GoalTodo

Declutter your home: 8 weeks for a flat, 12 for a family home

Declutter my home

8 weeks · Mon, Nov 30 → Sun, Jan 24

Week by week

Tick a box each time you do a session.

Nov 30–Dec 6
Week 1

One drawer

Start small

- [ ] Clear one drawer: keep, donate or bin each thing in it
  20 min
- [ ] Clear one more small spot, such as a shelf or a bathroom cabinet
  20 min
- [ ] Put a donate bag by the door and find out where your nearest drop-off point is
  20 min

Done when: One drawer and one small spot are cleared, and what you took out is in a donate bag or the bin

Sticking point: You'll want to do more. Stop at one drawer or shelf per session: finishing something small is the whole point of this week.

Dec 7–13
Week 2

Entryway and bathroom

Easy rooms

- [ ] Declutter the entryway: shoes, coats, bags, post
  20 min
- [ ] Declutter the bathroom: cabinet, shelves, under the sink
  20 min
- [ ] Weekend block: finish both rooms
  1 hour
- [ ] Drop off donations

Done when: The entryway and bathroom have each been gone through once, and the first bag of donations has left the house

Sticking point: Stay in the room. When something belongs elsewhere, put it in one basket and take it back at the end, not halfway through.

Dec 14–20
Week 3

Catch up and take it out

Lighter week

- [ ] Finish anything left from the first two weeks
  20 min
- [ ] Sort what's waiting by the door: list what you'll sell, recycle what you can, and bag the rest for next week's drop-off
  30 min

Done when: Nothing from weeks 1 and 2 is still waiting to be sorted

Sticking point: A lighter week can feel like slacking. It's where the leftovers get finished, and that keeps the rest of the plan from piling up.

Dec 21–27
Week 4

The kitchen

One room a week

- [ ] Drawers and utensils: keep one of each you really use
  20 min
- [ ] Cupboards: pans, tins, mugs and containers without lids
  20 min
- [ ] Weekend block: counters, pantry and out-of-date food
  1 hour
- [ ] Drop off donations

Done when: Every kitchen drawer and cupboard has been gone through once, and the counters are clear

Sticking point: Duplicates hide in kitchens. Keep the one you reach for, and let the spare go.

Dec 28–Jan 3
Week 5

Bedroom and wardrobe

One room a week

- [ ] Bedside tables, drawers and surfaces
  20 min
- [ ] Wardrobe, first half
  20 min
- [ ] Weekend block: the rest of the wardrobe, under the bed, shoes
  1 hour

Done when: The bedroom and wardrobe have been gone through once, and clothes you don't wear are bagged

Sticking point: "It might fit again" keeps wardrobes full. Keep what fits and what you wore this past year.

Jan 4–10
Week 6

Catch up and take it out

Lighter week

- [ ] Finish anything left in the kitchen or bedroom
  20 min
- [ ] Drop off donations and list anything you want to sell
  30 min

Done when: The kitchen and bedroom are finished, and the donations have left the house

Jan 11–17
Week 7

The living room

One room a week

- [ ] Surfaces, the coffee table and the shelves
  20 min
- [ ] Cables, remotes, media, games and the corners things collect in
  20 min
- [ ] Weekend block: cupboards, books and decorations
  1 hour

Done when: The living room has been gone through once, and its surfaces are clear

Sticking point: Books and decorations are slow. Choose by shelf: what would you put back on it if it were empty?

Jan 18–24
Week 8

Storage, paper and keepsakes

Last week

- [ ] Paper: post, files and manuals; keep what you need, shred or recycle the rest
  20 min
- [ ] Storage: cupboards, boxes and anything under or on top of things
  20 min
- [ ] Weekend block: sentimental items, then a walk through every room
  1 hour
- [ ] Drop off donations

Done when: Every room and storage space has been gone through once, and the last donations have left the house

Sticking point: Keepsakes take the most out of you. Go slowly, keep the best few, and leave anything you can't decide on in one box with a date on it.

How the plan works

You start with one drawer. Then you take one room or area a week until every room has been gone through once.

Three short sessions a week. Two weekday sessions of 20 to 30 minutes and an hour on Saturday. Put them in your calendar now: sessions you've scheduled are the ones that happen. Move the days if you need to, but keep them fixed.

Easy rooms first. The entryway and bathroom come first because they're quick to finish. Paper, storage and sentimental things come last, when you're in the habit and know what you want to keep.

Every thing gets a decision: keep it and give it a place, donate or sell it, or bin it. Anything that lives in another room goes in one basket and is put back at the end of the session.

Donations leave every two weeks. A bag by the door that never goes anywhere is just more clutter. The plan has a drop-off every other Saturday.

Lighter weeks are for catching up. Finish what's left and take things out of the house. A shorter plan leaves these weeks out, so the room weeks get fuller. On the shorter plan, still take donations out every other Saturday: add a quick drop-off to a room week that doesn't have one.

It's a guide, not a race. Aim for momentum, not perfection: a room gone through once is done, even if it isn't perfect.

Which level to pick

▪ A flat or small home: 8 weeks, one room or area a week, with two catch-up weeks. With fewer weeks it's 6.

▪ A family home with 3 or more bedrooms: 12 weeks, one room or category a week. With fewer weeks it's 10. If your home is large or very full, going slower is normal: give each room two weeks instead of one.

You can go faster with a short session every day and longer blocks at weekends, but that pace is hard to keep up. Clearing a whole home in one weekend isn't realistic unless you hire help.

Before you start

This plan is for ordinary clutter. Talk to a GP first, instead of starting on your own, if:

▪ letting go of things causes you severe distress,

▪ clutter stops rooms being used for what they're for, such as a bed you can't sleep in or a kitchen you can't cook in,

▪ the clutter makes your home unsafe: blocked exits, piles that could fall, things near heaters or cookers, damp or mould.

These can be signs of hoarding disorder, which a doctor can assess. A GP can refer you to mental health services if needed. If this describes someone you live with, the same applies: don't clear their things away for them or call in a clearance service. Help them see a GP instead.

While you work: lift heavy boxes with help, use a proper step or ladder rather than a chair, and wear a mask and gloves for dusty lofts, mould or old chemicals. Dust and mould can trigger asthma and allergies. Stop if sorting becomes overwhelming.

What you need

▪ Bags or boxes for donate, sell and rubbish, and one basket for things that belong in another room.

▪ A timer, on your phone or the oven. Stop when it goes off.

▪ A drop-off place for donations, such as a charity shop, and a reminder every two weeks to take them.

▪ A shredder or a shredding service for old papers with personal details.

▪ Gloves and a dust mask for storage spaces.

Don't buy storage boxes before you've decluttered. Extra storage tends to fill up again, and you'll know what you need once you've finished.

Common mistakes

▪ Starting with the hardest room. Photos and the loft drain you fast. Start where it's easy.

▪ Emptying a whole room at once. Work one drawer, shelf or corner at a time, so the room still works if you stop halfway.

▪ Marathon sessions. Consistency matters more than intensity. Three short sessions a week beat one exhausting weekend.

▪ Letting the bags sit. Take them out on drop-off day, even if they're half full.

▪ Deciding for other people. Other people's things are theirs to sort. Ask, don't clear.

▪ Buying organisers first. Declutter, then see what storage you need, if any.

Keeping it that way for three months

Once every room has been gone through, the next step on your board is to keep it that way for three months. The three months is GoalTodo's milestone, a good stretch to make the habits stick; it isn't a figure from research. What keeps a home clear is small, regular resets:

▪ Every evening, a few minutes putting things back where they live. In the kitchen, 10 to 15 minutes after dinner clearing the counters.

▪ Once a week, a 10 to 15 minute paper review: sort the post, file what you need, recycle the rest.

▪ Every two weeks, a donation drop-off, so the bag by the door never fills up.

▪ One in, one out. When something new comes in, something similar goes.

If a room slips, give it one 20-minute session. You don't need to start the plan again.

If you fall behind

Missed 1 week: Carry on with this week's room, and finish the one you missed in the next lighter week. If there isn't a lighter week left, or you're on the shorter plan without lighter weeks, use Saturday's block to finish what's left or move your finish date back by a week. Don't double up sessions to catch up.

Missed 2 weeks: Go back to the room you missed and give it a week, then carry on. If you're short of time, use up a lighter week, and enter your new date on the plan page.

Missed 3 weeks: Restart small: one 20-minute session on one drawer or shelf in the room you stopped in, then pick up the plan from that room. Enter a new finish date on the plan page.

Missed 4 or more weeks: Pick the plan up from the room you stopped in, with a new finish date. If you keep stopping because sorting feels overwhelming or upsetting, talk to a GP; that's worth help, not more willpower.

Sources

Modern Minimalism
`https://modernminimalism.com/how-to-declutter-your-home`
“Two-month plan: Declutter one room or category per week.”

Modern Minimalism
`https://modernminimalism.com/how-to-declutter-your-home`
“Three-month plan: One room or category per week.”

Modern Minimalism
`https://modernminimalism.com/how-to-declutter-your-home`
“Six-month plan: Two rooms or categories per month.”

Modern Minimalism
`https://modernminimalism.com/how-to-declutter-your-home`
“Dedicate 15–30 minutes each day, plus focused weekend blocks.”

Modern Minimalism
`https://modernminimalism.com/how-to-declutter-your-home`
“Start with easier spaces (entryway, bathrooms) and save the harder ones (garage, paper, sentimental items) for later.”

Modern Minimalism
`https://modernminimalism.com/how-to-declutter-your-home`
“Weekly paper review: Spend 10–15 minutes sorting mail, filing what's needed, and recycling the rest.”

Modern Minimalism
`https://modernminimalism.com/how-to-declutter-your-home`
“Focus on momentum, not perfection.”

Livingetc
https://www.livingetc.com/us/advice/decluttering-schedule
“If you only have 20 minutes after dinner on Tuesdays and Sundays? Great.”

Livingetc
https://www.livingetc.com/us/advice/decluttering-schedule
“Try a 30-minute timer.”

Livingetc
https://www.livingetc.com/us/advice/decluttering-schedule
“Set a reminder to drop off donations every two weeks or keep a running 'sell / donate / trash' box by the door.”

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“After all, she finds that consistency matters more than intensity.”

Homes & Gardens
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“Focusing on just this one room and giving it some TLC was a game-changer.”

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“Accumulated dust and mold may trigger asthma and other allergic reactions.”

Harvard Health Publishing
https://www.harvardhealth.org/mind-and-mood/when-keeping-stuff-gets-out-of-hand
“Worse, people are occasionally injured when papers catch fire or piles of them shift and topple.”

Cleveland Clinic
https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17682-hoarding-disorder
“Serious hoarding can lead to fire hazards, tripping hazards and health code violations.”

HSE
https://www.hse.ie/conditions/hoarding-disorder/
“A GP can assess them and refer them to mental health services if needed.”

HSE
https://www.hse.ie/conditions/hoarding-disorder/
“Trying to throw things away can cause strong emotions for the person who has hoarding difficulties.”

HSE
https://www.hse.ie/conditions/hoarding-disorder/
“Do not get extra storage space or call a service to clear the clutter away.”

Cleveland Clinic
https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17682-hoarding-disorder
“Living spaces that are so filled with possessions that they're unusable and/or unsafe.”

This plan online	https://goaltodo.com/declutter-your-home
Reach it with others on Welang	https://welang.com/goals/declutter-your-home
Reach it on your own in HourLife	https://www.hourlife.com

This plan is a guide, not medical advice. See a doctor before starting if you have a health condition, are pregnant, or haven't exercised in a long time.