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HAS YOUR HOME WORKSPACE DESCENDED INTO A DISASTER ZONE? MARIE KONDO'S NEW BOOK REVEALS EASY WAYS TO UPGRADE YOUR LOCKDOWN DOMAIN - AND FIGURE OUT WHAT'S NEXT. BY SUSAN GRIFFIN

MARIE KONDO has helped us transform our homes through the simple but powerful ritual of decluttering and tidying. Now she's turned her attention to our work life. In her new book, *Joy At Work*, which she has co-written with psychologist Dr Scott Sonenshein, Kondo reveals the positive impact of tidying our workspace - great news for those struggling under lockdown. She not only explains that clearing desks and inboxes helps us feel better but also that practising a streamlined approach to work focuses the mind and sparks joy in what we do. 'If you don't have a home office, identify the items that are crucial to getting your work done and designate a clear spot for them - a box or portable carrier will do,' suggests Kondo, 35, who started her tidying consultant business in Tokyo when she was 19 and has been named one of Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People. 'When it's time to work, move all unrelated items off your workspace and add one thing that sparks joy

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KONDO'S TIPS TO SPARK JOY



1.

Clean your workspace at the start of each day to maintain good hygiene and generate a healthy outlook.



2.

Remind yourself to feel grateful for the things that make your work go smoothly.



3.

See the act of tidying as a creative endeavour that will bring you contentment.



4.

Select a few items you love, from pens to plants - things that bring happiness when you look at them.



5.

Make time for honest self-reflection to assess your present situation and make improvements.



Achieving a Kondo attitude

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when you look at it,' she says. 'I always keep a crystal or small vase of fresh flowers on my desk. I also suggest doing something that marks the start of your working day. I strike a tuning fork and diffuse essential oils to signal to my body that I'm switching gears.'

With so many people using this period of upheaval to reassess their life and goals, Kondo's KonMari Method is significant.

Method believes that by finding order in our work life, we can take the steps needed to forge the career we truly crave.

'Tidying can help you get in touch with what you really want, show you what you need to change and help you to find more joy in your environment,' she explains.

'Through tidying, you learn to trust yourself and your ability to make decisions. It's the first and most effective step towards realising your vision of a joyful career.'

Kondo recommends first visualising your ideal work life from how you'd like it to look to what you might feel and how you might act, as well as the time frame, or 'flow of your day' - the times you start and finish, and the breaks you take.

'When we examine our ideal from different angles like this we begin to see the concrete steps we want to take next,' observes Kondo in *Joy At Work*.

Only then should we set about tackling the clutter we've accumulated, she adds. 'The more stuff we have

around us, the more overloaded the brain becomes. This makes it harder for us to recognise, experience and savour those things that are most important to us - the things that bring us joy.'

In her Netflix series *Tidying Up With Marie Kondo*, Kondo showed us how to tidy the home by category as opposed to room, and it's no different with the workspace. The process begins with books as Kondo sees this as 'a powerful means of self-discovery'. The ones you choose to keep because they spark joy reveal

your personal values,' she notes.

Next up is paper, often the most onerous aspect of tidying, as each sheet should be checked carefully before being kept or shredded. Kondo's basic rule is to be ruthless.

Then it's komono (miscellaneous items), which covers things such as office supplies and electrical, and finally sentimental items: letters and photos. As you go, you should hold each item in your hands and only keep 'things that directly spark joy, those that provide functional joy and those that lead to future joy'.

Discard things that don't by showing gratitude for the role they've played in your life before letting them go and carefully store those items you are keeping to ensure you don't 'rebound'

and find yourself in a mess once more.

'The trick is to designate a place for every item,' she says. 'Once you know where everything in your workplace is stored, you can keep track of your things, even when they start to multiply.'

Once the physical workspace is finished you can move on to the non-physical facets of your work life, such as digital data, emails, networks and how you designate your time.

'On average we spend less than half of our workday on our main job responsibilities. The rest of the time is taken up by interruptions, admin tasks, emails and meetings,' highlights Kondo.

Even though we can't hold these things, the same principles apply when tidying them up. It's why Kondo keeps her desktop empty except for what she needs on the day.

To tidy your calendar, make sure you schedule downtime. Block out windows of time each week to turn off notifications, take a walk or simply

let your mind wander. Your creativity will be replenished and your brain function will be sharper,' she says.

It's ultimately about simplifying and enhancing your work life for 'a joy-sparking career'.

'No matter whether you thrive in a tidy space or a cluttered one, the tidying process will help you discover what kind of workspace makes your creativity bloom,' she says. 'It's one of the best ways to know your own criteria for joy.'

Joy At Work: The Life-Changing Magic Of Organising Your Working Life by Marie Kondo and Scott Sonenshein is out now

Tidy mind:
Marie Kondo

Avoid tech neck - set your work posture straight

Back, neck, butt aching from working from home? Join the club. Many of us do not have the right equipment to spend eight hours a day sitting down at a computer in our house. Over days, the cumulative effects of sitting in the wrong chair, working on a laptop (which often means either the screen or the keyboard are at the wrong height) or even crossing your legs add up. Enter Hiba Boufares, osteopath at the Hoy Hotel in Paris, with her three tips on how to help your body feel better WFH.

1 SIT PROPERLY

'Sit upright, lower back against the bottom of the chair or against a small cushion,' says Boufares. 'Thighs and hips are at right angles and feet flat on the floor. The elbows and the upper arms need to hang in line with the chest, not forward of it.'

While the average head weighs between ten and 11 pounds, gravity means that holding the head at a 45-degree angle can increase that 'weight' to 49lbs and cause muscle strain - so-called 'tech neck' because it is a common bad posture to adopt while looking at a phone or screen. Boufares says to prevent this, be aware that the head needs to sit in line with the shoulders with the chin tucked in.

No work desk? 'Rather than collapsing on a sofa or, worse, in bed, sit on a small cushion, back to the wall, cross-legged, the computer raised by a stack of books to avoid collapsing in front of the screen,' she recommends.

2 POSITION YOUR SCREEN

Screens should be at eye level, says Boufares. 'If you have a laptop, raise it to avoid having to look

down constantly. Ideally, the keyboard should be at elbow height and the forearms at right angles to the upper arms to relax the shoulders. An extra mouse (rather than a laptop's built-in trackpad) allows you to move without getting tense.'

3 STRETCH OFTEN

'Every 30 minutes, get up and stretch,' says Boufares, who recommends a simple roll-down as an effective exercise. 'Stand with your feet flat, shoulder-width apart, bend your neck down, then roll down from your chest until your upper body is bent forward over your legs. Keep your knees relaxed to stretch the back and the back muscles. Count to ten and roll up slowly, returning to the starting position.'

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hoyparis.com/en/care.htm

