



10 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW TO GET YOUR HOME READY FOR CHRISTMAS

1. Get your garden ready and packaway the furniture
2. Freshen up the entrance to your home
3. Declutter key areas of your home
4. Refresh your walls with paint
5. Tackle your hallway cupboard
6. Carry out maintenance jobs that are on your mind
7. Declutter your living room
8. Create a cosy ambience with lighting
9. Prepare the bedroom for guests
10. Give your bathroom a spruce up



Declutter before Christmas

TV presenter and home stylist Georgina Burnett shares tips on how to declutter before Christmas...



» TV presenter and home stylist Georgina Burnett has partnered with fitted furniture company Sharps to provide decluttering tips.

With all the gifts and festive tat that appear around Christmas, there are few homes that remain clutter-free over the holiday.

And the way to keep on top of that clutter is to tackle the problem before Christmas even begins, explains TV presenter, home stylist and decluttering expert, Georgina Burnett, aka 'The Home Genie'.

"We all know that a cluttered home leads to a cluttered mind, which isn't ideal over the busy Christmas period, when enjoying quality time with loved ones is what matters most," says Georgina, a regular home improvement presenter for ITV's This Morning.

"So here are my steps to a clutter-free and enjoyable Christmas experience..."

1. Prioritise, assess, diarise (PAD)

The first thing to do, says Georgina, is think 'PAD', which stands for 'prioritise, assess, diarise'. "You should prioritise the most used areas of your home, as you'll feel the impact of your efforts sooner, which will spur you on to finish the job," she explains.

"Assess your clutter woe spots – these are the spaces that tend to get congested. If you can work out why this is, you're more likely to be able to come up with solutions to

prevent it happening in 2024.

"Then diarise when you want to do each space. The worst thing you can do is bite off more than you can chew, so you don't end up doing it properly and seeing the long-term benefits."

She suggests putting more time aside than you think you'll need for each area before making a date for it in your diary, and warns: "If you can't do your whole home before Christmas, cut yourself some slack and be accepting of this. If you've made a start, that's the main thing – this is about relieving stress, rather than causing it."

2. Create a decluttering Advent calendar

To make decluttering a bit more fun, get the help of a friend to create a decluttering advent calendar of sorts, Georgina suggests.

"Give your list of areas that need tackling to a friend and ask them to assign one per day for you in the lead-up to the big day, so it's a surprise each morning. You might just find the spontaneity of this exercise makes it more fun!"

3. Keep/consider/donate

When decluttering, Georgina says it can be helpful to put your items into three piles labelled keep, consider, and donate.



"Items you know you use regularly and can't live without, you 'keep'," she explains. "There may be some you're undecided about, so put these in the 'consider' pile to reassess when putting things back in drawers and cupboards. Anything that you know you don't need or want can be given away."

4. Group similar items together

Every item needs a home, and the best way to keep things tidy is to group similar items together, advises Georgina.

"You may know in your head what and where these groups are, but if you live with other people, they may need some help," she observes. Labelling baskets, cupboards and drawers on the inside gives everyone a helping hand and will make it more likely you won't need to spend so long decluttering next Christmas."

5. Storage is key

Georgina stresses that a decent amount of storage is a vital part of an organised home.

"Make sure you have efficient use of space when it comes to your storage solutions," she advises. "making use of vertical wall areas too, which are almost always overlooked. Fitted furniture is a great way to maximise opportunities for storage and is surprisingly effective in more confined spaces."



"You'll be amazed by how much more efficient you can be – particularly if they can be more objective about what you get rid of," she says.

"Get some mulled wine and mince pies in and ramp up the Christmas tunes, and you'll be amazed how much you enjoy what used to be considered a chore."

7. Stick to the 'one in – one out' rule

After you've successfully finished your Christmas declutter, adopting the rule of 'one in – one out' will help you stay on top of it all, promises Georgina.

"Basically, if you're gifted or you purchase anything, an item of equal size needs to go," she explains. "You'll find this helps you to keep tidy and you'll also think twice before spending your money."

6. Get a little help from your friends

Christmas is all about fun, friends and family, so why not make a social event of your decluttering by getting a couple of friends around to help, suggests Georgina.

It will probably be hard, and you'll have to be strict with yourself, but it's the best way to stop yourself drowning under clutter again in the future.



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6:30pm for 7:00pm start

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Call 02380 869697 or email fundraising@tfsr.org

Registered charity number: 280437

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DON'T PUT YOUR GARDEN TO BED THIS WINTER BRING IT ALIVE!

Christmas quiz night is back!

Netley Marsh based charity, Tools for Self Reliance, are bringing their Christmas quiz to a new venue for 2024 and this year's event includes a Fish & Chips supper! The sell-out event is a must-have in the diary, so book now to reserve your team's spaces.



The Tools for Self Reliance Christmas Quiz is created by charity CEO, Sarah Ingleby, whose brain teasers, picture rounds, and quick fire questions, will keep you on the edge of your seat in Totton & Eling Community Centre.

Katie Wilson, Head of Fundraising and Communications of Tools for Self Reliance, said, "We were delighted that so many of the local community support our annual Christmas quiz to raise vital funds for our life-changing training projects across Africa. By simply entering a team of up to 6 people you could help us send a tailoring kit to Africa and support trainees like Christine as they transition to work and build a livelihood from their trade. This year the ticket includes a Fish & Chip supper so there's even more reason to come along for the evening. We hope to see you there!"

The Charity's annual Christmas Quiz fundraiser is all to help raise vital funds for a great cause. Right now, Tools for Self Reliance is working to support young people and marginalised communities in learning trade skills so they can start their own businesses or find formal employment. Working with local partners in five African countries, Tools for Self Reliance delivers vocational and business skills training to young people and marginalised communities, complementing this with the provision of the tools, equipment and sewing machines needed to move into work. In their latest shipment to Zambia, 2,203 lovingly refurbished tools were delivered to Prisoners' Future Foundation in readiness for an exciting new project to provide technical, business and sexual and reproductive health rights training to ex-offenders of non-violent crimes. With comprehensive

training and a quality tool kit to help them in their chosen trade, graduates will be equipped to begin rebuilding their lives. These tools are donated to the charity by the public and collected and refurbished to excellent standard by a committed band of over 500 volunteers across the UK. The refurbished tools are given a second lease of life when given to trainees and graduates in the five partner countries in Africa.

Project participants are then supported to start their own enterprises and generate a sustainable income for their future, helping to reduce the cycle of poverty many trainees face. The Charity Christmas Quiz takes place on Saturday 23rd November, at the Totton & Eling Community Centre. Doors open at 6:30pm for a 7:00pm start. Tickets are only £15pp including a fish & chips supper (vegetarian and gluten free

options available) entry. With a cash bar and plenty of raffle prizes up for grabs, it promises to be another brilliant fundraising event. Please help us raise funds whilst having a great night of entertainment. Booking is essential to secure your places and your menu options. Please call or email for your ticket Tools for Self Reliance: 023 8086 9697 or email fundraising@tfsr.org

Don't put your garden to bed this winter - bring it alive!

Our gardens can feel a bit gloomy at this time of year, so join Eco Thorney Hill for some bright ideas while giving nature a helping hand.

Lots of fun activities for kids: Making bird boxes and bug balls, rate your garden with our creepy crawlly quiz, and name that bird!

bay without using chemicals, safe ponds for small spaces, and all you ever wanted to know about keeping your compost heap cooking in the cold.

Advice and information on how we can make more space for nature: How to keep pests at

Together, our small actions can make a big difference!

