



Are you struggling with too much clutter in your home?

Most people have lots of items in their home, and that's fine, but it can become a problem if you have too much clutter. This may have a negative impact on your day-to-day life and your health.

Hoarding disorder

Too much clutter can turn into a hoarding disorder when someone acquires an excessive amount of items and stores them in the home in a way that then interferes with everyday living. It affects the quality of that person's life or others around them.

Am I a hoarder?

Not everyone who has too much stuff has a hoarding disorder. We have produced this guide to help you identify if you, or someone you know, is a hoarder; this includes practical tools and advice that can help lead to a clutter-free life.

Have a look at the questions and the Clutter Index below. If you then think you have a problem, don't worry, this guide will help you identify ways you can start to tackle it and access the right support and advice.

- ◆ Do you buy the same things time and time again because you can't find what you already have?
- ◆ Does your clutter prevent you from having people visit?
- ◆ Are you late paying bills because you can't find them amongst the clutter?
- ◆ Do you have enough money to pay the bills?
- ◆ Do friends and family complain about your clutter?
- ◆ Do you feel bad looking at your piles of clutter?
- ◆ Are your rooms too full to use for their intended purpose?
- ◆ Is your kitchen too cluttered to cook or wash up?
- ◆ Is your bath full of stuff?
- ◆ Is the clutter stopping you from opening your windows and doors?

If the answer is yes to most of these questions, you may have a hoarding problem.

The Clutter Index

The Clutter Index has been developed to help give a visual explanation of what hoarding can look like. Have a look at the pictures below, compare it to the rooms in your home and see how they rate on the index.

LOW RISK (1)

No identified issue.



LOW RISK (2-3)

Could do with a little tidy to provide better access to the room.



MEDIUM RISK (4-6)

There is an issue with hoarding, which should be addressed before the problem escalates.



HIGH RISK (7-9)

This is a high-level of hoarding which needs addressing as soon as possible.





Here to help

If you have identified that you may have too much clutter in your life, don't worry, help is at hand!

Top tips to help declutter your home

Decluttering your home can be stressful, but there are lots of simple steps you can take to get you started. The first steps are often the hardest, but once you start it will get much easier.

- 1 Identify an area in your home that you want to clear.**
It could be a room, part of a room, a cupboard, or simply a box or pile of items. Think about what you want to prioritise, take it slowly and don't try to tackle everything at once.
- 2 Make decluttering part of your daily routine** and try to dedicate 15 to 30 minutes to it every day, at a time you're less likely to be interrupted.
- 3 Ask for some help** from someone who will go at your pace, and will ask your permission before throwing anything away.
- 4 Try sorting things into boxes or bags** labelled 'Bin it', 'Donate it', 'Sell It' or 'Keep it'. When you've finished sorting, remember what you said you'd do with each box and stick to your plan. Don't be tempted to get things out again. Try to bin the rubbish as soon as possible and dedicate some time each week to finding ways to donate or sell the other items.
- 5 Have a look at your 'Keep' items. Do you really need them?**
Try placing it out of sight. After a week, write down how you feel about not seeing that item. Do the same after a month. You may discover the item wasn't as precious as you thought. If it isn't, donate it, sell it or bin it!

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If you are tempted to keep an item ask yourself

the following questions to help you decide if you really want to keep it:

- ◆ When was the last time I needed it?
- ◆ When was the last time I used it?
- ◆ How likely is it that I will use it in the future?
- ◆ What is my track record of using items like this?
- ◆ What is the impact of keeping it?
- ◆ Will it help me declutter?

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Make a decision and try to stick to it!

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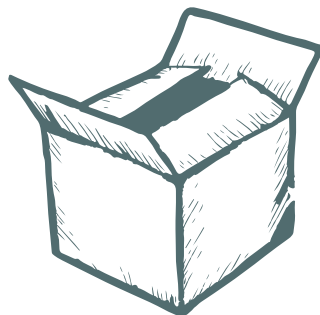
If you've got lots of paperwork or post, sort it into piles according to whether they need to be actioned, put somewhere safe, recycled or put in the rubbish bin. When post arrives, make sure you sort it this way immediately instead of letting it build up.

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Take a before and after photo so you can look at what you've achieved. Every single item that you get rid of is a goal and one you should be proud of!

Don't be tempted to...

- ◆ Just move items from one place to another.
- ◆ Keep an item for other people or because you think you may use it one day.
- ◆ Move things from the 'Sell', 'Donate', 'Bin' boxes or bags to 'Keep'.
- ◆ Most importantly, don't be tempted to bring more items into your home. Ask yourself 'Do I? Can I? Should I? Will I?' before making a decision.



Do I? Can I? Should I? Will I?

Ask yourself these questions to help you avoid bringing in more items into your home than you really need.

Do I...

- 🏠 really need it, even if it is for free?
- 🏠 have one already?

Can I...

- 🏠 make do with something I already have at home?
- 🏠 live my life without it?
- 🏠 find somewhere uncluttered to keep it?
- 🏠 justify spending money on it?

Should I...

- 🏠 take it home to add to the clutter?
- 🏠 think about it for a few days before I take it home?

Will I...

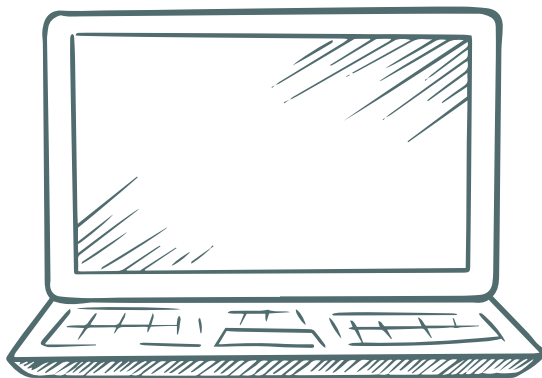
- 🏠 ever use it for the purpose it was made?
- 🏠 just be adding to my already overflowing home?

Digital clutter

Many of us are guilty of storing up too many emails, documents, videos, pictures and even games on our digital devices. You can't see it in your home, but it can have a negative impact. If you use too much memory, your phone, computer and other devices can get slower and it can also take a long time to find things.

You can treat your digital declutter the same way as you would your home. Take a little time every day to have a look at all your digital clutter and decide whether you should 'Bin' or 'Keep'. As with letters, emails should be dealt with as soon as they arrive in your inbox.

The same can be said of gadgets in the home. If you've upgraded your phone or your camera, don't hang on to the old one. If it will be useful to someone, why not donate it to charity?



You're not alone

There are a number of organisations out there who can help you. Have a look at the list below.

Support

Your GP or your local Health Centre should be your first point of contact. If you don't know how to start the conversation, download the Icebreaker form from the 'Resources' section of the National Hoarding Awareness Week website

www.hoardingawarenessweek.org.uk/resources

NHS Choices www.nhs.uk/Conditions/hoarding

Clouds End CIC www.cloudsend.org.uk

Hoarding UK www.hoardinguk.org or call **020 3239 1600**

The Counselling Directory www.counselling-directory.org.uk

Hoarding Disorders UK www.hoardingdisordersuk.org
or call **07950 364798**

Children of Hoarders www.childrenofhoarders.com

Help for Hoarders www.helpforhoarders.co.uk

OCD Action www.ocdaction.org.uk or call **0845 390 6232**

Help to declutter

Cluttergone www.cluttergone.co.uk or call **01279 792000**

FlyLady www.flylady.net/d/what-is-flylady

The Association of Professional Declutterers and Organisers
www.apdo-uk.co.uk

Help to sell or give away your items

The British Heart Foundation (free service)

www.bhf.org.uk/shop/donating-goods

Gumtree (free service) www.gumtree.com

eBay www.ebay.co.uk

(Hoarding UK - **www.hoardinguk.org** - offers support to people who want to sell their items on this site)

Freecycle (free service) www.freecycle.org

Music Magpie (CDs, DVDs, Games, Phones)

www.musicmagpie.co.uk

Ziffit www.ziffit.com/sell-my-books

Fat Brain (books) www.fatbrain.co.uk/sell-books/

We Buy Books www.webuybooks.co.uk

There are also lots of online car boot sales. You can find them by searching on Google.