

4 decluttering tips before the new year hits

The New Year is fast approaching and for many of us, as the festive season ramps up, the workload slows down, which makes it a perfect time of year to shed the clutter you may have been accumulating over the past year.

Whether it's a messy desk or a messy head, clutter gives us too much stimuli, draws our attention away from what we need to focus on, gets in the way of us relaxing, makes us feel guilty and suggests to our brains that our work is never finished.

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Unless you're someone who thrives in your own organised chaos, then any upfront work you can do now will ensure you're setting yourself up for a smooth start to 2020.

To help you with that, here are our top 4 tips to decluttering your workspace and headspace in preparation for the year ahead:

1. Declutter your desk.

Start with your workspace. There is no doubt that there is a link between a messy desk and a messy head. In fact, a survey by print company Brother found that 40 percent of workers admitted that an untidy workspace made them less productive. So, leaving work with a tidy desk is going to help you feel a lot more prepared to hit the ground running when 2020 rolls around. Here's where to start:

- Identify the essentials. What absolutely needs to be on your desk for you to do your job? Everything else is unnecessary.
- Create spaces for things you need. Everyone loves stationary! Try implementing an in-tray and out-tray system, or check out new desktop organiser.
- If you don't use it, ditch it. Take one item at a time on your desk and ask yourself when you last used it. If it wasn't this week pack it away. If it wasn't this year, ditch it.
- Tackle paperwork. Paper is your enemy. Attack it. File it. Scan it. Recycle it.
- Do the same for your computer. Emails and files build up very fast and now is a good time to start streamlining your folders.

2. Declutter your head.

Once you've left work behind, it's time to declutter your head. As we all know, our personal lives and our professional lives are not separate entities, even if we try to avoid it, the two overlap and impact each other. So, think about how you can approach these

decluttering tips holistically:

- Empty your head by making lists. Writing things down lessens the mental juggling you need to do. It doesn't mean you have to do everything now. You could be creating a list that you don't even need to look at until the New Year, but at least it's out of your head.
- Make decisions. Action is better than procrastination. Sometimes, taking a chunk of time to knock off the small niggling jobs can help kick-start the process and give you the clear space you need to start tackling the items that cause you the most stress.
- Do one task at a time. For most people multi-tasking is just stressful. Ticking achievements off one at a time from your list as you go helps with motivation.
- Discuss. You don't want to start your new year harbouring concerns or challenges from the past. So, in the spirit of decluttering, if there is something that has been troubling you for some time, make a point of trying to address it.

3. **Set yourself up for success.**

Now is the time to create next year's goals and get all your tools and resources ready so you can hit the ground running. Have you bought a diary for 2020, plotted key dates, and done your budget?

4. **Do something you love.**

Before you head back to work make sure you have some real "me" time. Doing things that have been putting off will help to alleviate any subconscious pressure you might have been putting on yourself. So, plan an activity you have wanted to do for ages but hadn't had the time or get a coffee with a friend you have been meaning to catch-up with. We promise, you'll feel better for it.

Now, just do it. Look for ways to put these steps into action. It doesn't matter if you can't get around to them all – any bit of preparation will help ensure your return to work in 2020 is smooth and stress-free.