

Men's Fitness

How to Power Clean Your Life

12 ways to get organized this spring

by Christine Richmond

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There's more to spring-cleaning than tossing out stained tees and moldy leftovers. Your mind could use freshening up. Maybe your relationships, too. Try to approach them as you would approach going to the gym.

"When it comes to working out, you have goals and a clear plan to reach them," explains Peter Walsh of TLC's *Clean Sweep*. "Bring that discipline to other areas of your life, you'll feel healthier, more focused, and more grounded."



To get started de-cluttering . . .

. . . your Pad

- **Initiate a "one in, one out" policy.** If your video games or DVDs no longer fit in your entertainment center, or your bookshelf looks like a giant Jenga tower, cull your collection until it fits. Then make a pact with yourself that before you add a new title, you'll get rid of an existing one.
- **Free your closet.** Flip all your hangers so clothes face the wrong direction. As you wear and return garments to the closet, flip the hanger to the correct direction. "After six months, remove any garments that still have hangers facing the wrong way—it's safe to say you don't wear them," says Walsh. (Obvious exceptions are items you pull out only for certain occasions, like a winter coat or tuxedo.)
- **Don't let mail pile up.** Recycle or shred junk mail immediately. (Even better: Use a Web site like catalogchoice.org to keep those Eddie Bauer catalogs from showing up in the first place.) Then start filing important mail like bills in a designated area so it doesn't clutter your countertop or get lost.

. . . your work space

- **Clear your desk of anything that isn't "active."** Pens, staplers, and other essentials, along with pressing paperwork, should be at arm's reach. Everything else can be filed away. And go easy on the bobbleheads and desk toys.



- **Keep a to-do list.** It may sound like a chore, but it can turn out to be a surprising de-stressor. Spend the last ten minutes of the day listing the next day's assignments, and you won't worry that you've forgotten something. "It puts a period at the end of your day and makes the next morning more productive," explains Walsh. Lists also help you see how you're using your time, and if you're wasting too much of it on tasks that don't matter.

. . . your mind

- **Unplug for 10 to 15 minutes daily.** "Schedule a bit of time for peace of mind. You'll be more grounded, and you'll have a stronger sense of purpose," Walsh says. Practice tai chi or meditation. Or simply turn off the radio and phone when you're in the car and use that time to decompress and reflect.
- **Stop multitasking.** "In life, we're encouraged to juggle multiple tasks at once, but ultimately that just dilutes your attention," says Walsh. Instead? Be where you are. "If you're working out, be there. If you're on the phone, be there. If you're at dinner with a girlfriend, be there. It's the single biggest tip for creating a balanced and focused life."

. . . your body

- **Chug some fresh lemon.** In the morning, squeeze the juice of half a lemon into a glass of water and throw it back, says Ronald Stram, M.D., founder of the Center for Integrative Health and Healing. This stimulates your gallbladder (an organ that produces bile, which breaks down fat). Try it for 10 to 14 days.



- **Cook with garlic and parsley.** Mince one large clove of garlic. This brings out the most allicin, a compound that can help remove heavy metals from the body. Combine it with three sprigs of diced fresh parsley, a detoxifying herb that also helps neutralize the smell of garlic. Sprinkle the mixture over a salad or pasta dish. It's safe to do this every day.
- **Pop a milk thistle capsule** "This is a very safe herb that promotes liver detoxification," explains Stram—meaning it's especially helpful if you've had a boozy weekend. Buy it in supplement form and follow the dosage instructions on the bottle.

. . . your relationships

- **Delete exes from your phone.** De-friend them on Facebook, too. "if you're with someone new, she'll sense that you're keeping something in your back pocket," explains Barton Goldsmith, Ph.D., psychotherapist and author of the *Emotional Fitness* book series. Even if you're not seeing anyone, keeping a connection with an ex will prevent you from completely moving forward.
- **Get rid of toxic friends.** There's one in every social circle—the guy who always has negative or derogatory things to say about almost anything. If he's a casual buddy, try not to engage him—just walk away instead. But if he's a good friend you want in your life, you'll have to take the difficult step of calling him out. Give him the chance to work on it, but after you've asked three times, you're done. "At that point, the most mature thing to do would be to let him know and then cut him out of your life," says Goldsmith.