man's junk is another man's treasure so put as much as you like up for others to take.

My favourite places to give things away are:

- [Freecycle.org](https://www.freecycle.org)
- [Gumtree](https://www.gumtree.com) (on the Free Stuff board)

Join up, put a picture and a description of the thing you're giving away and wait for the emails.

Both sites have all sorts given away there including a lot of furniture, books, [storage](#), clothes, kids toys and more.

N.B. one thing you must be aware of here is that nasty fraudsters trawl these sites – as they do the selling sites – and you could find you get a dodgy person asking for your items, giving you a sob story and saying they can't get to your place, could you help them with their train fare etc etc. Ignore those ones. Also, if you want to pick up a freebie on the site, beware of dodgy ones that ask you to pay for postage or something like that - best to go and pick the things up yourself. If they won't allow that then be suspicious.



## Stick stuff out on your front lawn or pathway

Depending on where you live, this could be a quick and easy way of 'recycling' your goods and giving to the community.

However, do put a note on the items saying something like 'please take' or 'free to take' so that people know it genuinely is being given away. According to Mark Hall of BusinessWaste.co.uk, unless someone gets permission of the householders, it's technically theft if you grab something that someone has thrown out into the bin...or even outside of it. Weird but true.

## Do a free garage 'sale'.

If you have a lot of stuff you'd like to chuck out, maybe do a free garage 'sale'. Put leaflets through doors locally and maybe stick a note on Facebook and Twitter to tell people you're opening your driveway/garage for a day and everything there is free to take (or at least very cheap). You could add in some things for sale as well and make a bit of cash at the same time.





## Chapter 7

# CLEAR YOUR FINANCIAL CLUTTER

While we're into [clearing junk](#) from our lives and making and saving money, let's attack the horrible clutter in our finances.

When was the last time you looked at your bank account? It's possible that it is cluttered with standing orders and direct debits for things you don't use any more like a gym membership. Check that and weed out the money-wasting junk.

Then spend an hour getting cheaper versions of your gas, electricity, car insurance and other boring essentials. You should be able to save at least £1,000 over the year by switching your main bills. Get the cheaper options on these [comparison pages](#).

### Check your pensions, investments etc

Yes they're boring and dull but not having enough money to do the things you have always dreamed of doing is even more boring and dull so at least spend a half hour or so flicking through the tiresome statements your pension and investment companies send you just to see how much you have and, possibly, how much more you should put in to give yourself a decent pot later on.

Now would also be a good time to set up standing orders into savings and investments products from your account. Set up standing orders to go out of your account at the beginning of the month when you pay your other bills...not at the end of the month when you've spent it all.

That's the way to make sure you look after your future self. Pay yourself first and the rest will look after itself.

### Go see a financial advisor to get things really sorted

Now you're on top of the [clutter in your home](#), get help to put yourself on top of your money and your future wealth. You don't have to have a financial advisor but if you have a few investments and family members that need to be cared for in some way, it can help to have an expert take a look at your situation and give you advice. Expect to pay for one if you want really good, independent advice (at least £150 per hour).

### Make or update your will

Far too few people have a will and it causes a lot of misery for those who are left behind. Whatever age you are, if you have possessions, make a will and update it when things change (like you get married or have children). See this article [How to get a will written – the easy guide](#).

You could also make a note in your diary for October to book yourself a solicitor in November which is [Will Aid Month](#) In that month, solicitors who are connected to the [charity](#) donate their fees for making a will to the charity.



## Chapter 8

# CLEAR YOUR MENTAL CLUTTER

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It's one thing to clear your physical clutter but clearing your mental clutter is probably even more important. You wouldn't believe how much mental clutter most of us have day-to-day, dragging us down.

Do you find yourself regularly bothering about small, unimportant things? Do you check your Facebook and Twitter statuses constantly? Are you concerned with what's happening to celebs, people in soaps, and your neighbours?

If lots of little, annoying, upsetting and largely trivial things are cluttering up your thoughts and emotions through the day, you're going to be held back in life and the physical clutter will manifest itself around you again, as our surroundings tend to mirror our thoughts.

*So, what can you do about mental clutter? Here are a few habits to cultivate:*

### Get quiet and take control of your thoughts

Professional de-clutterer Peggy Caruso says recognising and being thankful for the good things in your life can keep you from adding new clutter.

She recommends that people take a moment

each day to acknowledge and appreciate what they have. She says it will also help you forgive grievances - another thing that can clutter up our thinking!

### Cut down on Social Media

In fact, if you can do it, don't just cut down...give up on social media completely.

If that's a bit hard core, just look at it once a day. Also, do a purge of the people you follow at least once every six months. Even if these people are friends, if they keep filling up your timeline with boastful pictures of their holidays or constantly implore you to sign their latest petition or sponsor their latest self-serving 'charity' walk, drop them online. You will feel better.

If you're on LinkedIn for business purposes, stop all or most of their emails and use the privacy settings to the max.

### Check emails just once a day

This is something I'm hopeless at, but all the time management people say it's the best way to keep emails under control. If you can do it then do. It is a good way to keep it in its place.

Also don't read emails or social media at the weekend. It will suck you in!



## Have a one day mobile amnesty

Go without a mobile phone for a day every now and then. In fact, when you go on holiday try to switch your phone off for the whole time...or at least most of it. We are 'on' far too much of the time and we need to be 'off' quite a bit more in order to collect our thoughts and live our own lives at our own pace.

As well as doing this - or instead of it - put your phone on 'mute' for a few hours in the day. That way you will get messages and texts and you can see who has called you but you won't hear the rings or dings. For a few hours a day it's a calming way to be. You feel connected because people can get you (eventually) but you're more in control because you don't have that pesky ringer demanding your attention just when you're trying to concentrate on something important, like a very large piece of chocolate cake!

## Get rid of your TV or just cut out certain programmes

Oh, and that includes YouTube...so don't cheat!



This isn't just good for your mental health, it's good for your wealth too. According to Thomas Corley, author of 'Rich Habits: The Daily Success Habits of Wealthy Individuals', 67% of rich people only watch TV for one hour or less per day. Also, just 6% of the wealthy watch reality shows, while 78% of the poor do.

What are they doing instead? Mostly reading a good book (often a non-fiction one that is teaching them useful stuff) or they're out doing sports, meeting people or generally living.

If you want to keep the TV, try and find a way of hiding it - maybe creating a cupboard in the wall for it or making a cover for it so that you don't immediately see it when you come in the room. Just hiding it from sight can help you ignore it at least some of the time and reclaim some of your life for yourself.

## Cut down on magazines and newspapers

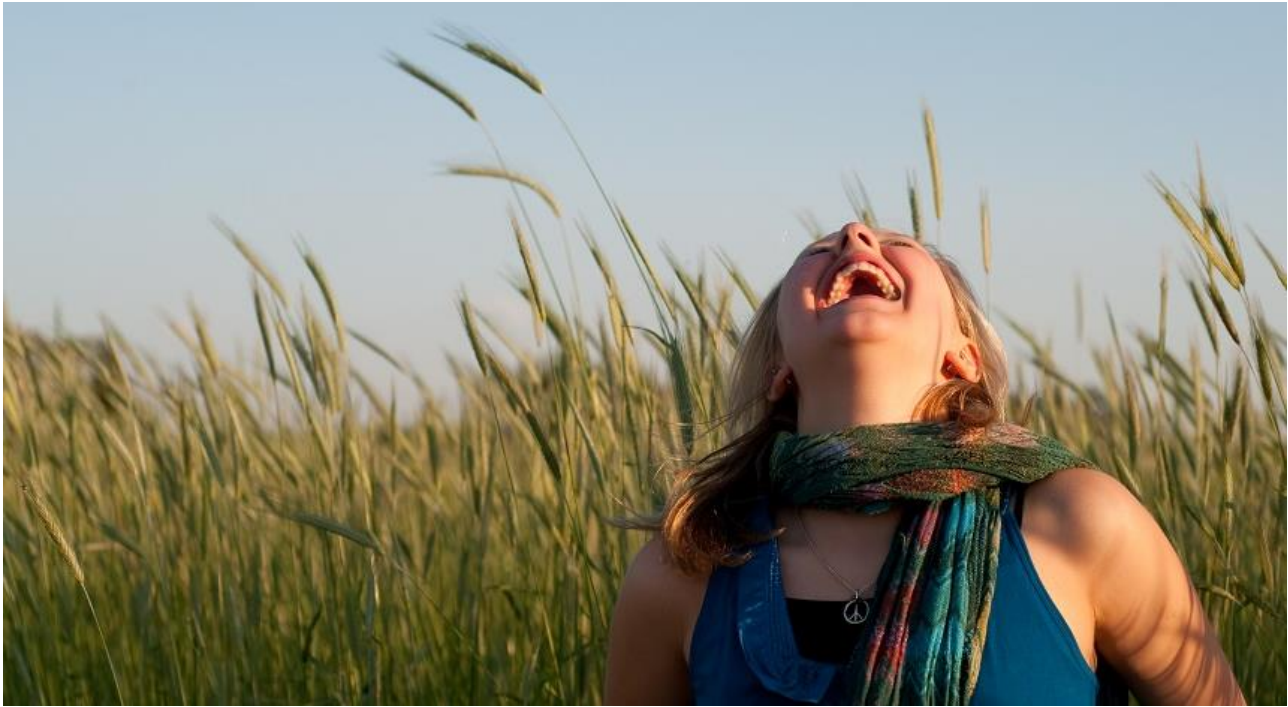
Talk about clutter! Magazines, newspapers, catalogues and all those free publications that get pushed through the door can pile up and make a room look messy in minutes.

If you're anything like me you don't have time to read even half of the stuff that piles up. So do what I'm doing - cancel them. Most of it you can read online anyway, so stick to doing that every now and then.

If you love glossy magazines then by all means have them. But as soon as you get this month's one, give the last one away, either to a friend or neighbour or to your local charity shop. Stick it in your ongoing [charity](#) bag to take with you on your next trip there.

With catalogues you can take yourself of a whole load of lists by signing up to the [Mail Preference Service](#). However, you might still get junk mail from companies you've signed up to without realising it (sometimes there's a box hidden in the T's and C's that says you're happy to receive mail through the post from them).

In this case it's worth phoning up the companies direct and asking to be taken off the list. It's a pain but if you do one per day it isn't so bad.



## Live...really live

Once you've got rid of some of the time and mental energy wasters above, use the extra freedom to spend more quality time with friends and family, to spend more time outside. Maybe get that pet that you've been thinking about for ages.

## Basically...live.

This is what de-cluttering is all about...freeing yourself to think clearly, feel clearly and live more, so go do it!

Some of the things you could do with your extra freedom are to:

- Take advantage of the many free events and venues in your area. Check your local council website to see what events they might be holding for free for the community and do those.
- Go to your local library for talks and events, go to free museums and galleries.

- Check out free events in your area on the free events websites such as [Free-events.co.uk](http://Free-events.co.uk) or [Freelondonevents.co.uk](http://Freelondonevents.co.uk) and [Daysoutguide.co.uk](http://Daysoutguide.co.uk).
- Have people round, make them food and play board games in your [newly-de-cluttered](#) home.

Basically, live because the less you have to store, clean, mend, think about, the more time you have to do actually enjoyable things with people you love...or at least like!

## Chapter 9

# FEELING GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF? NEW HABITS TO START NOW

Yes it's a great feeling to have sorted even one room...even one drawer...so wouldn't it be great to have more of that freedom going forward?

Once you've started de-cluttering your [home](#) and your life, you can use what you've learnt to keep yourself clutter-free going forward. Here are some habits to develop:

### Think before you buy

Easy to say but often tricky if you're in a shop and they have a fabulous sale on, or you're feeling down and want that quick uplift from buying something silly or you're just thinking of other things and don't even realise you're buying something you didn't mean to get (that happens a lot in the supermarket I find).

Don't feel like a fool. We're all doing it and much of the time it's actually not our fault.

We are being attacked, mesmerised and used by companies that want our money and are getting cleverer at making us buy things we don't even want let alone need.

It's war...a stealth war, that most of us aren't even aware we are in.

The way to win this war on a day-by-day basis is to think more and stay more awake, particularly when you go shopping.

### Have a constant charity bag

This is an easy one and you probably do this already. Have a bag or box in a cupboard somewhere in your home - maybe near the front door for ease - where you constantly put things you don't want anymore, and when it is pretty much full take it to the

nearest [charity shop](#) (during opening hours) to give to them.

It clears your clutter regularly and does good for the community. What's not to like?!

### Ask yourself:

- Do I need this?
- If not, do I want it?
- If I want it, why do I want it? Is it because I know it will enhance my life or someone else's life or is it really because I've been fooled by advertising into thinking it will make my life better?
- If it really is something that could enhance my life, could I get it for less or for free somewhere else?
- Also, even if it is something that will enhance my life, do I have the money to buy it now or should I wait, save up and get it later?



These might seem like killjoy questions but if we thought like this more often not only would we buy less rubbish and be less imprisoned by [clutter](#) but we would also have more money to spend on big things like holidays, a new [home](#) and an early retirement...seriously...it can do that!



## Have regular sorting sessions

I say regular...this could be once a year. It's up to you, but if you sort things fairly regularly - as regularly as you can bear/manage - it will help you find things you thought you'd lost, stop you buying things you'd forgotten you had and keep you up to date with bills and other tiresome paperwork.

It's the sort of thing you can do in front of the TV on a boring Sunday afternoon or get the family to do together on a Saturday with a view to getting together as many items as possible to sell at a [car boot](#) sale later (and maybe put the money towards a family holiday or a great Christmas - give it a goal to spur everyone on).

## Do a quick tidy each day

This is one of those habits that some people have naturally and others (like me) have to teach themselves.

It's up to you how you do it, or even whether you do it, but a few ideas to try (maybe just pick one) are to:

- Make your bed as soon as you get up. You could air it first - shake the duvet and put it at the bottom of the bed - until you have had breakfast then make it immediately then. Having a well-made bed can help set you up for the day.
- Wash up as you go along. I'm a shocker for leaving dishes in the sink through the day but I'm learning that it's a useful thing to wash up as soon as a meal is finished. It's easier in the long-run and keeps things tidy. Keep your hands good by always washing up with rubber gloves on - good for men as well as women, particularly in the winter!
- Do a quick tidy each evening. Tidying the living room is easy if you just plump and sort the cushions, put papers and magazines into a tidy pile and put a few things back on shelves and in cupboards before you go to bed. You don't need to do much to make it look like you're on top of everything.
- Share the load. Don't try to do everything yourself. Share the tidying and [cleaning jobs](#) with all family members and even have a wall calendar with who's doing what so that everyone knows what they have to do.

## Chapter 10

# EVEN MORE BENEFITS TO LIVING DE-CLUTTERED LIFESTYLES

### De-stress

Too much clutter can be a sign of stress and it's a cause of stress too. [Clutter](#) keeps you from doing the things you love, confuses the mind and makes you feel out of control.

American life coach Peggy Caruso says "getting organized and reducing the clutter can lead to an overall sense of calmness. But getting organized can be a challenge when faced with massive piles of stuff everywhere." That, of course, is where this ebook comes in handy, plus the [Clear Your Clutter Day campaign](#), but at least having a go at a bit of the clutter each day can help you get through the whole lot eventually.

Keep at it at your own pace and you will win.



### Lose weight

As with debt, one often finds that people who have far too much stuffed into their homes also stuff far too much into their faces! Addressing the whole issue of clutter, food, spending and other excesses as symptoms of trying to fill a void can help to transform your life.

According to research in the USA, excessive clutter and disorganization are often

considered a symptom of other health problems. Dr. Pamela Peeke, assistant clinical professor of medicine at the University of Maryland in the USA says she often instructs patients trying to lose weight to at least create one clean and uncluttered place in their home. She recalls one patient whose garage was "a solid cube of [clutter](#)." The woman cleaned up her [home](#) and at the same time lost nearly four stone. "It wasn't, at the end of the day, about her weight," Dr. Peeke says. "It was about uncluttering at multiple levels of her life."

### Ask yourself

- Am I buying stuff to make me feel better?
- Am I keeping things around me to make me feel comforted, loved, whole?

If so then these false friends need to go and real friends be welcomed in such as spending more time looking after others, taking an interest in current affairs and actively working to improve things in the community, going back to church, getting creative...in other words, getting out of yourself and into life.





## Live more

Yes, spend less, live more...it really does work.

The problem with things is that you generally have to do something with them - clean them, mend them, put them somewhere, move them out of the way so that you can find something else etc.

In other words, they take time and effort. You might not notice it that much, particularly when they're stuffed in the back of a wardrobe, but they're often a mute distraction from living actual life. The less we have to spend time over the more time we have to have experiences - to go out and see things, meet friends at home or elsewhere, to do a class and learn things or just to go out to a coffee shop and read a book surrounded by other human beings.

Selling our unwanted stuff also gives us more money to do things - and that is what I'd like you to think of when you do get the money in from those things you sell. Sure it's useful to use the money to buy things you actually need, or buy presents for others, but if possible, put it towards a holiday or a course or child's university expenses or something else that's to do with actually living rather than just accumulating.

Live light, live more is increasingly my mantra and I recommend it to you now!





# APPENDIX

## MORE IDEAS

### Websites

There's loads of help on the internet for de-cluttering your [home](#) and your life.

Check out Hilda's De-cluttering / Purging Tips-& Ideas/[Pinterest board](#)

And of course the [Clear Your Clutter Day](#) Pinterest board

Actually, while you're at it, follow [MoneyMagpie's](#) Pinterest board.

Also, if you like taking photos, you can take before and after photos of your decluttering efforts, post them on Instagram and tag the photos with #ClearYourClutterBeforeAfter and we'll repost our favourites from the National [Clear Your Clutter Day Instagram](#) account.

### Books

So, the problem with books is that they can [clutter](#) up your room again. But, take the advice of Marie Kondo and, once you've read the books (including hers), get rid of them. Give them to friends who need them or donate them to the [charity shop](#).

First off, I suggest Marie Kondo's book [The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organising](#).. It costs £7.69 and has nice clear writing with big spaces around it which makes it nicer to read. Worth skimming at least.

If you want to clear all sorts of [junk](#), including extra weight, you will get inspiration from Shelley Wilson's book ['How I Changed My Life In A Year: One Woman's Mission To Lose Weight, Get Fit, Beat Her Demons, And Find Happiness'](#)

Then, if you're now really into anti-consumerist living, read ['Stuffocation: Living More With Less'](#) by James Wallman. It will get you riled about the waste in our society and stop you buying more!

www.clearyourclutterday.com  
#ClearYourClutter

Sell & Swap

Upcycle & Recycle

De-clutter

Clear your clutter  
Make money for the summer

charity donations

apdb<sup>uk</sup> ziffit.com MONEYMAGPIE For a richer life

Clear Your Clutter Day 2016

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March

The graphic features various line-art icons of household items like a camera, headphones, a sweater, a teddy bear, a piggy bank, books, and shoes, scattered around the central text.