

# Spring to life

Struggling with spring cleaning? As you clear and clean surfaces, reward yourself with some simple revamping tricks. Here are some tips for an inspirational seasonal rejig

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These two scruffy wooden cubby hole boxes were bought online for a very modest price. They were given a new life with a thorough clean using warm soapy water and a pot scrubber. Once they had dried in the sun, the boxes were painted with Resene Lustacryl semi-gloss waterborne enamel tinted to Resene Half Drought. One set was used to store art supplies (left), the other for an artful arrangement of sewing bits and bobs (see page 53)

Some of us embrace the task of decluttering and cleaning with enthusiasm, while others find it one of the hardest things to do. What if I throw out something potentially useful? How come it's *my* job to tidy up after everyone else in this household? Where do I even start?

Given the everyday ebb and flow of a home, things naturally tend to stray from order to disorder, and for those of us who are collectors, crafters, or simply just very busy living, things can easily get out of hand.

## Tips & tricks

Something in, something out: kickstart your decluttering with a new-to-you piece of furniture to store handy items. Trawl TradeMe or visit your local op-shop for potential repurposing projects. Look for furniture with shelves, drawers or handy cubby holes you can tidy up and refresh with paint

## Tips & tricks

Go for a soft, natural look by rubbing down that old table and coating it with a beeswax finish

Lacking motivation? Make a to-do list and reward yourself by ticking off items as you go. Research shows that accomplishing set goals gives us an "efficacy boost", helping us feel good.  
Source: *Psychology Today*

## Tips & tricks

Find a use for items you love, such as vintage jars, but give yourself permission to get rid of anything that's dull or damaged beyond repair

If winter comes,  
can spring be far behind?

-PERCY SHELLEY, ODE TO THE WEST WIND



### Tips & tricks

A wood finish is lovely, but you can have too much of a good thing.

If brown tones make a dark corner gloomy, lighten the mood with old-fashioned whitewash



At the extremes of feminism and chauvinism, a lot of bunkum has been said about housework. Fact is, some of us are instinctively organised and don't mind cleaning - some will even admit to enjoying it! Others are messy by nature.

"Housekeeping is neither noble nor ignoble, it's practical," says Sandra Felton, bestselling author and founder of the hugely popular support group

Messies Anonymous. At a basic level, it's about creating a living space for ourselves and our families. For some of us this starts with reclaiming spaces in our home that have been lost to chronic mess.

Whatever your disposition, the annual spring clean offers us a chance to refresh and revitalise our surroundings. It's the season of the year to

do more than simply clean up after yourself or others. It's an opportunity to clear out spaces, rediscover surfaces and reassess what's currently not working in terms of flow and maximising space.

And the good news is that once spaces are cleared and cleaned, even somewhat, we can enjoy getting creative with these fresh new places.

### Tips & tricks

Give yourself a visual treat every time you put the dishes away by lining the back of your cupboards with mix-and-match papers. We've used vintage wallpaper scraps, mixed with Resene wallpaper from their current range - the green Aria print from House of York

### Tips & tricks

Find somewhere to safely display your special cup and saucer collection, if looking at it brings you pleasure on a daily basis



Save glass jars from pantry staples until you have a matching set. Soak the labels off and use them to store spices, pulses, tea or other perishables for a cohesive look. Screw-top lids are often better than plastic containers at keeping out weevils or pantry moths!

### Tips & tricks

Hone your visual skills and check an arrangement's composition by looking at your objects using cupped hands to make a spyglass

Tall white jugs, milk jug, mugs on third shelf and white bowls from French Country Collections; pale green ceramic milk bottles and travel tea mug from Iko Iko; white mugs on second shelf from Citta Design





Vintage anglepoise table and floor lamps are a British design classic. Keep an eye out for replicas (such as the Citta Design lamp on page 48) or pick up a newly rewired retro model from antique stores such as La Vitrine

PHILIPS' SWISS SCHOOL BOOK MAP OF THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND

Maps make aesthetically pleasing wall coverings as well as being satisfyingly educational! Think second-hand – this one was a steal on TradeMe



Boxes, magazine files, folders, pens and blue and green notebooks from Kikki-K; small notebooks from Iko Iko; cushion from Citta Design; pencil holder from Collected; hourglass from French Country Collections; lamp from La Vitrine

Corkboards let you create a display of photos, postcards and mementoes that's easily switched up when the mood strikes



### Tips & tricks

Store all that unsightly stuff you can't get rid of just yet in a stack of colourful boxes. Make a diary note to review the contents at a certain date and pass on anything you really don't need

Don't aim for perfection. If you're a naturally messy person, you may feel as though you can't clean things unless you do it perfectly. Fact is, there's no right or perfect way to clean something.

Think of the maxim 'something in, something out' and let that be a motivating principle. If you were to add a shelf, cupboard or other item of furniture, what would it be? Now might be the time to reinvent a piece of furniture with a fresh coat of paint. Perhaps you can better arrange what you have or repurpose an item from elsewhere in the house.

Try starting with the room you spend the most time in – or the space in your house that bugs you the most. That way you'll get results you can appreciate every day, inspiring you to do more.

Feeling overwhelmed? Think of your challenge as creating an oasis in a desert of mess and muddle. Make it a priority to maintain that oasis, then as you're ready,

add another and another.

As you work your way through your home, consider the difference between clutter and collectables. As organisational expert Peter Walsh says, it isn't just the

Antique stores are full of seating options ... but we recommend avoiding vintage school chairs unless you're particularly short



One of the advantages of being disorderly is that one is constantly making exciting discoveries

—AA MILNE

If in doubt, throw a cushion on it! It's the simplest way to add a little comfort and colour





Bookshelves can become dumping grounds for all sorts of miscellanea and bits of junk. Here's how to give them a makeover!

**Step 1: Remove everything. Find a home for it elsewhere or put everything in a banana box to keep the mess contained**



stuff in your cupboards. "It's anything that gets between you and the life you want to be living, whether it's in your home, in your head, in your heart or on your hips."

Develop a healthy passion for clear surfaces; first create them by clearing horizontal surfaces of clutter. Cleaning things with warm water and a pleasant-smelling eco cleaner is easy when you have space to work in.

Pay attention to what is being kept. Is it beautiful or useful? If functional, are these items collected together in a practical way (for example, Lego in a rummageable suitcase, stored under a child's bed). If beautiful, are they on display and arranged in

complementary clusters – for example, by shade or colour?

Reward yourself as you go. Verbally congratulate yourself, post a picture online for friends to see, or treat yourself to a moment in the sun with a freshly brewed cup of tea.

According to Peter Walsh, the secret to successful decluttering is this: "You will never get organised if you don't have a vision for the life you want. Ask yourself, 'Does this thing create that vision or get in the way of that vision?' If it does, hold on to it with all your life. If it doesn't, why is it in your home?"

### Tips & tricks

**Put your precious and vintage collectables on display – use colour as a starting point to organise your collection**



**Step 2: Take a hard look at the shelves. Is it time for a new colour?**

**Step 3: Lightly sand shelves, wipe with a soft cloth and give them a new look with cool neutrals and a splash of fresh colour. We used the neutral Resene Black White and added zing with Resene Citrus, Resene Pelorus and Resene Chelsea Cucumber**

If you're not painting the shelves, wipe down surfaces with an eco-friendly cleaner and a well wrung-out cloth

Only put back those items you want to have on display, clustering your most attractive collectables on the upper shelves and more practical items lower down – or elsewhere!

Group books into clusters of similar colours for a less cluttered look

We used Resene test pots for the coloured backgrounds. Test pots are ideal when you only need to cover a small area and fancy experimenting with bold new shades

Treat yourself to stylish new storage boxes or repurpose large shoeboxes with a coat of paint. Use these to store unsightly items such as DVDs or stationery

Only keep the best games! Completed puzzles can be taken to an op-shop or school gala, or swapped with friends for a new one to try



Silver candlesticks, silver photo frames, magnifying glass, glass baubles and vase from French Country Collections; ceramic origami crane and dinosaur from Collected; blue glass bird and 'Aroha' bowl from The Poi Room; blue and white boxes from Kikki-K