

The Many Faces of Clutter

Clutter in Your Space

- ❑ Just-in-case items
- ❑ Telephone
- ❑ Mail/e-mail
- ❑ Collections/knick knacks
- ❑ Mending
- ❑ Unfinished projects
- ❑ Ongoing construction
- ❑ Multiples
- ❑ Unwanted gifts
- ❑ Things bought for others
- ❑ Seasonal clothes
- ❑ Items for storage
- ❑ Toys/stuffed animals
- ❑ Recipes
- ❑ Things to read/know
- ❑ Inherited items
- ❑ Photos
- ❑ Repair items
- ❑ Items to return
- ❑ Paper, financial records etc.
- ❑ Too many pets or plants

Clutter in the Body

- ❑ Constipation: eating to excess, holding on to too much
- ❑ Too much weight
- ❑ Unexpressed emotion: turns into tension, stagnant energy, illness. Creates conflict with others

Clutter in Mental Form

- ❑ Language: negative self-talk; language in music; words you accept from others
- ❑ Belief systems that no longer serve you
- ❑ Obsessions, phobias
- ❑ Constant projection into past/future: obscures the "now"

Clutter in Spiritual Form

- ❑ Perpetually looking for answers outside of self; can become just another diversion
- ❑ Relationships that no longer "fit" or support you

Background Clutter/Subtle Forms

- ❑ Visual clutter (e.g. billboards), blinking computer screen, pop-up computer announcements
- ❑ Radio static, background television noise

Clutter: The Cost and the Payoff

The Cost of Clutter

- ❑ Confusion
- ❑ Procrastination
- ❑ Frustration, irritation, anger
- ❑ Hopelessness
- ❑ Exhaustion, feeling harried
- ❑ Embarrassment
- ❑ Fear
- ❑ Sense of failure
- ❑ Anxiety and depression
- ❑ Injury (e.g. tripping, falling)
- ❑ Wasted money (multiples, storage units)
- ❑ Poor role modeling
- ❑ Stagnation
- ❑ Limited vision
- ❑ Guilt

The Payoff of Clutter

There is some reason you have it, why it works for you.

- ❑ Just in case you may need it and won't be able to afford another one or a better one; creates a sense of safety
- ❑ Avoidance and distraction; not looking inward or forward; excuse not to evolve, not to move forward
- ❑ A buffer/protection from feeling, from hurting
- ❑ Sense of worth, of being needed (e.g. a piled-high desk)
- ❑ Remedy for boredom: backlog of activity, things to do
- ❑ Feeling of control over the uncontrollable, even protection from death ("there is too much to do, so surely I can't die")
- ❑ Wealth ("look how much I have")
- ❑ Memories: good *or* bad (people often hold on to the bad too!)
- ❑ Rebellion/response to fastidiousness
- ❑ Identity: "this is who I am, what I have accomplished"



How to Clear Your Clutter and Transform Your Life

How To Approach Decluttering

These steps are key to making decluttering a positive experience; they allow you to get a sense of satisfaction/completion and to feel energized to continue the process in the future!

Identify your higher purpose in decluttering and hold that in mind as you select which items to keep or discard. It may be a micro-purpose such as wanting to be able to use a drawer or closet, but there is almost certainly a macro reason. Examples: bring in financial abundance, reduce friction between you and your partner, feel free.

Select a time of day when your energy is high and avoid decluttering when you're exhausted or irritated.

Support yourself energetically by putting on music, lighting a candle and/or incense, and drinking plenty of liquids.

Declutter one area at a time (e.g. a drawer or a closet). Begin in your bedroom. Create sanctuary.

Clear a surface on which to declutter (table top, counter or bed). Cover bed with an old sheet.

Assemble boxes and label them clearly: "garbage," "give away," "friends and family" (items for specific people), and "disseminate" or "other rooms" (items that belong elsewhere in your house- this allows you to stay focused in the room you are working in). Additional categories might be "recycling," "repair," "attic," "sell/consign," or "decide/sort later."

Create beauty in the place you have cleared, perhaps with a favorite decorative item. This will "protect" the space from accumulating clutter again so quickly. An essential step!

Identify ways to stop the flow of clutter *into* your life! Go to www.thirdmountain.com or www.newdream.org for ideas and links.

Actions For Removing Clutter

I suggest moving/removing items in quantities or multiples of nine, however you may move in any quantity you choose.

Search and rescue: Attack a chaotic space by gathering like items in piles before putting away (e.g. books, shoes, toys). Stay focused.

Move 27 objects within one room that haven't been moved in over a year.

Spend 15 minutes a day clearing a cluttered area.

Eliminate "just in case" items.

Remove everything from the front and sides of the refrigerator for nine days.

Leave the top of your dresser or fireplace mantel completely empty for nine days.

Sort clothes; give away one bag of clothing/week.

Donate books to a charity in quantities of nine.

Throw out or file nine items on your desk that you no longer need. The next day, nine more, etc.

Designate a basket in which the mail gets deposited to prevent it from spreading all over the house. Have receptacles for recycling and garbage handy so that unwanted items can be discarded immediately.

Eliminate clutter near the front door to invite in more opportunities.

If someone else's clutter is driving you crazy, attack your own. They will get it energetically.

Cancel a social engagement that isn't a "yes!"

Begin small... declutter your purse, wallet, or car.



Stress Relief For Your Body, Mind and Spirit Flow Through Your Day With Ease and Presence

Quick Body Relief

- ❑ Practice self-massage: on face, scalp, hands and feet. Ahhhhh.
- ❑ Encourage a yawn or sigh and notice how good it feels. Let a sound develop, perhaps "Om" (made by saying "ahh, ohh, mmm"), and enjoy the vibration resonating inside your body.
- ❑ Move eyes side to side, up and down.
- ❑ Drop jaw open fully, creating distance between your back teeth on upper and lower jaw. Press the back of tongue down or stick tongue out.
- ❑ Reduce tension in hands, wrists and forearms. Bring palms together in front in prayer position. Bring hands down so that forearms create a straight line. Roll shoulders down and back. Hold and breathe. To intensify stretch, turn fingers down.
- ❑ Release shoulder and neck tension. Interlace fingers behind your back and press hands away from shoulders, down the back, lengthening arms. Allow chest to open as shoulder blades squeeze together and lift head slightly towards the ceiling. If standing, you can add a forward bend with legs together or spread in a straddle.
- ❑ Standing, sitting or lying down, tighten every muscle in your body, hold, and then release. Repeat. Imagine you are calling every cell in your body, your being, to awaken and to release anything that no longer supports you.

Preparing for the Day

- ❑ When you wake up in the morning, don't hop immediately out of bed. Instead, breathe into your body and imagine the wonderful day ahead, the moments you desire to be "present" for.
- ❑ Think positive thoughts and envision well-being. You can do this any time.
- ❑ Imagine that anyone who might annoy you is an enlightened being sent to teach you something fabulous, if only showing you where your "hooks" are.
- ❑ Ask for help (and reduce your stress).
- ❑ Learn to say "no!" (and smile).
- ❑ Create a daily Sadhana (SAH-da-na), a practice proven to cultivate a living relationship with spirit: spiritual practice. Create a practice you can do daily. This may be 10 minutes of mediation, a few yoga poses, or simply taking three breaths with awareness and setting your intentions for the day.

Improve Digestion with Stomach Pump

Do not practice if you have had recent surgery or stomach problems. Stop if you become dizzy.

Practice before eating. Lying down on your back, exhale fully and hold the breath out. While holding the breath out, suck your belly firmly in toward your spine and up under your ribs, then press the belly out towards ceiling. Repeat, in and out, until the need for breath is strong. Return to normal breath. Repeat. Enjoy your food all the more! Stomach pump also has the effect of making us more emotionally aware since it brings fluidity to our "gut."



How we breathe affects every aspect of our being. Most of us breathe shallowly with the chest instead of the belly, putting our nervous system into a constant state of "fight or flight". Restore well-being, restore union, by breathing deeply into the belly throughout the day!

Breathe only through the nose during these exercises.

Relaxation Breath

One of the fastest and most effective stress relievers is the "4-7-8 Breath." For best effect repeat the following cycle four times, twice a day. Practice just before bed for improved sleep.

Place the tip of your tongue against the bony ridge by your upper front teeth. Breathe in through your nose for 4 counts. Hold your breath for 7 counts. Exhale through your mouth (making a whooshing sound) for 8 counts. (Source: Dr. Andrew Weil's web site: www.drweil.com).

Compression Breathing & Core Lift

Lying down, exhale and draw your abdomen towards your spine while slowly pressing breath out as if you were getting the stale air out of an air mattress. As the exhale ends, contract your abdomen firmly, drawing the muscles in and upward, lifting towards and under the ribcage. Try this "core lift" while standing and walking also. It strengthens the core, reduces impact on the joints, and improves balance.

"Skull Polishing Breath"

Also called "Kapalabhati," this breath clears the mind and creates a more responsive abdomen. This can bring you more in touch with your emotions (you may want to use it after conversation with a relative who gets on your nerves!). Do not practice this exercise if you are pregnant, have had recent surgery, or have an active stomach ulcer. If you have uncontrolled high blood pressure, consult your doctor. You may want to have a tissue handy and blow your nose prior.

- ❑ Sit erect, relax your abdomen and breathe in and out through your nose throughout this practice.
- ❑ Take a few breaths in and out. Then, on an exhale, contract your abdomen powerfully (as though you were trying to blow out a candle with the air from your nose).
- ❑ Allow your abdomen to relax from the contraction so that a passive inhalation happens.
- ❑ Repeat exhalations and inhalations at a steady pace. Start with 10-20 expulsions and increase as you feel comfortable. If you become light-headed or lose your rhythm, slow down and make sure you are taking in enough air on the inhalation.
- ❑ To finish, exhale and hold out as long as is comfortable.
- ❑ Inhale to 2/3 your capacity and hold as long as is comfortable.
- ❑ Release the breath and feel the effects.

