

## Cleaning Out the Closet— 5 Benefits to your Mental Well-being

We all have one—the overflowing junk drawer, the busting at the seams closet, the exploding file cabinet. Usually, we tend to ignore these untidy spaces but what you may not realize is how your cluttered spaces are really impacting your mental and physical well-being.

### What benefits are there?



#### 1. A clean space equals a clear mind.

Research has shown that working in a tidy space increases your ability to focus. The less clutter you have around decreases the chance that you will get distracted. This means that you can be more productive and spend more time doing things that bring you joy!



#### 2. A clean space can lead to other healthy choices.

Studies have shown that individuals that keep a clean and organized space are more likely to also make other healthy choices, including eating better and exercise. Bonus! A clean space will also have you physically feeling better because all those allergens and debris will be long gone after you're done.



#### 3. Stress reduction.

Our brains are very good at recognizing patterns, and even if there is not a pattern, we will subconsciously attempt to figure one out. By cleaning up your space and implementing a "loose" organizational system to your belongings, your brain gets to relax. This then reduces stress for you.



#### 4. Boost your mood.

Cleaning your desk triggers a mood boosting hormone, dopamine, that gives you that sense of joy and achievement we all need. Not only will a clean space keep you more productive through the week, but once you check that task off your to-do list, you'll get an instant boost of satisfaction.



#### 5. Spark Creativity.

Research has suggested that individuals with messy spaces are more creative, however, extremely messy spaces can be detrimental to clear creative thinking. A clean functional space will help you have more "Aha!" moments during the day and turn creative ideas into creative reality. Who knows, maybe your best idea is hidden in that stack of papers?

## Where to start?

- **Prepare.** Think about the space you want to organize. What activities do you want to do in that space? Where do you need things to go or what do you need to get rid of? If you need ideas on how to organize or what you want your space to do check out the Marie Kondo documentary or the book "Stuff" by Randy O. Frost. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Do you have a friend who has their label maker always ready to go? Reach out for help or ideas on how to better use your space.
- **Purchase.** Think about what you really need to optimize your space. Do you need a whole new closet organizer? What things do I already have that I can use to better organize? Keep in mind that budget friendly options organize just as well as pricey organization systems. Package boxes can be made visually appealing with some wrapping paper or inexpensive wallpaper.
- **Start Small.** Reworking an entire space can be a daunting task. Create a check list of things you want and need to do. Set aside time each day or weekend for you to work on the tasks and work down the list slowly until you're done. But once you start it'll be hard to stop!
- **Set a Deadline.** What we don't want is another project to provoke anxiety. By setting a deadline or time limit, you will know when your project will wrap up by and you can schedule your time accordingly.
- **Drop off Donations.** So you've eliminated all that clutter in your closet but now its sitting in the trunk of your car. Research ahead of time which organizations are accepting donations, types of items they will take, and when you can drop them off. Or save yourself a trip and arrange for donations to be picked up at your front door.
- **Stay Away from the Clearance Aisle.** Now that your closet is clean you want to avoid filling it back up. It can be easy to buy things when you justify it as a "good deal". When you are in the store or online shopping only buy things that have a purpose and that you are going to use shortly after buying.



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