



TIDY-UP TIME!

All out of storage solutions? Try these quick and easy ways to keep your home clutter free.
Kate Farr reports

Living in DB, we're blessed with an exhilarating city, vibrant culture and spectacular countryside right on our doorsteps. One thing we don't have in abundance is space – the one thing that most families tend to need the most. But before you start packing your bags for roomier destinations, here are a few ways to live within the limited space available without losing your cool.

Sort it out

The first step towards solving any problem is admitting that you have one! Take a good, critical look around your home or ask a friend to do this for you. It can be difficult to be impartial about your own home, so ask them to be completely honest in their assessment (and don't

forget to return the favour). You'll probably find that their thoughts echo your own – if you can see those piles of paper balanced on every surface, so can they.

Once you have a 'hit list' of bugbears, tackle them one at a time. Focusing your attention on one area will prevent you from becoming overwhelmed and enable you to find workable solutions to each problem.

Begin at the front door – if you stumble over shoes and sports gear on your way in, consider a shoe cupboard, stacking shelves, or wall-mounted racks. Be realistic – saying that you'll file receipts daily isn't the same as actually doing it, so make your own life easier with a bowl by the front door to handle pocket overflow, coins and other items. Set aside three minutes per

week to empty this and you'll barely notice the time.

Spark joy

When tackling larger living spaces, preparation is key. We've all heard about it, but Marie Kondo's bestselling book *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* has some genuinely helpful tips that benefit everyone.

No time to read? Kondo's most useful tips are to sort your possessions by category, keeping only the items that 'spark joy', before finding them a dedicated place in your home. This means saying goodbye to all that lidless Tupperware, and hello to a well-labelled spice rack that will make you look forward to spending time in the kitchen. ▶

A family affair

Of course, the smallest people in the household create the biggest mess. Toy storage tops almost every parent's list of headaches, and the encroachment of plastic on living space can make you feel as though you're living in a branch of Toys "R" Us, ransacked by tiny ram-raiders.

It's never too early to get kids involved with tidying up, and, love it or loathe it, nobody does creative, affordable storage quite like 'The Big Blue Box'. A strategic Ikea shop can solve clutter woes quickly, with child-friendly drawers, boxes and shelves turning tidy-up time into a friendly collaboration rather than an all-out family battle.

Help little ones to find the right home for their treasures by sticking pictures onto each drawer. Pull-along boxes with wheels make gathering small items easier, while Perspex drawers are great for sorting Lego into individual colours (these also work well for Mum's makeup stash). Consider keeping paint, Playdoh and other messy items on a high shelf away from little fingers, while keeping toys that they can enjoy without supervision at floor level for easy access.

Ask the experts

What we wear has an intrinsic association with our memories, so if you're struggling to part with long since outdated outfits, or have simply lost sight of what suits you and what doesn't, an expert 'wardrobe edit' can help you cull dead wood. Make My Wardrobe Work will send a stylist to your home to help you curate your clothes into a workable everyday collection, saving you angst, not to mention time, in the process.

If you find that you have items –

such as seasonal clothing or sporting equipment – that you can't live without but have no immediate need for, consider off-site storage. Look for units with climate control to guard against mould, and consider the added convenience of collection and drop-off services. Pakt photograph and store your clothes, so you have a full visual inventory on hand, while Spacebox can stash almost anything that has outstayed its welcome in your home, leaving you with nothing but wide open space.

And finally...

Once your pad is pristine, keep it that way! Have regular clear-outs, donating unwanted toys, appliances and furniture to charity. DB Mothers

and Friends accepts good condition donations, and will collect bulky items from your home. Encourage budding entrepreneurs to sell toys and books for extra pocket money, either in the time-honoured fashion of a blanket on the ground at the monthly Flea Market, or on one of the many local Facebook trading forums.

And the ultimate clutter-busting tips? Try to apply the 'spark joy' principle to everything that you buy, or, failing that, freeze your credit card in a large block of ice. Forcing yourself to carefully consider each purchase will help to ensure that your cupboards remain uncluttered and save you money too. Enjoy your orderly new home! **B**



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Prioritise clever storage solutions for kids



Every entrance benefits from a shoe cabinet

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- DB Mothers and Friends, 2ndhanditem.wordpress.com
- Ikea, www.ikea.com/hk
- Make My Wardrobe Work, www.makemywardrobework.com
- Marie Kondo, konmari.com
- Pakt, www.pakt.hk
- Spacebox, www.spacebox.com.hk

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