

1.15 Declutter Your Space

Clear your field of bothersome distractions.

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As mentioned in Disconnect (Tool 1.3), even brief challenges to your focus will eat into your capacity to be productive—or to simply enjoy life. A cluttered visual or auditory field can easily take a toll on your mental processes, slowing you down.

Distraction takes many forms. Whether you have extra tabs open on your computer desktop or clutter on your physical desk, extraneous stuff provides a visual interruption to your thoughts, draining your energy. In the same way, hearing beeps, clicks, and other notifications from your phone can divert your attention toward meaningless tasks. If you're feeling drained, scattered, or just not productive enough because you're having difficulty concentrating, it may help to do whatever you can to eliminate distractions.

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- Reduces or eliminates mental drain.
- Helps you stay focused on your priorities.
- A clean, quiet environment can be more enjoyable.

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- We may become emotionally attached to familiar objects or even comforted by phone notifications and find it hard to remove them.
- Benefits aren't immediately felt, so this is often underprioritized.

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Take some time to arrange your physical environment so that it provides minimal distraction. Photographs, empty coffee cups, etc., take up space in your thinking. Clear your desktop and desk of unnecessary items and mess by sorting things into appropriate folders or drawers, storing them somewhere, or trashing them.

The same applies to your online environment. Hide or close browser tabs, icons, or extensions. Uninstall any unused apps and consider adding a monthly or quarterly reminder to declutter your phone. Alter your settings so that you receive fewer notifications and so that those you do receive are in a less distracting form—for example, silent rather than a vibration or a noise.

Removing distractions will make it easier to be productive when you want to be. It will also make your spaces more pleasant and enjoyable to relax in. A cluttered space can provoke worry and the subtle sense that you need to do something to tidy it, even when you're trying to wind down. An uncluttered space is a pleasure to inhabit.

You may not be sure how to determine which objects are important to you. One way to choose is to

invoke the Marie Kondo Method. Put simply, she asks whether items spark joy. Those that do can remain. Those that do not can be removed or recycled.

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1. Explore the Marie Kondo method: <https://konmari.com/>
2. Why is it important to declutter?:
<https://foresthomesstore.com/blogs/decor-for-wellbeing/why-is-it-important-to-declutter-how-can-it-benefit-your-mental-health-and-others-wellbeing>