

QuickTakes



TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR TIME

Lose weight. Start jogging. Eat healthier. Clean up the clutter. Manage stress. These are just some of the resolutions we've been hearing for 2015. Statistics show that by the end of January about 64% of resolvers are still sticking to their resolutions. Six months later, that number drops to 44%.

It always takes time to commit to and stick to any behavior change. But we all find that time is in short supply in our busy lives. Increasing demands at work and at home make a mess of most schedules. Time management is important for every part of your life. Improved time management skills will help ease the stress of a busy life. You'll be more likely to work better and play better. You'll also be more likely to stick to a new healthy lifestyle change

DE-CLUTTER AND DE-STRESS

Too much clutter at home or at work makes it hard to find the stuff you need when you need it. Everything from your car keys to your phone charger to the permission slip for Junior's school field trip could be hidden from sight. Stacks of bills and catalogs clutter your thought process as well. Try to find pleasing ways to store your clutter both at home and at work. Streamlining your possessions, and especially tossing or fixing broken items, can help you de-stress.

Getting organized by removing clutter is good for your and your family's health. And not just mental health. If you can't find your running shoes, for instance, you won't go for a run. If there's a pile of toys in the hallway, you might trip and fall.

"I'm a firm believer that physical clutter creates emotional clutter," says Robin Zasio, PsyD, LCSW. Zasio was the therapist on the reality TV show *Hoarders* and is the author of *The Hoarder in You: How to Live a Happier, Healthier, Uncluttered Life* (2012).

The process of de-cluttering can be overwhelming. Letting go of stuff isn't easy. That stuff in your life has been accumulating for months, even years. In this newsletter we'll give you tips to make your quest to become clutter-free a successful one.

BEGIN WITH ONE SIMPLE PROJECT

You don't have to de-clutter the entire house or office on your first try. Start simple. Reorganize a junk drawer, a cupboard or your in-box. Stick with it until it's done. Take pride in what you've done. Then you can move on to larger projects.

USE A THREE-BOX STRATEGY

Label three big boxes or bins with Donate, Discard, Keep. Plan to get rid of the Donate or Discard boxes as soon as they're full. Take a second look at the items in the Keep box. Be firm. Keep only the things that have a realistic home in your house.

SCHEDULE TIME FOR DE-CLUTTERING

Enter your de-clutter time in your calendar, right along with all your work and family commitments. Mark it as a specific hour or two on a specific day. This reaffirms your commitment to limit clutter.

ONCE DE-CLUTTERED, STAY DE-CLUTTERED

Sometimes it's OK to pass up a good deal. Don't buy more than you expect to use in the near future, whether it's lipstick or shoe polish or graham crackers. Even when it's on sale. There's no need to turn your house into a warehouse. You're not saving money if you never get around to using the item.

DE-CLUTTER YOUR KITCHEN

It's always easier to prepare a meal in a clean kitchen. But the kitchen is not always tidy. It's the activity hub in most homes. The family tends to hang out in the kitchen, and not just at mealtimes. They often leave their stuff there, adding to the clutter. Consider these tips before tackling the kitchen clutter:

- Don't overwhelm yourself by reorganizing the whole kitchen all at once. Give yourself 30 minutes and see what happens. Those 30 minutes might inspire you to tackle another cupboard or even your freezer next. Rediscover the joy of being in the kitchen.
- Discard food that's past its expiration date. (Note, this is not the same as a sell-by date.)
- You can only use one potato masher at a time. Recycle or donate duplicate utensils.
- If you buy staple foods in bulk, be sure to date them before storing them in airtight containers. Honey and dried fruits will last forever or close to it. Nuts and whole grains contain oils and will slowly go rancid. The process speeds up in hot, humid climates.
- Reuse mason jars or pasta sauce jars to store items bought in bulk or other bagged items like flour, sugar, dried beans and rice. This helps maintain freshness and it's easy to see what you have on hand. Plus there's no chance of bags tearing and rice spilling out on counter shelves.
- De-clutter countertops by mounting the phone and to-do lists on the wall. Add a magazine rack for incoming mail, magazines, catalogs, maps and other printed materials.
- Hang inexpensive wall shelves to display cookbooks, pitchers, carafes and pretty serving bowls. This is a great way to save on space and show off some of your favorite items.
- Check out kitchen and home stores for lazy Susans and wire shelves you can place in your cabinets for added space.

PASTA E FAGIOLI (PASTA FAZOO) Serves 4

Pasta e fagioli, meaning "pasta and beans," started as an Italian peasant dish. It's likely you already have the ingredients on hand to make this easy, heart-healthy dish.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 14-oz can low-sodium diced tomatoes with Italian herbs
- 1 15-oz can low-sodium great northern or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup ditalini or elbows, preferably whole grain
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan or Pecorino

NUTRITION INFO PER ½ CUP SERVING

320 Calories	47g Carbohydrate
5g Fat	9g Fiber
1g Saturated fat	493mg Sodium
0g Trans fat	150mg Calcium
17g Protein	



Recipe source: Healthy Living Kitchens

DIRECTIONS

Heat oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onions and carrots and cook, stirring, until they begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook another minute.

Stir in tomatoes and their juices, beans and broth. Add a generous grinding of black pepper. Bring to a boil and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in pasta and cook until tender but firm, about 12 minutes.

Ladle the thick soup into bowls and sprinkle with grated cheese. Lightly drizzle with olive oil and serve.