

The Wellness Family

Dr. Cohn Keeps You Informed

Cutting out the Clutter

Organization, cleaning and purging have become catch phrases for TV shows and news articles. It's no longer something hidden in the closet, literally, but is now out in the open and becoming almost a fad. De-clutter your life and be happier, safer and sane. Really? Maybe it's just a matter of having a little more time and space. Regardless of your reasons, here are some helpful ways to cut out the clutter.

Clutter in Your Home

If you've ever found yourself thinking that you need a bigger house, that might not actually be the problem; it could just be that you need less stuff. Our homes are typically our biggest clutter collectors.

The first step is to start with one room or closet that has become a catch-all of sorts. Take one large box and two large baskets and dig in. In one basket, you will put the stuff that you will use regularly and should continue to have easily accessible. In the other basket, you will place those things that you just can't bear to part with but that you know you don't need to be able to get to quickly. In the box, you will put everything else.

Once that room or closet is empty, everything in the first basket is put back neatly. The items in the second basket should be packed into a storage bin, which should then be labeled and put in a storage closet in your home, in the garage, or in a small rental unit.

Do this with each room, then when you're finished, the items in the boxes can be sold at a yard sale. Anything that doesn't sell can be donated to a local thrift store or rescue mission. If you don't want to have a yard sale then skip the sale and go straight to the thrift store.

Clutter in Your Car

You might not realize it, but your car can also be a clutter collector. If you turn a corner too fast and hear a loud thunk, it's probably not something wrong with your car but something slamming around in your car.

The trunk or rear storage space may be home to an assortment of re-usable grocery bags, jumper cables, an emergency tool kit and perhaps even an emergency rations kit.

The back seat might currently be housing empty water bottles and snack containers or even miscellaneous toys that have been carted to the car and forgotten.

Hair brushes, books and book bags, notebooks and more have probably found their way into your car and under the seats.

Cutting out the clutter in your car is as simple as one storage bin for the trunk or rear storage space and a small box for the back seat. Place anything that needs to stay in the car (jumper cables, etc.) into the storage bin and place it neatly in the corner of your trunk or rear storage space. Place anything that should stay in the backseat (hair brush, car toys, etc.) into the small box and place it on the floorboard of the back seat. Everything else should be taken out and discarded or returned to the house.



"The simplest way to de-clutter is to only keep the things you positively can't live without..."

Clutter in Your Workspace

Whether you work at a home-office or in a cubicle at a company, clutter can reduce your efficiency and interfere with your productivity.

The quickest way to cut the clutter at work is to get the stuff off your desk that you don't use everyday. A couple of bins and a few organizational hanging folders and you can actually have your desk clean and organized in no time. For instance:

- Extra office supplies should be put in a labeled bin and in a closet.
- Project notes should be put in labeled files and stored in a project bin.
- External hard drives or other office equipment that you only need to get to when something goes wrong with them should be stored on the floor under your desk away from your feet.

An extra filing cabinet or bookshelf can get stuff off your desk and away from your workspace and make a huge difference.

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Clutter in Your Schedule

This may seem a little out of place, but this is probably the area where our clutter causes the most stress. The average schedule typically includes at least 8 hours a day at work, grocery shopping at least a couple of times a week if we're eating whole, living foods, and trips to school, daycare or after-school activities where sitting in the car can feel like so much wasted time.

Other clutter in your schedule can be work meetings or healthcare appointments (dentist, chiropractor, etc.) and we can't forget lunch dates and coffee chats. Finally, mix into this mess, meal preparation and necessary family time; well, it's easy to see why your schedule could be considered cluttered.

Cutting out the clutter in your schedule can be as simple as learning how to say, "No," or as complicated as time management classes. However, the truth be told, it's probably somewhere in the middle by owning and managing a calendar.

The first step to de-cluttering your calendar is to actually own one. If you were to print off a one page calendar with spaces for appointments starting at 8 AM and ending at 8 PM, then took the time to fill in those spaces with everything you have to do tomorrow, the truth is you'll probably find things overlapping and areas where you haven't left yourself enough time.

Many people think they don't have enough on their schedule to require a calendar, but in fact these are the people who typically have the most cluttered calendar because they have no way to recognize when they're reaching their limits.

It's a lot easier to say no if you know your calendar's full. Time management is really nothing more than knowing not to schedule two things for the same time. Both of these clutter-cutters can be helped with just the purchase of a day calendar.

Finally, always include in your calendar at least ten minutes in between meetings or appointments and travel time (even if it's just 5 minutes to get from one conference room to the next).

In Summary

In every area of our lives we should try to remember the old saying: everything has a place and everything in its place. The simplest way to de-clutter is to only keep the things you positively can't live without and then give them a place that is appropriate to their use.

One final piece of advice, every home needs a pantry. It doesn't necessarily have to be a closet in the kitchen, it can be any closet in the home; but it should be where cleaning supplies are stored up high and other items can be tucked out of sight.

Cutting clutter out of your life is really nothing more than recognizing that some things you own because you want to, and not because you need to. If you don't have the space for them, let them go.

The Keys to Cutting the Clutter:

One step at a time.

Can you live without it?

Do you really need it?

Dear Patient,

Dr. Cohn is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

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