

## **The mental health benefits of “tidying up”**

Source: [Stronger Minds by Mind Beacon](#)

Marie Kondo’s popular “KonMari” method of tidying up has made her a household name: Sort your stuff by category and only keep what “sparks joy.” Whatever doesn’t, bye-bye. You don’t have to buy into this method, but there are several mental health benefits to decluttering. With most of us at home, this is the perfect time to tidy up.

### **How we live affects how we feel.**

Studies show that clutter impacts our mental health. There’s the obvious – not being able to find what we need quickly. But, for some, the impact goes beyond this.

Researchers at Princeton found that clutter makes us less able to focus on a task, which they attributed to being distracted by all the stuff around us. This led to decreased performance and increased stress. In fact, a 9-year UCLA study showed a link between high levels of stress hormone cortisol in women with a more cluttered home. Other studies have linked clutter to sleep disorders and anxiety.

Tackling clutter, on the other hand, can give us a sense of accomplishment – which is very important when it comes to tackling mental health challenges – as well as confidence in taking on other challenges.

### **How to get started and stick to it.**

Decluttering can feel daunting, and you may not know where to start. Here are a few practical tips to help you get started:

#### **Have a method.**

You need somewhere to put that clutter. Take out some bins, boxes or large bags. Items you are donating, recycling or disposing of go here.

#### **Start small.**

Tackle one small, confined area at a time, like a hallway closet, bedside table, or your office desk.

#### **Set a realistic timeline.**

Being at home a lot means we don’t need to “spring clean in a day.” Take your time. Be realistic on how long a task will take you so you have better chance of accomplishing it.

#### **Be structured.**

Set aside 10 to 15 minutes at the end of each day to put away stray items. Having a daily routine can help build new habits you stick to in the long run.

**Build on mini-wins.**

Cleared out that shoe closet from 25 pairs to 10? Yay! Next time, take on a slightly bigger task like a dresser, or a few kitchen cupboards.

**Parting ways.**

It can be tough getting rid of items you are emotionally attached to. Try to think how the item makes you feel. Does it make you feel sad or miss an ex? Or, does it spark a wonderful memory? If it makes you happy, keep it. But keep it where you can see it and be reminded of the memory.

**Let's spark...action.**

These are challenging times. But, it can also be a good time to take on productive tasks that leave us feeling accomplished. Decluttering can be one of these – clearing your path (literally) to a clearer mind.