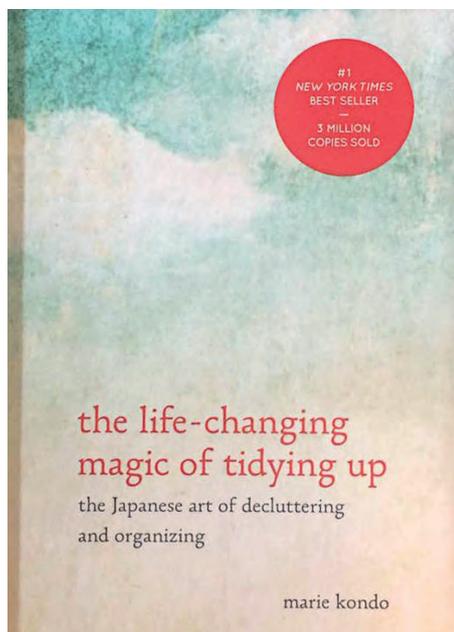


Getting ready for Spring



Spring has arrived! Hopefully the cold winter days are finally vanishing and along with it all the paraphernalia that clutters the home: from big coats blocking the hallway to all those hats, scarves, gloves and wellies that spread out over the house. To keep your house working for you and not against you, it is crucial to work and think seasonally.

The start of a new season is a wonderful time to put away one set of lifestyle accessories and bring out the next. Closing down autumn/winter and bringing out spring/summer is a breath of fresh air. Here is how to manage a seasonal change in 5 easy steps:



1. Gather together

Bring together everything that is not needed anymore: bulky coats, hats, scarves, gloves, winter duvets, blankets, hot water bottles, heavier jumpers, trousers, dresses, boots and snow clothes.

2. Sort out what hasn't been used, is broken or doesn't fit

If you haven't worn the clothes don't keep them for another season, donate them to a charity or friend or sell them. A good rule is, if you haven't worn it for a full season, get rid. Broken items or those that don't fit must be moved out of your house. Bag up items and take them out while you are decluttering; don't leave them by the door, put them in the car while you are in the mind frame.

It is worth remembering that children grow a lot over the year, so if snowsuits or wet weather gear just fitted them this year it might not the following year.

3. Dry clean or clean

Please do not pack dirty, unfolded clothes. It sounds like a chore but it is worth refreshing all clothes before packing them away. Also for cashmere be sure you have suitable anti moth devices. Fold all the clothes, when you bring them out in the next season, the joy of everything being sorted and folded feels like a whole new wardrobe!

4. Sort into groups

Think about your storage space. Under beds, lofts, high cupboards, cellars. Use the appropriate storage devices for what you have and the space you have available.

Vacuum bags are great for the bulky items and can be reduced in size and stored under beds. Lifestyle accessories can be boxed and stored in garages. Make sure you pack like with like and use storage devices that are appropriate. Try not to use cardboard boxes because items stored in them are likely to get damp. Laundry bags, plastic boxes, wicker baskets, vacuum bags, duvet bags are all great storage devices.

5. Label and pack

An inventory is one of the best rules to include in the management of your home. If you have a note of what you have, you won't be tempted to buy again and then double up on items therefore creating clutter.



A house book is an essential tool to run your home. Label each storage item with a number, then write what is in the box or laundry bag and where it's stored in the house book. Make a note of what went and what will be needed for the following season.

For many households spring is the end of the tax year. After handing in your tax returns and all the paper that goes with it, it is a great time to spring clean your filing system and reassess how paperwork is managed within your home.

Paperwork is an on-going issue within many homes and causes a pile up on all surfaces from kitchen counters to bedside tables. Having a good system in place is crucial to keeping on top of your household administration but also your home clear of clutter.

My experience has led me to putting a two-tier filing system in place.

The first tier is a place to manage the paperwork as it comes into the home: post, school work, art work, children's certificates, utility bills, memories, work papers, newspapers, magazines and local information. House PA uses an open magazine file system.

Either on the hallway table within the kitchen or wherever you open the post, put in place open magazine files for each member of the family and one for the home. You can also colour code and label them for each member, so that everyone takes responsibility for their file box.

Place everything that comes in on a daily basis into these files and when you can't put in anything more, move them to your second-tier filing system.

This first tier system immediately stops the pile up on surfaces and allows you to easily find paperwork for each member of the family.

The second tier filing system is the place where paperwork will take its final resting place. Most of the time it is in the bin but with memories, household administration and school artwork it still needs to be filed. House PA has found that filing cabinets work best for the ease of dropping in papers to hanging files rather than spending the time hole punching and then actually filing into lever arch files.

Memories and school artwork can be stored in art folders and certificate boxes. There are so many beautiful products out

Wherever you open the post, put in place open magazine files for each member of the family and one for the home.

in the market at the moment. You also don't need to spend a fortune and can improvise with leftover delivery boxes or shoe boxes. Although be careful of storing papers in cardboard boxes in damp places as they go mouldy.

If applicable, having a tax folder, receipt spike, an in-tray, box or drawer that you use to dump all papers relating to tax in one place until needed, stops the last-minute dash to find papers in the house when the time comes.

The same applies to all paperwork. You don't have to file every day or even once a month. This system allows you to keep surfaces clean, have one place for everything, then an organised and lasting system that is easy to manage and easy to find. A place for everything and everything in its place is a great motto for your home.

A good rule is if you haven't worn it for a full season, get rid.



FROM THIS



TO THIS



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GETTING READY FOR SPRING – 50 ITEMS TO GET RID OF WITHOUT REGRET

1. Spare buttons from clothes that you are keeping 'just in case'
2. Make up past its best
3. Anything in your home that you look at and don't like
4. Clothes that don't fit
5. Books you've never read and won't ever read!
6. Books you have read and have no intention of reading again
7. Old magazines
8. Anything that you can get the same information easily again online
9. Anything broken
- 10 Old bedding in the bottom of your linen cupboard that you never use
- 11 Baby items if you have finished having babies and your family is complete
- 12 Chipped or cracked crockery
- 13 Out of date food in the cupboards
- 14 Half finished craft projects that are never going to be completed
- 15 Toiletries you will never use (e.g hand cream/foot cream etc (Christmas sets?))
- 16 Pens that no longer work
- 17 90% of what's in the loft! (most of which you will have forgotten about!)
- 18 Anything that you didn't remember was there!
- 19 Large items that take up too much room and could be borrowed if you ever need again
- 20 Anything that makes you feel sad or guilty when you look at it
- 21 Clothes that no longer suit your style
- 22 Games/jigsaws where some of the pieces are missing
- 23 Chargers for phones you no longer own
- 24 Kitchen gadgets you never use (ice cream maker was one I had and never used!)
- 25 Artwork that doesn't make you happy
- 26 Anything that doesn't work as well as it should (bedding that doesn't quite fit etc.)
- 27 Any earrings that don't have their partner
- 28 Any shoes that don't have their partner
- 29 Most manuals for items you buy (you can find all the info online)
- 30 Scraps of wrapping paper that won't wrap anything!
- 31 Anything you have a duplicate of
- 32 Old computers (take care to destroy the hard drive first)
- 33 Educational notes etc. from prior qualifications (you have the qualification now), I need to let go of my uni notes
- 34 Any plastic carrier bags you are stockpiling (20 is probably plenty!)
- 35 Sports bras that have lost their hold!
- 36 Any mugs over the total number of people you would ever have drinking in your home in one go
- 37 Any glasses over the total number of people you would ever have drinking in your home in one go
- 38 Anything that is past its best in the freezer
- 39 Herbs and spices you never use
- 40 Specialist tea/coffee you never drink
- 41 Boxes from electronic items you have bought
- 42 Receipts from items you have kept and used (unless it's the guarantee or you need to keep for accounting reasons)
- 43 Out of date medicines
- 44 Items related to hobbies you no longer do
- 45 Socks with holes in the toes
- 46 Tights with ladders
- 47 Paint for rooms that you have since redecorated a different colour
- 48 Memorabilia that doesn't hold the same value for you any more
- 49 Projects you have been meaning to get around to for years but haven't
- 50 Toys no longer played with

With thanks to Chrissy at www.organisemyhouse.com

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