

SUMMER DETOX

Hopefully by now you have packed away your winter woollies and are putting on your cool summer styles. Your homes will appreciate the chance to feel the air and wear lighter layers at this time of year just as much as you do.

So, the time has finally come to see an end to artificial heating and stuffy rooms with heavy furnishings and winter clutter. What are you waiting for? Open up your homes and let them extend outdoors; give them a bright un-cluttered start to summer and enjoy entertaining, relaxing or just living.

It may take an hour, it may take a week; however much or little is needed it is you who will ultimately benefit from your home's detox. There are many experts now who can be hired to do this job for you but if you fancy having a go yourself then this should help.

Choose a day when you have plenty of time, and throw open the windows.

Now let's tackle the clutter. Instead of thinking of this as a chore, think of it as the first step towards your new improved home. In the case of de-cluttering, less is best!

As we are all accustomed to seeing our homes a certain way, day-in, day-out, we very often become blind to the unsightly clutter hiding its best features. If you could walk into your home as it is now, and see it for the first time it would be like putting on a pair of spectacles. You would probably see the pile of shoes, coats, bags, keys or post in the entrance. The mountain of old magazines and newspapers in the lounge. The bursting wardrobes, failing to contain the clothes that might return to fashion. You would see the chemist contents collected in the bathroom and the unused gadgets in the kitchen.

IF YOU DON'T USE IT, LOSE IT!

Many books have been written about clutter and the effects it can have on our lives and I am sure that most of you will agree that, when you do get time to re-organise and clear out your blind spot - be it your car, handbag, garage, top drawer - it leaves you with a sense of wellbeing, of achievement, of pleasure. In order to detox your home and get ready for the summer sunshine, open your front door and take a good hard look at what you see.

WELCOME HOME

Your entrance should be as light and welcoming as possible so that you always feel happy to be home. If your lighting is not correct, it may be time to change your light fitting or clear the window contents.

Try changing your window dressings to something light and airy like a sheer or light linen, and buy some fresh flowers to lift your spirits.

SPA FRESH

Is your bathroom feeling a little dull? New fluffy towels will make a huge difference and, if you feel inclined to give it a bigger boost, changing your taps, mirror and lighting will give it an instant update.

Your window dressing should be simple and clean; remove any curtains and add a blind or change to opaque glass. Think of your bathroom as your personal spa.



Justine Knox has lived in Mallorca for 26 years, speaks fluent Spanish and successfully runs her own business called, Knox Design & Developments. She is a certified professional property presentation and home styling consultant; and specialises in bathroom and kitchen design as well as home furnishing. She has trained with Channel Five's "House Doctor" Anne Maurice to obtain the status of "senior consultant"; and her friend Dawna Walter of BBC's Life Laundry has taught her the art of de-cluttering.

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SITTING COMFORTABLY

Look at your living room from a new angle and make sure that your furniture is arranged correctly. If all your furniture is placed around the walls you will make it look smaller and uninviting. While paying attention not to obstruct any doors or passageways, re-arrange your furniture to create and define specific areas, such as reading, dining or even watching TV.

■ If you have shelves or bookcases make sure that you have not overcrowded them; thin them out and let them breathe.

■ It can be a good idea to have a special storage box for your decorative objects. This will enable you to change your displays to suit the season.

HOME COOKING

Next take a look at your kitchen; most could easily afford to lose a third of their contents.

■ Focus on your fridge: remove magnets, photos, notes and menus from your fridge door; this immediately creates a cleaner, more spacious feel.

■ Clear your surfaces and add a pretty bowl of fruit, some fresh herbs or flowers and some nice new colourful linen.

■ New door handles or knobs can make a huge difference if you feel your kitchen is looking tired.



SWEET DREAMS

Your bedroom can easily receive a facelift with the addition of new, lighter and brighter bedding and window coverings. Put away the warm and cosy bed throws and go for crisp white cotton or colourful creations that will bring the summer into your home.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

- Start with one room or area at a time.
- If you have decided to dispose of something, do it straight away before it finds its way back into your blind spot.
- If you plan on keeping it but need it out of your way, box it and store it; we now have many storage units available to us.
- Throw away anything broken or unused for 12 months or more.
- Let go of a past life. Outgrown children's toys, redundant sports equipment or guilt-ridden expensive whims... find them a new home.