

Catch the Clutter



THREE HABITS TO BUILD IN ORDER TO
TO STOP CLUTTER *BEFORE* IT HAPPENS

BY KIM SMITH

It's amazing how quickly our homes can fill up.

Each new day brings both wanted and unwanted items into our homes. The items we want to keep tend to find a place to live, whether this be on a fireplace mantle, inside of a toy box, or dropped into a filing cabinet. **It's the things that we don't *really* find ourselves attaching to that become the main the culprits of clutter.**



did you know?

The National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals reported that 80% of the items in most American homes go unused.

From junk mail to kids' artwork to hand-me-down kitchen appliances that our in-laws *insist* we keep, unwanted incoming items build up quickly and turn our once organized spaces into dumping grounds for, well, just about anything. Can you relate? **If so, I'm here to tell you two things:**

- 1) You are not alone in your frustration.**
- 2) Habit-building and mindset shifts can help you to catch the clutter *before* it happens.**



Habit #1: Create a Plan for Paper

Paper is *constantly* finding its way into our homes. Mail, newspapers, kids' school pages... the list goes on and on. **Because of this, paper tends to pile up and clutter our flat surfaces if it's not dealt with right away.** Here are some ways to quickly say bye-bye to paper clutter:

1. *Go through your mail right away.* Spending five minutes (if that!) to review the mail you are walking inside with will eliminate a huge portion of the paperwork that lands on your flat surfaces.

2. *Automate your bills.* Automating your bills will allow you to be able to immediately rip and toss any that also physically land in your mailbox.

3. *Create a photo library of your kids' artwork.* Instead of keeping every drawing and craft that your children make, eliminate major paper bulk by hanging onto a few favorites, then creating album(s) on your phone designated to the remaining pieces. You can then turn these into photo books using printing services like Shutterfly, Snapfish, or GooglePhotos.



here's a pro tip

Keeping a trash can at or close to your paper drop zone will encourage you to toss any incoming junk mail and ripped envelopes right away. You can find small, decorative trash cans that coincide with just about *any* aesthetic at your favorite home decor store or by searching online.

Habit #2: One In, One Out

Another way that our homes become cluttered is when we bring new items in without letting go of older ones.

Let's face it, friends... **Our clothing drawers, kitchen cabinets, storage shelving, and closet hang rods have a limited amount of space.** It's perfectly fine and normal to have these spaces filled up, but when they begin to overflow, we've got ourselves a problem.



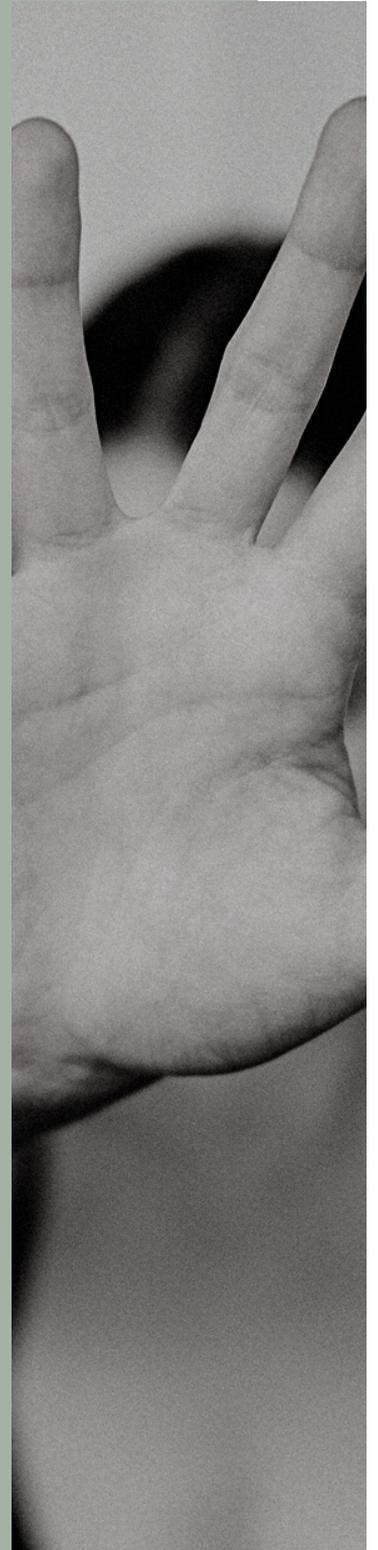
by building the one in, one out habit, you will be able to maintain a healthy collection without the fear of creating excess.

Habit #3: Grow the Power of "No"

The guilt of saying *no* to a family member or friend who is offering us something he or she believes we'll enjoy creates clutter in our homes. Following our hearts and practicing respectfully declining these items stops clutter before it even begins.

Here are a few ways to grow the power of saying "no":

1. *When offered a item, ask for a night to sleep on it before saying yes.* This gives you the opportunity to determine whether or not the item at stake will truly serve you.
2. *Ask to test out the item and for permission to return or donate it if it doesn't work out in the intended space.* The item will eventually find its proper home!
3. *Happy with your current collection of items? Say no thank you from the start to avoid creating excess.*



Conclusion and Next Steps

This guide outlined three of the habits you could begin building in order to stop clutter in its tracks. I would encourage you to select one of the habits shared to start with and to give yourself time (*psst, like one whole month!*) to allow it to become an unconscious behavior before moving onto another. Once your brain gets used to the practiced habit, it will become second nature and no longer take up any energy, brain space, or stress on your part!

If this guides motivates you to start your decluttering and organizing journey, I'd love to keep sharing tips and information with you! You can find me here!



www.abalancedabodenj.com
@abalancedabodenj
Life in Balance | A Balanced Abode NJ

Thank you!