

Your
Personal
Organising
Planner

Change
your Space

WELCOME

to your

Personal Organising Planner

Aim of the Pack

Our homes are the key to our wellbeing so it's time to make them work for us. We want to walk through the door each day to a home we can be proud of and love to be in.

As Professional Organisers, we thoroughly enjoy making these aspirations come true for many people by practically supporting a review of their belongings.

The aim of this pack is to gain insight into the processes we use when working one to one with clients so that you can effectively organise your home yourself. You can apply the planning and sorting to suit you and fit it flexibly around your work and home schedule.

Motivation is a key part of what we offer so during our conversations we can work out how best to keep you positive and focused on achieving your goals for your home.

By undertaking a fundamental review of your home and your belongings extra time, space and money will be a realistic and achievable goal.

This planner is there to guide you through the process so that you are supported, encouraged and given tips that will give you the best return on your time.



We will guide you so that you can

- introduce decluttering and organising as a continuous process in your life
- have a home that complements your lifestyle
- remove the overwhelming feeling that having a disorganised home brings
- enjoy inviting friends and family to your home spontaneously
- save valuable time each day trying to find things
- create space in your home
- turn your unwanted items into cash or donate them to someone who can really enjoy them
- know where your most treasured belongings are, so you can access them easily.

WHAT'S IN THIS PACK?

This planner will lead to your organised and happy home. Each part includes a focused activity, time guidelines and a process to follow. Use it for each room or area you wish to review.

Change your Space

Time to declutter

Declutter first. At this point don't worry too much about where your things are going to go. Take pictures as you work and document the process. Note down what you found hard, what items you decided to rehome/ recycle etc.

- Get started. There's no easy way. Tackle visible clutter first on surfaces or the floor to give yourself space to work. Then work clockwise around the room until it is finished.
- Make sure you tackle your clutter in manageable amounts. Acknowledge things are going to look worse before they get better as you empty out previously hidden spaces.
- Use it, Need it, Love it? Most objects fall into these categories. If you do not use it regularly, need it sometimes or love it all the time, it is time to question whether it should stay.
- Ask more searching questions. Is it broken? Do you have something more useful/interesting? Have you got something newer? Are you keeping it only out of guilt?
- Plan to offload everything on the day you declutter. That way there is no chance of getting confused.
- That vision you have of your newly decluttered space should be kept firmly in your mind all day long to keep your motivation high. The reward of moving unrequired items on is the space to allow your treasured belongings to have a proper home and look great.
- Do not buy storage until you have fully decluttered and are ready to organise. That way you can get exactly what you need. This activity will save you money in buying storage you may not require.
- Choose a system that works with your lifestyle. Be realistic and know it is not necessary to micro-organise. Then sit back and take it all in – you did this!

Your notes

What items did you find? What surprised you?

Any questions you wish to ask during your coaching call?

Examples

I made a specific decision to get rid of all books I had read.

I got rid of any magazine more than 3 months old.

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Organisation & storage

Having moved items out of the space that are to be rehomed or donated, you can start to put items back and shape the space to fit your lifestyle. Look back on your aims for the room.

Take pictures as you work and compare to your 'before' picture of the room. Having an 'after' picture is great motivation as this is how you wish to have your room set regularly.

- Consider how you use the space and store similar items together.
- Your space should make sense to you and complement your lifestyle.
- Put items back into cupboards more efficiently. Think about accessibility.
- Make sure you have clear routes around the room, with no trip hazards and plenty of space to open cupboards.
- Have you got the right storage? Can you use vertical space more effectively? Maximise your cupboards without over stuffing them.
- Have you arranged the things you use most frequently with easy access?
- Think about using baskets on shelves for a more streamline look.
- Invest in a label maker. It helps you and members of your family know exactly where things go.
- Containerisation is key to effective storage. Ensure your containers are the right size and depth.
- Zone your items. Store like with like and try to introduce a system where there is only one place to find a certain type of item.

INTERESTING FACT

90% of the homes we work in do not need additional storage once they are decluttered

Your notes

Examples

I decided to move the mugs into the cupboard nearest to the kettle.

I introduced a hats and gloves area with colourful storage boxes near the front door.

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TOP TIPS

Managing paperwork

Technology is moving so fast that we are thankfully moving towards a paperless society, yet we have little control over the steady influx of paper that comes in on a daily basis. A staggering 80% of what gets filed is never referred to again. The key to a successful paperwork system is getting rid of unnecessary paper whilst remaining in your comfort zone.

- Evaluate your documentation. Do you want to keep it as a memory or for practical reference? Most of us can halve our paperwork with just a simple first sift.
- Gather all loose paperwork together, and start to categorise broadly: Home, interests, children, work. Conduct your first sift, as there will be out of date information sheets, envelopes, superseded information which can be recycled immediately.
- Examine every single piece of paper – shred it, recycle it, put it in your action tray, file it, or scan it to keep a digital copy. If it's been buried for months under a two foot pile, is it that vital? Maybe now is the time to wipe the slate clean and just accept it's never going to pop to the top of your list of priorities.
- Look at your office supplies – what do you really need? 7 hole punches, 78 plastic sleeves, and your old secondary school ringbinders? Chances are your working methods have changed with a paperless system, so let the old stationery go. You paid a lot for it, I know, but leaving it hanging around cluttering up your working space is going to affect your clarity of thought.
- For most home offices a filing cabinet is a great solution – you can get some nicer looking ones these days and they are sturdy, flexible, and help you keep volumes of paperwork in a manageable way.
- Hanging files are brilliant because they are flexible - you can add or take away as required and move them around to suit. If your file is groaning under the weight of that paper, do one of two things, be ruthless with what you keep or subcategorise. Plastic inserts are useful too, but use the ones that open on two sides for ease of access.



Anything that involves too much effort is a barrier to you getting the job done.

- Be clever with your filing system. You might use colour coding, alphabet, numeric – your system, your choice. Bank, Current Account, money, financial – these things are the same but a different name works for different users. So choose one that works for you.
- Your in-tray becomes your to do list. My paper system mirrors my digital system. If it is in my in-tray it still needs looking at, if it's in my email inbox it still needs action. Once it's actioned, it gets filed whether that is in my filing cabinet or my file folders. It works for me! Now all you need to do is find a system that works for you.
- When you find yourself with more than three carrier bags full of confidential waste think about having it professionally disposed of. It will save you a lot of time.
- Think about where you can create space for archival storage if you need it. Don't clog up your filing cabinet with archives.

Change your Space

TOP TIPS

Wardrobe weeding

The average Brit buys 56 items of clothing a year and has 22 items that are unworn in their wardrobe. Only you know what you never wear, what has had its day, and what you may use in the future. Your wardrobe is your expression of who you are to the world. Life's too short to wear things that don't make us feel good.



- Get all your clothes out one wardrobe or drawer at a time and put them on the bed. Once it's out you have to make a decision for it to go back in. If it's in you have to make a decision for it to come out. The psychology is interesting! Also taking everything out allows you to clean the space.
- Laying it all out on the bed ensures you can see what items go with what, colours (how many grey clothes do I have?), and what is missing to complete an outfit.
- Keep a notebook of clothes you need that would allow you wear something more often (a matching vest or cardigan for example), and if an old favourite has had its day, you may want to directly replace it and can note it down.
- Use boxes or areas for items to keep but with subcategories, for example, mend, alter, wash, iron, and bags for charity, rehome, ragging.
- Consider the storage you have. If space is limited perhaps you can archive the summer wardrobe in plastic containers under the bed or at the bottom of the wardrobe. Or vice versa in winter.
- If you tend to be more messy than organised, think about trying to hang things. Tidy shelves are for tidy people. Hanging is much more forgiving.
- If you are not a great folder, then try rolling t-shirts, scarves or jumpers.
- If you have items that need altering, make time to take them to the dressmaker quickly, don't let them linger in a bag for months.
- Take photographs of clothing that has sentimental value and scrapbook the picture with memories of when you wore the clothes and the adventures you had. You do not need to keep the clothing - but you can preserve the memory.
- If you are selling clothes, just remember you will need to wash the item, detail everything you can about it on the listing, and take a good photograph of it.
- If you are unsure whether something fits, try it on. If you have changed shape and or have items you have not worn for a while, this is a key exercise.
- If you are in the process of losing weight, will your finances allow you to buy something new as a reward if you achieve your weight loss goal? If so, be kind to yourself and let stuff go.
- Think about asking a friend or professional to help you with your wardrobe sort. A fresh eye often helps you see things differently and you can create a new wardrobe and a lovely look from the things you already have.

Change your Space

TOP TIPS

Keepsakes

Belongings are part of our story, our identity and say a lot about our relationships and journeys. You are going to feel much easier about decluttering if you know how to preserve the important keepsakes in your life.

- Have a box for keepsakes that you top up periodically in an easy to access area. Then have another keepsake archive in, say, the loft where items go when the keepsake box is full.
- Enjoy the moment that you find something you thought was lost and treasure it. Allow yourself a few seconds of joy, and then put it back in the box for safekeeping.
- The most powerful way to preserve memories is to have a few key items that you can access and refer to. Volume does not bring about more powerful memories, but easy access to keep those memories active does.



INTERESTING FACT

There are many important psychological aspects to keepsakes. Most importantly is how an item defines us in a way that fits with our own story of ourselves.



- Often there are huge volumes of photographs that have been stored in homes so perhaps make a family event out of getting them all out and looking at them and categorizing them. Make smaller meaningful albums with the people that matter to you rather than reams of landscapes that don't evoke the same memory.
- Transfer cine-film, slides or VHS footage that is important to you onto DVD. There are companies that do this across the country and it is worth the investment.
- Scan photographs, digitise home videos and share them with your family regularly whilst they are fresh in your mind.
- In your keepsake archive you can label up as years or as family members and review once in a while to ensure the boxes are manageable.
- If you are struggling with bulky items such as inherited furniture then keep a scrapbook with photographs of the items that can help preserve the memories for all involved. The items could then be rehomed, but the memory is there forever.

Change *your* Space

TOP TIPS

Loft decluttering

The loft is a voyage of discovery. Whatever your reason for going up there: loft insulation, bending rafters, making sense of the space: you are bound to find things that were forgotten. Lofts and garages are often a halfway house and can be easy to declutter. You've already decided the items don't belong in your living space so they have a temporary home in your loft until you can make the decision to get rid of them. So maybe now is that time.



- Make sure you have a decent ladder. If it is fixed, make sure it is secure as you are going up and down several times.
- It is essential to have someone with you for the project to help with carrying and making the ladder steady. A loft declutter can be overwhelming so you need a helping hand.
- Invest in some robust clear boxes to replace the cardboard ones that may have deteriorated, and to improve the look, and stacking capability. Loose things should be in boxes where possible.
- It is also worth having with you some large labels and a black marker pen to clearly label up your sorted boxes so you can see without moving them what the contents are.
- Have a wide sweep of the things you can see that you know you do not need and bring those down immediately.

- Lofts often house collections and it is worth checking they are still of worth to you personally and stored adequately.
- When you have finished, zone your loft and map out the layout of what is where.
- Lofts could be zoned into household items, toys and clothes that are going to be useful for younger children, memorabilia, suitcases and travel, seasonal decorations, archival paperwork, photos (if the space is dry).



INTERESTING FACT

A loft conversion can add 20% to the value of your home and in some cases means you do not need to move house for extra space. Height, pitch and footprint will determine what you decide to do with your loft.

Change your Space

TOP TIPS

Effective kitchens

It is your kitchen so you need a system that works for you. Keep in mind your requirements and what space you actually have available to you so the key is compromise.

- Have all your heavy pots and pans right where you need them, adjacent to or underneath your cooker.
- It is not advisable to mix food and non-food together. Pots in one area, cereals in another. It helps create a more hygienic workspace.
- Whilst lining up cans and bottles in your cupboard may seem a lot of effort, it allows you to see exactly what you have and helps avoid overbuying. Organise food like with like and check all sell by dates.
- If you're not lucky enough to have a carousel or Le Mans unit in those awkward corner cupboards, try to recreate one with two plastic boxes, one in the corner and one in the front. Put seldom used pots and pans in there and it will make accessibility so much easier.
- If you are planning a kitchen from scratch then incorporate plenty of space for recycling so it is not littering up your kitchen floor.
- If you're struggling for space, use your walls - storage in between your wall and base units can eradicate the need for a utensils drawer. Also maximize options up high such as hanging racks.
- If you are a simple cook then try not to fall into the trap of being falsely aspirational. You will not use all the latest gizmos and gadgets. However, if your cooking is Michelin star worthy, then you're going to need more than just a knife and a chopping board to see you through.
- If you are an adventurous cook, then those spice racks with space for six spices is not going to be sufficient so have your herbs and spices accessible in a cupboard in a basket. If they are at low level use a marker to write on the top of the spice so you can see exactly what they are from above as well as at eye level.
- Shelves often adjust in modern kitchens so choose shelf heights that are suitable for your needs. If you can't fit that oversize wine glass in the cupboard and it ends up in with the dog food, think about swapping the glass for a smaller one.
- If you don't have space then resist the urge to bulk buy. If your shelves are not high enough for a 750g of cereal, buy a 500g one instead.
- Where possible always find a cupboard for items rather than store on your worksurface.
- Do a good declutter. Very few British kitchens have ample space. If you haven't used that gravy separator for 5 years, it's time to say goodbye so that you can fit in the items you do actually use.



Change your Space

TOP TIPS

Children's belongings

The average 10 year old owns 238 toys but plays with just 12 daily. Keeping toys under control is a constant battle for parents and children. The key is regular tidy ups and reviews.



- Review and rotate toys every 4-6 months.
- Each child could have a coloured box for items belonging to them that need to go to their rooms. This may include laundry, homework, mobile phone and toys. When it is full they are to take the items upstairs and put them away.
- Make tidying up fun and part of your regular routine. Taking time to turn the lounge back into an adult living space after a day as a playroom is important to the whole family. Introduce a 10 minute race against time family adventure to put things away.
- Create a launch area. This is a space by the door that is totally clear and is where all the bags and items for the next day will be clearly placed (library books, PE kit etc). Get everything prepared the night before.
- Have a large clear plastic box for crafts so you can see what's in there and keep them contained. Then add a colourful box or basket for their drawings and artwork. When the basket is full ask

your child to help you choose the best 3 pieces to put in your memory box in the loft. This will make those pictures more meaningful.

- Involve your children in recycling and donating. It is a great way for them to understand the value of items and what belongings mean to them and all of us. Give teenagers the project of selling unwanted gadgets in the house and keeping a percentage of the proceeds. Smaller children can help find original boxes and instructions if they wish something to be sold or donated.
- Have a dedicated box for instructions. When donating or selling having these as part of the item will be hugely helpful.



Change your Space

TOP TIPS

Selling unwanted stuff

It is estimated that the average home has about £514 of unused and unloved items residing in cupboards and lofts. Here's your chance to make some money.

- Be realistic about whether you have the time and skill to sell on Ebay. Consider passing the task onto a professional Ebay trader. They often have a wider market and can sell your stuff for more money and allow you to reap the rewards without the hard work. Maybe your time would be better spent decluttering and gathering the items to sell.
- Be realistic about whether your items have value in the open market and whether your time is well spent investing time into it.
- If your time is limited, why not choose a few key items to sell yourself that are of higher value and either donate the rest or outsource the job to someone else.
- Photograph items well and give as much detail as possible if selling on Ebay, Gumtree, or Preloved. Even on local Facebook ads, give appropriate details such as size, brand, retail price. Research what items are selling for and adjust to how quickly you wish to move the item on and have the proceeds in your pocket.
- You can identify local traders for special items and collectables. They will often take a percentage of the sale but allow you to move items on without storing it all. Contact a book dealer or vinyl specialist for larger collections. Have a list of details if you need to email it.
- You can seize the moment and take your items to a local table top or car boot sale. Be prepared with labels, hangers, snacks and change. They can be fun, but price realistically as you do not want to bring it all home. Engage with browsers. It can be hard work.
- Explore local buying and selling options through Facebook groups or local interest groups.
- There are several online outlets where you can sell your unwanted items. Why not take a look at some of these to see whether they will work for you.



www.ebay.co.uk

www.gumtree.com

www.webuybooks.co.uk

www.musicmagpie.co.uk

www.amazon.co.uk

INTERESTING FACT

Householders are hoarding an average of £1045 worth of clutter for no good reason.

Change *your* Space