

A Key to Reducing Stress?



How do you begin? One way is to start clearing away the clutter, not just in your home, but also in your mind. Clutter contributes to stress. It can make you feel overwhelmed, disorganized, and frustrated—to the point where your life may seem to be spiraling out of control.

Here are some ideas to try to simplify and declutter your life. They may help keep stress from becoming your constant companion.

Organize your personal things

There's nothing like a good old-fashioned housecleaning. How satisfying it is to clear out clutter and be able to find things when you need them. To declutter your home or workspace:

- **Start small.** You do not have to tackle your entire house in a day. Pick 1 room (or even 1 drawer) to begin.
- **Donate.** Give the things you do not need or use to charity or sell them at a yard sale. Chances are if you have not used something for a year or more, you will not need it.
- **Toss out junk.** Broken objects, gadgets with missing parts, and old rags and papers gathering dust can go to the recycle bin.
- **Organize things you want to keep.** You can store them in marked boxes or containers so they're easy to find.
- **Get a filing cabinet.** This way, you can organize paperwork into categories. Sorting through papers gives you a chance to decide what you want to keep and what you can throw out.



Make things easier on yourself

Sometimes a more personal housekeeping is just what you need. If you're trying to simplify your life, then following these tips may help:

- **Clear your calendar.** You do not have to be Superman or Superwoman.
- **Learn to say no.** There are a lot of demands on your time. It's OK to pass on coaching your child's soccer team or heading your club's fund-raiser.
- **Rearrange your schedule.** If rush-hour traffic stresses you out, then try leaving early for work. Or, take a longer, yet less-traveled, route.
- **Unplug yourself.** Turn off the TV, radio, cell phone, and laptop for a while and take a mini-vacation from technology.
- **Keep multitasking to a minimum.** Try to focus on 1 task at a time, if possible.

When you simplify your life, you're giving yourself a gift. It may be a cleaner home or a clearer head, more free time, and maybe even less stress.

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