



NEW YEAR *de-clutter*

Finding your home filled with too much 'stuff'? If organising is on your New Year's resolutions list, meet Helena McBride, The Space Maker from Woodcote



Do you or don't you make a New Year's resolution each year? If so, can you keep it up, or will it be another lost cause by mid-January? This year, I'm going to challenge you to five resolutions, but to break down some barriers, we're going to rename them New Year "to dos". Hopefully this will stop your toes tingling with fear at the very thought of another broken promise to yourself.

The good news is, you can still eat chocolate, drink coffee and even have a glass of wine. In 2022, let's focus on decluttering and organising our homes to help you to be more productive, less stressed and perhaps even breathe more easily.

However, to ensure we don't set ourselves up for failure, we're going to do this in bite sized chunks. How about, I set the tasks and you choose the timeframe?

TO DO NO 1
Define what decluttering and organising your home would mean to you, then devise a plan

What do you want to achieve? What is your goal? It might be that time's important to you and being able to locate your work clothes and keys with ease will make a big difference to your day. Maybe you have children and are feeling the stress of tripping over their toys.

'One of my favourite sayings is one person's clutter can be another one's treasure'

Or perhaps, it would simply give you pleasure to have a tidy home.

Jot down your thoughts. Knowing that your hard work has its rewards will help you stay motivated. Next, have a good look around your home and identify the pain points, the areas that you go to each day looking for something. These places could be a mixture of your wardrobe, your airing cupboard, kitchen drawer, children's bedrooms or even just a cluttered surface. Then you need to prioritise and develop a plan.

TO DO NO 2
Declutter each of the identified areas

You've prioritised your pain points, now you need to start methodically going through each area, removing the following items:

- Seasonal pieces - this can be clothes, shoes even garden tableware.
- Items no longer used.
- Clothes that either, don't fit, or were a

- "mistake" (we've all bought them!).
- Things you're keeping "just in case".
- Rubbish

Be ruthless, as sometimes starting your own decluttering project is not only all-consuming, it can also be too hard emotionally. We can all form an attachment to 'precious' items, meaning we struggle to decide when and how to let them go.

TO DO NO 3
Sort through the decluttered items

Before you start this, remember, you removed these items for a reason so don't sneak them back in!

Many of us hold on to things because we either think we will "fit into them one day" or "they might come in handy". The key is to consider how long you have been thinking that and if it's a substantial amount of time then let go. One of my favourite sayings is one person's clutter can be another one's treasure. ➔



Now sort everything into piles:

- Something for friend or family.
- Charity shop.
- Rubbish.
- Seasonal for storage.

TO DO NO 4

Organise remaining items

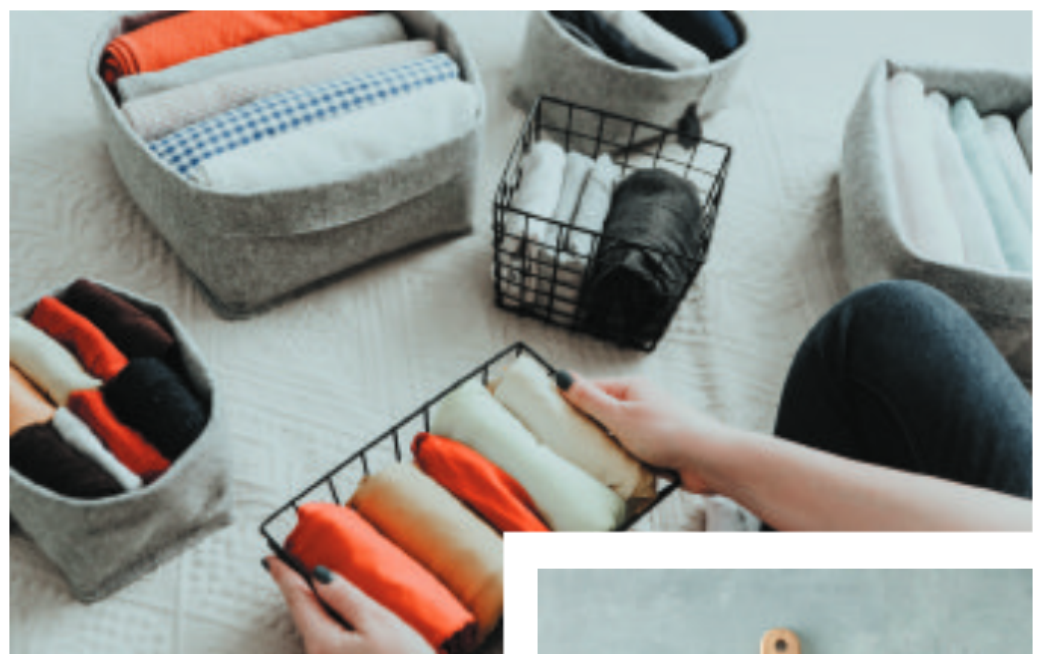
The likelihood is, you are still staring at a lot of belongings but that doesn't have to mean clutter. It just means it doesn't have a place in your home to call its own. Give everything a place, whether that's jumpers in a certain drawer, keys on a hook, or paperwork in a file. Choose what works for you.

I understand that curating and organising belongings logically doesn't come naturally to some people. It's easy for me to say, "a place for everything and everything in its place", it's my job, so here are three tips to help you:

- Focus on one area at a time – don't digress.
- Keep the things you use frequently in an easily accessible place.
- Use storage boxes for seasonal items, so you're not using up valuable draw space.

An organised home can still be full of 'stuff', it's just that some items need temporary homes, and some need permanent ones.

You just need to make sure what you're keeping has a use, a purpose and is accessible.



TO DO NO 5

Maintain and enjoy!

For some people, the doing is easy, it's the maintaining that proves to be difficult. So, put systems in place that work for you, they don't need to be complicated. Just saying something as simple as "put it back when you've finished with it" will save you time. It takes seconds to put something away but an awful lot longer to sort through piles of items that have been left lying around.

Now you have it – a place, with space, for a new, more efficient, more productive you.



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