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# Bernice Humphries Interiors

## Designs for Living Edition 2 - Decluttering and getting back on track. (June)

With Summer Solstice just around the corner (20th June) we have the most wonderful longest days of the year to look forward to. With the sun setting at approximately 21:20, I will be taking full advantage of the fire pit in the garden and enjoying the time with my family and a few socially distant friends.



A large sense of relief as our study demand reduces from five to two, due to exams and finals all being complete for my tribe of children. It really goes to show that decluttering, organisation and the study techniques from my previous newsletter help.

A little "dig for victory" update, my vegetables are growing well, but not as instantly as I naively hoped. That being said I am enjoying watching them grow and cannot wait to try them when ripe. How long does it take for a carrot to grow?



Speaking of growing and flowers being in season, make sure you buy some peonies whilst they are still in their short season. These are my favourite flowers.

Whilst lockdown eases and chaos reigns around us, I am (PPE'd up) taking on client visits again and continuing zoom schemes, so do reach out if you want a helping hand, any guidance on fixing lockdown DIY and designing that's gone wrong, or a full new end to end scheme.

### Decluttering

The key to decluttering, is starting. But, how do you start to declutter your home?

In order for this to not feel completely overwhelming, a plan is a perfect start. This avoids jumping straight into the deep end and guides you on how to get the job done.

- Step 1:** Decide where you are going to start your declutter. By picking one space (even if it is just one drawer a day) you ensure that the mess doesn't spread, you remain focused and can easily move on track to other areas. This makes the following steps easier.
- Step 2:** Go through all items in the allocated space. This creates an end to end job and means nothing is left. A huge sense of satisfaction.
- Step 3:** Keep, Donate, Recycle, Throw Away.
- Categorise each item into one of the 4 allocated piles. This stops confusion and speeds up the decluttering process. If this is an outdoor area, or large amount of items, it may be an opportunity to hire a skip.
- Step 4:** Finding a home. Each item needs a home, or it needs to go.



Donate



Recycle



Throw Away (re-home)



Keep



### Storage Solutions

The picture perfect, instagram interiors, completely clear from clutter is not always feasible. But, how can we get close to it?

Following the process of decluttering, its time to look at and get clever with your storage options.

#### 1. Sofas with Storage

Sofas often take up the most space and are the focal point of a living room. If you have both storage and sofas in a living room, this can sometimes make the room look cluttered. So the perfect way to remove clutter could be a multipurpose sofa, with storage beneath the seat. This maximises room space and helps with organisation.



#### 2. Allocation of Guest Rooms

Guest rooms are commonly the least used rooms in the house, turning their full time job into a dumping zone for clutter. So, why not repurpose this room into a "part time" guest room and "full time" play room or study. This can be achieved by switching the bed to a sofa bed. Removing the large dumping space of a bed and allowing the room to have full usage. If the room is not large enough, there are single bed options.



#### 3. More Guest Room Ideas

If room really is tight, and the main purpose of a room is not a bedroom, then bed in a box is a good alternative. This minimises space used up for an occasional bedroom, whilst also working well as extra seating or a coffee table if you place a tray on top.



#### 4. Bedroom storage

Bedrooms can be one of the worse rooms for clutter, as if it doesn't fit in the wardrobe, where does it go? This is where under the bed storage can help and also provide further organisation. This can be in the form of drawers under the bed or a lift up bed, if the content does not often need to be accessed.

#### 5. Storage Footstools and Benches

Would you rather your storage be hidden in furniture designed and picked for your room? Storage footstools and benches can work in almost any room of the house (playrooms, cloakrooms, living room, bedrooms and studies). A wonderful thing about these is that they can hide your clutter whilst fitting in and adding to the design.

\*All sofas and storage shown are from sofa.com, contact me if you would like to purchase.

### Zooming and Etiquette

2020 has brought a new confusing means of communication for most of us, myself included. Zooming! Catching up with friends, school lessons, book club, family and challengingly work. It seems many disasters can occur on a zoom call, with stories causing laughter across sectors. What is the code of conduct when on a zoom call? how can we adapt our living space to avoid embarrassment and look smart and professional?

I mean, thank goodness it exists. I love seeing and talking to my school mums, book club friends, and with huge gratitude my family. Luckily for us our elderly parents, and parents in law, have taken zoom in their stride (with the children's help) and they now embrace our weekly chats (hearts full).

However, when it comes to zoom calls, I feel like there is an elephant in the room that I just need to get out. So, here are my two points to perfecting a zoom call:

1. Make sure that you have a clear desk. This is a big reflection of someones personality (tidy desk, tidy mind scenario). But similarly, it makes you the clear focal point rather than your surroundings.
2. Background selection. This is what your audience of your zoom call is going to be seeing as a large proportion of the on screen view, is your background. This emphasis the importance of avoiding embarrassing visuals, so here I have summarised a couple easy fixes:
  - a) Do not have a flashy, flowery, logo or graffiti wall behind you.
  - b) Do not have rubbish, unfolded laundry, or washing up behind you.
  - c) Do not have children arguing in the background (or in my case completing a hiit workout).
  - d) Do not sit with your back to a window as this turns your image into a silhouette.

However, thats enough of what you shouldn't do, so how about I give some ideas on what you should do. Do try to have:

- a) plain mid-tone colour, uniformed walls. If this isn't possible, try having a temporary pop up screen. Remember that anything other than a plain wall will create a "mood", so if you have an eclectic picture or exposed mood, be aware that your audience may be distracted from you.
- b) A quiet, undisturbed corner of the house
- c) Be organised so that you don't have to dash mid call.
- d) Lighting helps your appearance, so, have a lamp by your face (or behind the computer) for an even steady light, this avoids creating shadows on your face.
- e) Try and be eye level with your device (Prince Charles uses a pile of books for a laptop stand).

This allows the attention to remain on you and not what is behind you.

If anyone would like any advice on setting up the home office, be it an area in the sitting room or a separate room, or colours for zoom background then please contact me. I am bursting with ideas.

### Finally...

Whilst the children are still home and we have the long summer holidays ahead of us, why not get them to paint their own bedside lamp shades. These are fun to make and then you can keep them! If you are interested I can also do lampshade painting parties at request. Different techniques create different stunning effects (flicking, sponging, stamping, dabbing).



I hope everyone is keeping well during lockdown, and that these newsletters serve some inspiration.

Love,  
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Want to get creative or design your home in lockdown? My inbox is open.

