

Helen Sanderson
Creating Calm from Clutter



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How to use your Home Declutter Kit

Hello and thank you for picking up this special green box

I've worked as a professional declutterer and interior designer for over a decade. For a long time, it's been a dream of mine (spurred on by requests from clients) to make the decluttering process I use available in a do-it-yourself kit. I'm delighted that you now hold it in your hands and I hope it helps you make a real and lasting transformation to your home.

Make room for your future

It never ceases to amaze me the changes that happen when someone declutters their space. A new energy emerges from beneath the clutter. People often tell me they feel a surge of power and very often significant things start to shift: family relationships improve, new possibilities open up, promotions at work, new relationships, shifts in therapy.

This Home Declutter Kit offers a simple, easy way to detox your living space and clear clutter from your life – fast! If you're into healthy living you'll be familiar with the notion of detoxing or purging the body. Consider this a handy tool to help you do the same on the home front. Now's the time to make room for the future you deserve.

They say you don't notice good design. Well, I think you don't notice a good system either – it just works. Because I've been using this decluttering system for years I know what works and what doesn't. It's not rocket science, but if you stick to the process as described, things will go swimmingly.

Happy decluttering!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

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The methods described within this book are the author's personal thoughts. They are not intended to be a definitive set of instructions for this project. You may discover there are other methods and materials to accomplish the same end result.

How the kit works

The kit consists of several sets of illustrated prompt cards and this book that sets out my six step process. Together these tools take you through a clear, easy-to-follow method for doing a declutter or tidy up, big or small, alone or with a friend. However you choose to use it, I'll be right by your side – in spirit – helping you to let things go and make space for more calm and order in your home.

In this book, I'll show you how to set up the cards, get started, sort your clutter and create order. And I'll also suggest plenty of practical tips to keep you focused along the way.

There are many different cards in this kit. You may find it contains some cards you never need and is missing a few you wish you had. That's why I've also provided some blank cards, so you can write your own (and draw a picture too!) or simply stick a post-it on them.

The cards are colour coded into sets. Some can be used for a quick tidy-up, others you'll only need during a bigger purge. Some are specifically for a paper declutter and others will help tackle your wardrobe or other specific areas you want to clear. There's also a set for honouring memories, to help you process some of those more sentimental items.

Take it fast, take it slow

My hope is that you go for the deep purge and use this kit at least once to radically transform the look, feel and energy of your home. But, like a juice cleanse, I recommend you declutter regularly to keep your home in harmonious balance.

If that's not what you're looking for, use the kit as a fast, efficient way of clearing the kitchen counters, or that ubiquitous 'homeless' corner, cupboard or drawer where you end up shoving random objects. You know, the ones you never get round to finding a home for or keep putting off making decisions about. Don't worry – we can deal with those too!

Think of decluttering as like gardening

Reorganising your home is like cutting back plants and reclaiming an overgrown garden. It takes three stages until it is beautiful again:

- **Weeding** – clearing out that clutter.
- **Planting plan** – deciding where things are going to live. 'A place for everything and everything in its place' as the saying goes.
- **Maintenance** – setting up systems that work for you and help you keep on top of it.

This kit guides you through these stages and I recommend you use the 'everyday essentials tidy up' set regularly to keep the decks clear.

Do it for you

Decluttering isn't just about throwing things away, it's also a process of remembering and reconnecting with what you have. Afterwards, you'll not only be able to find items more easily, you'll feel good about yourself as well and discover that things flow better at home and in life. The home is a reflection of you, so doing this job represents a big tick in the self-care department.

This is mostly a book about common sense. But I wrote it because I know that what feels logical for one person might not be so straightforward for another. I have made the process as simple and easy to follow as possible.

I hope you enjoy using this kit as much as I do.

Good luck and have fun!

What's in the kit?

The sorting cards These are divided into colour-coded sets for different types of declutter; you'll learn more about these later.

Goals card You'll use this in Step one – setting a clear intention.

Prompt card Put this on the wall and when you aren't sure what to do with an item, look at it and ask yourself the questions printed on it: *Will I notice it's gone? Do I love it? Would I feel lighter without it?* and so on.

Things you can add to help make the process easier:

- Five or six containers in various sizes (transparent boxes are best).
- Stick-on labels and a black marker pen.
- A timer.
- Bin bags, recycle bags and strong bags for donations.
- A notepad and pen.
- A set of pegs, some Blu-tack or sticky tape.
- Some strong tea, biscuits or healthy snacks.
- And maybe a helpful friend!

Finally, think of a way to reward yourself when you finish. This is quite important as some part of you may not enjoy doing this!

This kit is designed to help you carry out a number of different types of decluttering sessions. These are the **Deep purge**, the **Everyday essentials tidy up**, the **Paperwork declutter**, the **Wardrobe declutter** and **Honouring memories**. There are special sets of colour-coded cards for each of these in your box. Pages 8 to 23 explain how to do the deep purge in six simple steps. Once you've learned the system, you can easily adapt it for your weekly tidy up or can tailor it to any particular area you want to tackle, for example to declutter your paperwork (see page 26). I explain more about the wardrobe declutter and honouring memories processes on pages 29 to 30.

The deep purge

The cards you use for your declutter will depend on you and your circumstances. Start with the green **Everyday essentials tidy up** set (page 24) and then choose the cards which apply to you from the blue **Optional extras** set, for example: if you're keen campers clearing out the garage, use the Travel/Camping card. If the children's toys are taking over the house, you need the Toy box card. You get the idea.

For the **Deep purge**, you will also need to sort items into sub-categories. You'll find out how to do this in Step five, later in this book.



I really want to emphasise how important it is to follow the process to the end and not cut corners. You may be tempted to jump to the later stages before the first ones are complete, especially when you get a surge of energy from the clearing you do. Hard won experience with many clients has taught me that this will backfire. Trust me on this and make sure you finish the 'weeding' stage first.

Preparing for a declutter

Decide which room, area or items you're going to tackle

Don't try and do your whole house at once. To begin with, I recommend you choose specific sets of items or particular areas and start with them only: for example, your books, bathroom cabinet, shoes, bags or simply clearing your desk or table will be a good start. Don't try to do everything at once, however much you're in a muddle.

Always keep your paperwork until last, unless you are doing a paper declutter only.

It's really important to work through and complete steps one to four for each set of items or area before you move on to the next.

Allocate a specific day and time

For a deep purge I recommend you try to set aside a block of 3 hours minimum, 5–6 hours max. I might sound like a tough taskmaster, but here's the thing: decluttering is a messy business and once you start, you need to finish! You may find it a challenge to cope with the chaos you'll create at the start, but don't panic, I've built in time for clearing up.

Here's a suggested schedule to use if you think a structured approach will help:

- 9 – 11.30am – start weeding
- 15-minute break
- 11.45 – 1.15pm – continue weeding (start clear up at 12.45pm for a half-day declutter)
- 45-minute lunch break
- 2 – 3.30pm – more weeding
- 15-minute break
- 3.45 – 4.15pm – more weeding or start to categorise, if the weeding's finished.
- 4.15pm – start clearing up and putting away
- 5.15 – stop!



Timing is important Jot down the times when you plan to work and use a timer to keep you on track. Trust me – the time will fly by! The only way it won't is if you start to agonise about decisions. Stick to your schedule, as your partner or flatmate might not be too happy if they get home and can't find the TV remote under all the piles!

Keep working through the process

The more things you pull out and put back without resolving what to do with them, the more overwhelmed you'll feel. If this happens you'll lose confidence in your ability to complete the purge and be less inclined to try it again. So accept that this process is going to take over your morning, afternoon or entire day and create a lot of mess at the start.

Clear a space

A big area of floor is good, so push back furniture to give yourself plenty of room. If you have a bad back, you can work on a table top. Set up containers so that you can reach them and attach your cards. You might have to walk to them, depending on how much stuff you have and how big the items are, but ideally stay seated during the weeding process.

Ask a friend to help

It really does help to have a second pair of hands. But tell them, politely, that you don't want them to hassle you or interfere. Their job is simply to hand you piles of stuff and to bag up and take out the recycle, donate and bin it piles, freeing you to focus on making decisions.

Play some music

You may prefer gentle classical music or something faster to give you energy. That said, steer clear of music if it's going to be distracting or make you feel emotional. Just use it to calm your 'monkey mind' that's complaining about doing this process – **remember you need to focus on making decisions.**

Getting to work – the six step process



My tried and tested declutter technique has worked for hundreds of clients and will work for you if you follow these simple steps. Remember to work through the steps one by one and don't be tempted to cut corners.

Here's an overview of the steps, which we'll cover in more detail in the next section. I recommend you read through all six steps to get a picture of the whole process before you start. Please don't be tempted to just jump in at step one. A steady approach at this stage pays off later.

Step one: Set a clear intention

Step two: Set up the cards and start weeding

Step three: Clear the decks

Step four: Box and label the other piles

Repeat 1–4 for each area you want to purge. Only move on to 5 when weeding is complete.

Step five: Sort things into categories

Step six: Create beauty and harmony



It's important to keep working quickly when you're sorting and not to get distracted; for example, by reading through things. Make good use of the Don't know, Action it and Read it cards to maintain your flow.

*'Intentions compressed into words
enfold magical power.'*

Deepak Chopra

Step one: Set a clear intention

Before you start your declutter project, sit down and get focused. If you like to visualise, picture the home you'd love to live in. If you meditate, I recommend a short meditation. If you're an active person, write yourself a to-do list. Or maybe do all three.

Spend about 10 minutes doing this and then write down your goals and intentions. These can be simple – just focus on how you'd like your home to look, how it will feel and what you'll be able to do once it's finished that you can't do right now. Here are some ideas for you:

- I will create more order and harmony in my home.
- I'll have a clear head having dealt with the clutter and no longer have to keep thinking about it.
- I'll feel good when I walk through the front door.
- I want to make a big change in my life – this is the first step to the new me.
- I will invite friends over for coffee or a dinner party.
- My home will be a relaxed, calm and supportive place to be.
- I'll have dealt with past baggage and made space for the new.
- My kids will feel more content, safe and contained.

Now write down your goals and intentions on your goals card.



Once you've set your intentions and know where you're headed, put the goals card up somewhere prominent where you're working. That way, if you hit a wall of resistance, boredom or tiredness, you can quickly and easily remind yourself why you set out on this journey.



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I hope you enjoyed this sample of my Home Declutter Kit manual and are inspired to create room for your future.

To learn more and get the full kit with 34 illustrated cards, visit homedeclutterkit.com today.

Helen



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