

# The Five Steps Clear Space

Kerryn Simmons Coaching





# The Five Steps. Overview

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## **Clutter Crew**

My left handed decluttering system for trauma clutter is comprised of three pillars:

- Decluttering techniques to address skill set deficits
- Bodywork techniques to support your nervous system
- Mindset techniques to ensure your clutter never returns

This resource is an overview of the Five Step Progress Only method. Detailed resources for each of the five steps are available on the website.

## **How**

By following the five steps and applying the concepts we will successfully clear your space.

- 1.Trash
- 2.Easy stuff
- 3.Duh Donations
- 4.Two Questions
- 5.Make it fit

## **Why**

This method removes lots of barriers to decluttering. We don't need a lot of physical energy, mental energy or emotional energy. We don't need a lot of time. We don't need to make hundreds of decisions, and most importantly we don't need to make a mess along the way.

## **When**

When we follow this method we clear space with whatever amount of time and physical, mental and emotional bandwidth we have available, whether that's one minute, one hour, one day or one week. That's because we can stop at any time and we will have still made progress.

## Select a zone

Get ready by selecting a zone to clear. A zone is a space within a room to focus on. This may be a shelf, drawer, cupboard or box. Remember it's better to start small and practice the steps in defined areas, rather than attempting to clear a whole room in one go. As each zone is cleared it builds our decluttering muscles and increases our momentum.

## Essential equipment

Next gather your essential equipment:

- A black trash bag
- A box for recyclables
- A box or bag for donations

## Step 1 Trash [Category identification step]

Scan your zone. Identify obvious trash/recycling. Put it in your black trash bag/recycling box. At the end of the session put the trash bag in the trash can and the recycling in the recycling bin.

Obvious trash is your version of a no brainer piece of trash. For example, if I found a rotting three week old banana sandwich in my zone I wouldn't have to think about it, I immediately know it belongs in the trash.

## Step 2 Easy Stuff [Category identification step]

Scan your zone. Identify an item that already has a home elsewhere and you know exactly where that home is located. Take the item to its home immediately. Do not create a pile for later.

Obvious Easy Stuff is your version of a no brainer item. For example, if I found my toothbrush in my kitchen pantry I would know exactly where it belonged in my bathroom vanity.

## Step 3 Duh Donations [Category identification step]

Scan your zone. Identify any obvious donations. Put them in the donations bag or box. At the end of your session take the donations to a charity of your choice.

Obvious donations are ones you don't need to debate with yourself. For example, if I found a pair of shoes that were in good condition, that I didn't like, that didn't fit me, I don't have to think about it, in the donations box they go.

## Now onto decisions

The first three steps are about ease and minimal decision making. We are scanning areas for categories of items and acting on them immediately. We are not picking up items one at a time. We are not making piles for later and adding to our mental To Do list. This is designed to reduce cognitive load and resistance. We start making decisions in Step 4.



## Step 4 Two questions [Decision Step]

With the remaining items pick them up one at a time and ask yourself Question 1:

- In a perfectly organised home, where would I look for this item first? Whatever your intuitive answer is Take It There Now.

If you have no answer for Question 1, ask yourself Question 2:

- If I needed this item, would it occur to me I already had it? If your answer is no, trash it or donate it. If your answer is yes, reask Question 1.

## Step 5 Make It Fit [Decision Step]

With the items that remain in your zone ensure they fit within the space you have available by keeping your favourites or the ones you value the most, and donating or trashing your least favourite items. The space you have is finite.

## Tips

A phone is an optional piece of decluttering equipment. I highly recommend it for:

- Taking Before and After photos. None of my clients have regretted taking before and after photos. The ones that don't take photos always end up regretting it. We see space differently in a photo than we do in real life. We also notice the changes overtime and are more able to acknowledge our efforts when we can look back at the evidence of what has changed. This helps with momentum and maintenance of a decluttered space.
- Setting a time. This is helpful as it's not uncommon to overestimate how long something will take to finish when we feel overwhelmed, and to underestimate how long something will take when we feel confident. Timing ourselves builds our knowledge base with realistic estimates.
- Playing music or body doubling. Singing along, listening to a podcast or an audio book or talking to a friend can make it seem less daunting.

## Acknowledgement

The Five Step Progress Only No Mess techniques were devised by my coach Dana K. White. They work alongside my bodywork and mindset techniques to form the three pillars of my Left Handed Decluttering approach.

## Related resources

- Common trash items
- The Five Steps | Step 1 Trash
- The Five Steps | Step 2 Easy Stuff
- The Five Steps | Step 3 Donations
- The Five Steps | Step 4 Two Questions
- The Five Steps | Step 5 Make It Fit

*Send any questions you have to Ask Kerryn via  
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