

Out With the Old and In With the New

The end of the year is a great time to clear out all that no longer serves us and declutter our lives, homes, and professional spaces. Marie Kondo, author of several books and a Netflix show, *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo* ([343\) 10 Amazing Tips from Tidying Up with Marie Kondo - YouTube](#)), has been a leader in the decluttering craze that has swept the United States.

There are medically good reasons to declutter. Clutter can affect our stress levels, sleep, and ability to focus. It can make us less productive and can trigger coping and avoidance strategies that result in increased eating, poor food choices, and avoidance behaviors such as watching tv [A Psychologist Explains Why Clutter Can Lead to Anxiety and Stress \(menshealth.com\)](#). In her article, [It's science: Clutter can actually give you anxiety - Motherly](#), Anne-Marie Gambelin explains why clutter is terrible for our wellbeing.

So there it is, clutter can make us feel stressed, anxious, and depressed. What can help us handle the clutter in our lives, and why do we have so much clutter anyway?

Many of us “save” things for various reasons:

- “I’ll use it someday.”
- “My kids might need this down the road.”
- “I want to pass this along to the next generation.”
- “I’ll fit into that next year.”
- “All this stuff was my parents. It brings back such good memories.”
- ” I got it on sale!”

Use Marie Kondo’s decluttering technique to help yourself handle your clutter by asking some of these questions:

- Do I love it? Don’t let precious items become sentimental clutter. If it doesn’t make you feel good or make you look fabulous, it is a “no” and has to “go.”
- Do I have duplicates? Do I have the room to store them so I don’t clutter my living space?
- Do I use these items regularly? Get rid of sale items that were too good to pass up. Items you bought thinking you would use them one day. Get rid of those vacation items you no longer need.
- Is it a gift I never wanted? Regift or recycle it!
- Can it be put to better use? Why not use that “good china.” Loan or give items to others who would benefit from their use. Rent your items and make them work for you!
- Has It passed its expiration date?
 - Expiration dates can be applied to food and documents and paperwork such as old invoices and bills, contracts, resumes, and even clothing. Ask yourself if the clothing pieces that have sentimental attachments for you but no longer fit or are no longer in style necessary to keep?
- Is it critical to save, and why? Important papers should be kept in fireproof storage. Tax returns should be kept handy in case of an audit.

After you figures-out what can go, commit to a plan, even if it is a small plan. Don’t be afraid to start! Jump right in and stick with it!

GET RID OF THESE THINGS TODAY!

- Expired or unused medications
- Makeup older than one year
- Mystery wires and chargers
- Extra buttons
- Old worn sheets and towels
- Outgrown toys, books, and sports equipment
- Instruction manuals, newspapers, and magazines you will never read

Spend 15 minutes a day gathering things to throw out or give away.

Plan a 30-day challenge and pick something easy to start with, then build on it.

- Empty one junk drawer or a refrigerator bin
- Purge your clothes closet
- Go through your old movie collection
- Clean out your TV stand, or bathroom cabinet
- Clean out your wallet, purse, or bookbag
- Organize and clean out your garage
- Organize and clean out your office

Be mindful of your thoughts, triggers, and actions:

- Be thoughtful of holding onto sentimental items. Save just enough of something to remind you of that special someone.
- Borrow from the library or purchase an e-reader instead of buying books, newspapers, and magazines.
- Buy fewer clothes but when you do buy them, buy better quality clothing so they last longer.
- Recognize the triggers of stress shopping, super sales, and buying multiples; pause before you pick-up the item to purchase it.
- Only buy things you “really need” for the current timeframe.
- Utilize storage and organizational techniques
- Put things away after you use them
- Hang clothes up or put them in the hamper
- Take any donations or returns out to your car immediately, so they are one step closer to getting there.
- Be thankful and offer gratitude to the items that have served you.
- Acknowledge the positive changes that occur as a result of living a more organized, clutter-free life.

The Healthy Nurse Healthy New Jersey team encourages you to apply the tips above to *clear away the old to make room for the new!* Please write to us at healthynurse@njsna.org for a chance to **WIN a Healthy Nurse Self-Care Package!** Let us know how you intend to make room for the **NEW Year in 2021!**

Cheers!

Linda Corigliano and the Healthy Nurse Healthy New Jersey team

Resources to help you get organized:

Organizing From the Inside Out by Julie Morgenstern

The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing by Marie Kondo

Spark Joy: An Illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organizing and Tidying Up by Marie Kondo

Joy at Work: Organizing Your Professional Life by Marie Kondo

The Life-Changing Manga of Tidying Up: A Magical Story by Marie Kondo

[Organize Your Life with These 8 Books - Classy Career Girl](#)