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Famous for her book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, Marie Kondo has inspired thousands of people around the world to embrace the concept of keeping only what you love and making sure that every item you have has its own place and is easily accessible.

While you might not reach Marie Kondo's goal of never having to clean up again, by following these guidelines your life will be easier and less stressful, plus you'll have the satisfaction of knowing where everything is.

Judith Penny of All Sorted Now says that organising is a continuous process, and needs regular tweaking and maintenance. She suggests that you make it a family commitment from the start, and teach children that picking up after themselves and maintaining systems is part of being on the family team. These are her guidelines:

● **CONSUME CONSCIOUSLY**

Just because you can buy an item on sale or something that looks great, doesn't mean that you should have it. Be conscious of what you introduce to your home. First ask yourself, "where will I store this, do I really need it and will it be useful?"

● **DEVELOP NEW ORGANISING ROUTINES**

Resolve to keep one small area organised at all times. This could be



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THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

● A peg board in the garage can be configured to display your tools. ● Tidy open shelves make for stylish displays and encourage you to avoid accumulating clutter. ● Make a handy spot for keys and post with file holders attached to the underside of a shelf.

THE joy OF TIDINESS

Clutter complicates our lives, drains energy and causes stress. Follow these tips from two Cape Town professionals on getting and staying organised

your kitchen counter, bedside table or stationery drawer. Set aside time periodically to keep it neat. This will motivate you to get going in other areas.

● **PUT IT AWAY, AND DO IT NOW**

It's tempting to put the keys down on the kitchen counter or leave your gym bag at the front door, but that results in more work later. Rather put the items, especially tools, away immediately so you'll be able to find them later.

● **LIVE WITHIN YOUR SPACE**

Every storage container, cupboard, filing system and shelf has a limited amount of space. When this fills up, don't buy another similar item. This is the time to purge and reclaim that space.

● **ONE-IN, ONE-OUT**

If you buy a new T-shirt, then give up one that you haven't worn for a year. The same goes for all types of clothing, books, magazines and toys.

● **ESTABLISH A DONATION STATION**

Pick a spot where the family can put things that are no longer used, needed or wanted. It could be in your garage or

in a cupboard. When it's full, drop it off at your local charity.

● **A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING, AND EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE**

Putting things away is so much easier when they have a designated place. Work out the best spot and put them there every time. You'll soon get into the habit.

● **COMPLETE ONE TASK CYCLE AT A TIME**

When you have finished showering or bathing, finish the cycle by putting dirty clothes in the wash basket or clean clothes in the cupboard, and hang towels up.

● **END OF DAY DECLUTTER**

At the end of each day, go through your home with a basket, collecting everything that's not in its place and put it where it belongs.

● **FILE, DON'T PILE**

Keep all your paperwork in one spot and set aside time on a regular basis to sort and file it. Establish a simple and easy filing system that works for you. Don't buy unnecessary storage boxes. You'll find you already have suitable alternatives such as ice cream containers. ▷



CASE STUDY

"Children's rooms are the most difficult areas in a home to keep tidy," says Leigh Geary of Rondebosch who writes the blog, The Mom Diaries. "Although our sons' room was fairly tidy, we needed to create more space for them as they had to double up after the arrival of our daughter. Noah had nowhere to do his homework and

ended up at the dining table, which is a fairly noisy part of the house."

She asked Saskia Wild of Simply Sorted to help her establish a simple, attractive, well-organised space. Saskia spent five hours with Leigh on an initial declutter and then a further three sorting and deciding how to containerise everything, for instance, socks stored in ice cream containers.

As the top priority was a desk for Noah, Leigh sourced a compact, wall-hung one with a drop-down work surface, a book tidy and bunk beds. Leigh says there's no longer a scramble to look for socks and underpants in the morning as these are now kept in separate containers and the boys know exactly where to find them. The boys have a tidy up time too and they know where things should go.

"I know the room will not stay this perfect," admits Leigh, "but at least we have a system and everything has a function." **GMH**

THIS SPREAD, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Inset: Leigh Geary (left) with Saskia Wild (right) of Simply Sorted. ● After reworking, Leigh's sons' room is now functional and easier to keep tidy. The book tidy is from Simply Home and the bunk beds from Nest Design. ● The desk came from Roca Kids Furniture & Decor. ● An organised cupboard makes for easy dressing in the morning.



SASKIA'S FIVE-STEP PLAN

"We use 20% of what we own, 80% of the time – the rest is just clutter," explains Saskia. Use her easy step-by-step guide on one room at a time.

1. GATHER TOOLS

You'll need a timer. Make each declutter session 15–20 minutes long. Your decision-making tools will be bags or containers labelled 'Recycle', 'Donate', 'Sell' and 'Another Room', and a black bin bag for rubbish.

2. SORT AND DECLUTTER

Start with stuff on the floor and then work clockwise from one corner of the room. Sort out small quantities of clutter at a time and put like items together. In children's rooms, sort toys into

categories like Lego, dolls and cars.

3. MAKE DECISIONS

Decide where each item will go. Be ruthless – if you haven't used it in the last year, donate it. If it is broken, recycle or ditch it. If you have multiples of the same item, keep one and donate or sell the rest. Only keep what you need, use and love.

4. CONTAINERISE

Decide where each item will be stored. Make use of walls with shelves or bookcases and utilise space under beds. Keep things in suitable containers like plastic boxes or baskets and label them.

5. SORT BAGS

Put the donations and recycling in the car to be dropped off, 'Other Room' items in their place and the rubbish in the bin.

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