

## A Simple Decluttering Routine

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Spring cleaning? Not if I can help it. Spring is the wrong time. Spring is the time to go outdoors and enjoy a few days without rain and snow and see the buds and growth shooting out everywhere. But I do find that it can become time consuming after I return indoors, dealing with the mess inside. It feels as if all you have to do to create clutter is go away for a few hours and somehow it replicates through every room of the house. Here's a simple decluttering routine that you can use the next time you feel overwhelmed. This also works year-round.

To get this routine working, walk through each room of your home and ask these questions:

- Do I have enough hiding space, or storage for all the things that are cluttering up the surfaces and the floor?
- Is there too much in the room? Do I really need it all?
- Is furniture in the right spot? Is it pleasing?

Write down the answers for each room. You may find that there is simply too much furniture, and then everything on the surfaces makes the room cluttered. Positioning the furniture for pleasing lines of sight makes a difference in how you feel in the room. Take some time to observe this. You'll know it when you see it.

If you don't have the storage space, add it. Getting things off surfaces and into bins, closets, bookcases, and drawers in itself will make things look much better. Instead of a table with legs, consider a table with drawers or bins under it. For children's books and toys, use a trunk or box next to the couch where these things can be put away quickly.

Having the storage close to where the messes are makes it much easier to declutter. Open the bin, throw them in. You can turn decluttering into a game for the kids. You'll be amazed at how much easier it is and how much nicer everything looks all the time.

Now that you've prepared your home for the decluttering routine, here is the process.

Step 1: Clear off. Walk each room and put things away. It's easy now that you have storage for everything.

Step 2: Return items to the correct rooms. School projects, books, computers, clothing all go back to the place where they originated.

Step 3: Dust/wipe off. Now that surfaces are clear, run a damp cotton cloth over everything. I like this better than using a feather duster, which can redistribute the dust into the air, only to land on what you just dusted.

Step 4: Ask everyone to make their beds in the morning right after they get out of them, so no one has to go back and do that during the day. It just looks better.

Step 5: Take your damp cloth and wipe out sinks and wipe down faucets. It makes the kitchen and bath look nice, even if it's not bathroom cleaning day.

Following this routine takes very little time once you've set up the system, and will make you feel great. It's also easy to do a quick vacuuming. Now you can set up a schedule for the deep cleaning. This light decluttering will make the in between times look like you've deep cleaned every day, and it works wonders when you have unexpected company.