

MINIMALIST

Living

Why Less is Actually More in Life



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 - What is Minimalist Living?	6
What Does Minimalist Living Look Like?	6
The Misunderstandings About Minimalist Living	8
Chapter 2 - What Kind of Freedom Can Minimalist Living Bring? .	12
Fewer Possessions	12
Freedom from Frantic Modern Life	13
Freedom from Duplicity	15
Chapter 3 - The Benefits of Minimalist Living – An Overview	18
Recognize That Less is More	18
Why Choose the Minimalist Life?	20
Chapter 4 – The Personal Benefits of Minimalist Living	27
Understand Yourself and Your Relationships Better	27
Free up Your Time for Better Mental Health	29
Chapter 5 - How to Embark on a Minimalist Lifestyle	33
Your Top Tips	34
Chapter 6 - How to Take a Minimalist Approach at Work	40
The Problems of the Workplace	40
De-Clutter Your Physical and Mental Workspace	41
Chapter 7 - How to Manage Minimalism in Your Personal Life	44
Pare Down Your Closet	45
Rethink Your Diet	46
Overhaul Your Finances	47
Consider Your Approach to Technology	48
Chapter 8 – How to Balance Your Minimalist Lifestyle	52
The Problem with the Ascetic Approach	52
Avoid the Disposable Economy	56

Chapter 9 – The Problems of Minimalism and How to Counteract Them	59
The Challenges of the Minimalist Life	60
Embrace the Concept	63
Chapter 10 - Taking the First Step Towards a Minimalist Lifestyle	66
Conclusion	70

Minimalist Living

Have you heard about minimalist living but aren't sure what it means or what benefits it could offer you? You aren't alone. The concept of minimalist living isn't a new one, but it's an idea that has recently gained more momentum as increasing numbers of people recognize how much better their lives can be when they switch to a minimalist lifestyle.

The modern world is a frantic and hectic place. The pace of life these days never seems to slow down. Many of us feel as if we are bombarded on all sides with urgent demands and pressures that are hard to resist. "More" is the buzzword of the moment. The more we have of everything, the more satisfied we're supposed to be. More possessions should equate to more happiness – at least that's what we're conditioned to believe. But is this true?

Those who have adopted the minimalist lifestyle would disagree with the above opinion. They say that, by adopting a simpler approach to every aspect of life, from relationships to the

workplace, it becomes possible to narrow down your focus and to concentrate on what really matters. As a result, you can enjoy more happiness, more satisfaction and even more success in all areas without all the physical, mental and emotional clutter that seems to build up over time.

Here, we take a closer look at what changing to a minimalist way of living could mean to you and how it could help you to enjoy greater peace of mind. With this how-to guide to switching to a minimalist lifestyle, you have all the tools you need at your disposal to make an informed decision about whether you could benefit from making the change.

Learn all you need to know about what a modern minimalistic lifestyle looks like and find out more about how you can adopt the principles of this exciting and revolutionary lifestyle concept into your everyday life. You're sure to be impressed by the many benefits that you can derive when you make just a few simple changes.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS MINIMALIST LIVING



Chapter 1 - What is Minimalist Living?

The first thing that you need to understand before adopting this new lifestyle is what exactly is "minimalism"? And how does it look in practice?

What Does Minimalist Living Look Like?

Before we answer this question, let's just reiterate the fact that minimalist living is nothing new. It's something that has been around for a very long time. Monks and nuns from centuries ago chose to live with only the absolute essentials in their lives so that they could focus on their faith and become closer to a supreme power. They found that, by eschewing everyday luxuries, they could develop a greater understanding of themselves and their beliefs.

Yet, these days, things are very different. Very few people are living this kind of basic and simple lifestyle. Most of us have fallen into a trap of wanting more than just the basics. We have fallen prey to the media and marketers' message that the secret to a happy life is to own more by having more of everything; more money, more success, more possessions and more technology.

Yet, those of us who seek to accrue an endless stream of possessions usually come to learn over time that the promise of happiness that advertisers dangle in front of us couldn't be more false. The real secret to finding happiness and peace is to think in terms of subtraction rather than addition. Less is more when it comes to finding satisfaction in life and peace of mind.

Essentially, at its core, minimalism is all about living with less. While that can be taken literally as having fewer possessions, it has more far-reaching implications for the way that you live your life. The concept behind minimalist living is learning to identify the things which are important and then focusing down on those things while eradicating everything else which is deemed to be unimportant from your life.

The Misunderstandings About Minimalist Living

As you might imagine, there is a lot of misunderstandings about what minimalist living really means. Many people think that it means you can't own a home or have a car. Others think that you're restricted to only having as many possessions as you can fit into a small backpack or bag.

None of this is true. In fact, minimalism could best be described as intentionally promoting anything that you most value while removing anything which brings no value into your life. It is a concept that resonates differently with every individual. While for some, that may mean a great degree of elimination, for others, it may be much less extreme but no less beneficial.

The principle of minimalist living is to remove anything which could be considered as clutter from your everyday existence. This clutter may be physical, in the form of possessions that you simply don't require, or it may be emotional or mental, for example, in the form of toxic relationships that are causing you unhappiness or stressful situations in which you find yourself. It means that you adjust your mindset and, in so doing, learn how you can live your life not only with greater purpose but also with greater peace.

What is a Life of Intentionality?

When you opt for a minimalist lifestyle, you're opting for a life of intentionality. What does this mean? It means that you're intentionally making time, space and room for all the things which you love and value, while simultaneously eliminating all that could distract you from really enjoying and appreciating those things to the max.

You're opting for a lifestyle in which you intentionally choose which possessions you should own and what you're going to do with them for yourself without relying on convention or pressure from external forces. You're also choosing how that will impact on your way of thinking and living, and how it will change your perspective on your own life.

It may seem like an unusual concept. After all, we're more used to following the herd and accepting what everyone else does as the norm. However, if you take this way of living onboard, you'll be surprised at the benefits you can reap.

Minimalism brings with it a host of benefits which are well known to those who practice this way of living. Those who extol its virtues say that minimalist living is an effective tool to help you to find freedom from worry, fear, guilt, and depression.



With around a quarter of us suffering from mental health issues at any one time, it's no wonder that so many people are now questioning whether minimalist living could be the right way to go. So, could you benefit from making these changes in your life?

Here, you can learn more about how switching to a more minimalistic approach to everyday life can help you to enjoy greater freedom, to improve your relationships, to become more successful in your professional life and, most importantly, to experience greater satisfaction and happiness across all areas of your life daily.

CHAPTER 2

**WHAT KIND OF FREEDOM
CAN MINIMALIST
LIVING BRING?**



Chapter 2 - What Kind of Freedom Can Minimalist Living Bring?

When you adopt a minimalist lifestyle, one of the greatest benefits that you will experience is a strong sense of freedom. While this freedom stems from losing the drive to possess more things, it has significantly far-reaching implications that spread through all aspects of your everyday life. This freedom comes in many forms, some of which will be quite unexpected but no less welcomed.

Fewer Possessions

Firstly, minimalism means that you'll own fewer possessions. This, in turn, frees you from the drive to accrue more of them over time. When you live intentionally with just the things you most need by getting rid of the distractions that excess

possessions can bring, you can put more of your focus onto the things in your life that matter most.

Once you're free from the passion to own more, you'll be surprised by the pleasure that this can bring you. You'll be stepping off the consumerism treadmill and looking for the source of your happiness elsewhere. Where will you find that happiness?

The answer will vary depending on your own life and circumstances. However, you'll almost certainly find the joy that you're seeking in your relationships, your experiences and your self-care. When you learn to value what you've already got, you'll also be reminded to be more grateful for the things you have and, in that gratitude, you'll find that your life is infinitely more abundant than it was, even when you could have a house-full of possessions.

Freedom from Frantic Modern Life

Another freedom that minimalism brings you is a release from the mania of modern living. The world today is running at a

breakneck pace. We're all rushed, stressed and hurried. We feel obliged to work long hours so we can pay our bills and we fall into debt as we try to keep up with the neighbors. We also find that we're endlessly rushing between activities, multi-tasking instead of appreciating the experiences we're living through, while still struggling to accomplish anything worthwhile.



Although we've all got cell phones which keep us permanently connected to those at home, at work and elsewhere, we often still struggle to maintain positive and meaningful relationships in real life. When we embrace minimalist living, life can finally slow

down. You can finally free yourself from the frenetic pace of modern life. You can disengage from all the pressures that we face today in the 21st century. It's only then that you can come to realize just how stressed you've been and how strained your relationships have become. With the new freedom that you've found, you can rectify that and start to rebuild a more positive living environment.

Freedom from Duplicity

Embracing the minimalist way of life means that you no longer must live a duplicitous life. Whether or not you realize it, you're almost certainly portraying yourself in a different way to different people in your life. The way you act in front of your family is sure to be completely different from the way you behave at work, or while you're around your neighbors. Yet, having to play up to an expected image can be hard work and over time, the strain builds up.

When you're living a minimalist life, everything becomes simpler. You can be more united in your approach to those around you. With consistency, reliability and dependability as

part of your life each day, you'll have more transparency and honesty than you ever thought possible.

No longer will you be tricked into chasing glamor, fame and success. You'll learn to chase things that are much more meaningful such as strong relationships, peace and positivity. When you adopt minimalist living, you'll find that you consume less and slow down, yet you'll enjoy your life much more.

CHAPTER 3

THE BENEFITS OF MINIMALIST LIVING



Chapter 3 - The Benefits of Minimalist Living – An Overview

So, now you know what minimalist living entails in practice. But what exactly are the advantages of adopting this way of life? Why should you consider leaving behind all the things that the modern world values so much and adopt a simpler way of life instead? This is something that most people ask when faced with the idea of switching to a minimalist lifestyle. So, what are the advantages that you could expect to experience if you take the step of altering how you view possessions and clutter?

Recognize That Less is More

It can be hard to see the wood for the trees when you're living a standard 21st century lifestyle. More than ever before, society today is subjected to marketing pressure and the media's ongoing message about what modern life should look like. You're constantly told that the key to happiness is to own more, to do

more and to have more. After all, you only need to look at how celebrities are living their everyday lives to see what you can expect to achieve if you push yourself to the limit and accumulate as much as possible.



If everyone around you is living in the same way – pursuing more money and more possessions, it’s almost impossible to imagine what life would be like without those things. That’s why it’s important to become aware of the benefits that minimalist living can provide. It can seem almost impossible that giving up those coveted possessions could give you greater satisfaction and happiness than owning them could bring. However, when you

put the principles of the minimalist lifestyle into practice, you'll be surprised to discover that it's true.

Why Choose the Minimalist Life?

When you choose the minimalist way of life, you'll experience the following advantages.

- You'll feel happier. Rather than feeling as if you must acquire more and more, minimalism helps you to derive true enjoyment from the things which you already own without feeling the need to spend money which you don't have to acquire items that you don't need. Instead, you can focus on your existing possessions which bring you joy.
- You'll have peace of mind. With fewer things to worry about in your life, your mind will be clearer. You'll be less subject to stress and anxiety and you'll have the freedom to focus on the things which are most important.
- You won't fear failure. When you own less and have a minimalist lifestyle, you'll have much less to lose if you fail in

any activity or enterprise. This gives you the freedom to try things that you would have avoided before for fear of losing everything. You can enjoy experimenting with new things and never be held back by concerns about losing everything. This can allow you to go from strength to strength and on to newer and greater successes.

- You'll enjoy better health. The minimalist lifestyle is virtually stress-free. That means you'll worry less and enjoy much better mental and physical health overall. Since stress is well known to be associated with all kinds of physical and mental medical complaints, you can have a longer and healthier lifestyle with less need for medications.
- You'll have more space. Since adopting minimalism requires you to get rid of anything which isn't essential to your life, you'll have a lot more space. This applies both physically and mentally. Your home will have more available room due to fewer possessions. Meanwhile, your mind, too, will be less cluttered so you'll have a stronger focus on the things which really matter. Since a cluttered home leads to a cluttered mind, and a cluttered mind leads to stress, anxiety and depression, it's no surprise that simply adopting a minimalistic approach to life can bring you greater happiness.

- You'll have more money. Without the need to constantly buy more things and maintain an expensive lifestyle you'll have more spare money. Not only will this help you to feel less stressed, it'll also mean you can save more and invest in the things which are most important. Having more money in the bank gives you greater freedom to enjoy your time too. For example, you'll be able to save up for a dream vacation that will improve your well-being even more.
- You'll have more time. When you minimize your time commitments to only those things which you truly care about, you'll have even more spare time to enjoy yourself and to focus on the things which are most important to you.

This will give you the freedom to use that extra time to boost your well-being and happiness. You can focus on yourself and how to live your best life. You can also spend more time with the people who are most important to you – your friends and loved ones – and build up the strong network of close relationships that are so important to your overall well-being.

- You'll have a greater sense of purpose. When you adopt minimalist living, you're intentionally opting to live with fewer possessions. That means you'll have greater direction and focus in your life. You'll be able to channel that focus in the

direction that best suits you, your needs and your preferences rather than in the direction that others tell you to focus it in.

- You'll have more confidence. When you adopt minimalism in all areas of your life, you'll automatically get rid of everything which doesn't align with your new lifestyle. That means you can be your own true self rather than having to live a duplicitous life and think about how you appear to other people in order to conform.

Instead of having to adapt your behavior and demeanor to suit the company that you're in, you can continue to behave as you usually would without ever having to worry about disappointing anyone or letting your guard down. When you can really be yourself in every situation, you'll develop greater self-confidence that will help you to feel mentally stronger and happier.

- You'll enjoy better relationships. Spending less time on the things which don't matter means that you'll have freed up time that can be better spent with those who are the most important in your life. Your family and friends can enjoy more of your company and you can enjoy more of theirs. In turn, this will strengthen all your most valuable relationships, whether with your parents, your children, your partner or your friends. Those strong relationships will be there as your

security blanket whenever you need help. Remember that no possessions could ever take over that supportive role.

- You'll have happier memories. When you live a minimalist life, you'll be storing up a lifetime of wonderful memories. When you aren't focusing all your time and resources on acquiring more possessions and working yourself to death, you can concentrate on having experiences that not only make you happy at the time, but for many years in the future when you recall those special moments. Those memories will last much longer than any possessions could.
- You'll have a low maintenance home. With fewer possessions in your house or apartment, you'll need to spend less time cleaning and tidying. Clutter in the home leads to clutter in the mind, so having a clutter-free property means that you can enjoy greater peace of mind overall. You'll also benefit from having more spare time since you won't need to spend as much time on domestic chores. This gives you the opportunity to pursue the activities that truly make you feel happy and to focus on the important relationships in your life that you wish to strengthen and deepen.
- You'll be more productive. When you minimize the tasks that you take on board, you have more time to dedicate to the work

that you do agree to do. With fewer commitments and priorities, you'll have more time and resources to ensure that the projects you take on are completed quickly and to the highest standard. This keeps your productivity level high and enables you to feel more confident in your abilities rather than overwhelmed by an endless array of tasks that need to be finished.

- You'll be helping the planet. These days, we're all trying to be greener, and eco-friendliness is the order of the day. The minimalist lifestyle is in perfect alignment with this philosophy. By reusing and recycling items and avoiding making unnecessary purchases, you'll be doing your bit for sustainability and helping to protect the environment from harm.

CHAPTER 4

THE PERSONAL BENEFITS OF MINIMALIST LIVING



Chapter 4 – The Personal Benefits of Minimalist Living

As you can see from the previous chapter, there is a raft of benefits that are associated with adopting a minimalist lifestyle. However, a great many of those advantages are personal ones. When you commit to reducing the clutter in all aspects of your life, both physical and mental, you can experience many positive changes that can take your life to a new level of happiness and success.

Understand Yourself and Your Relationships Better

Minimalist living helps you to develop a better understanding not only of what you really want but also what you really need. When you know the value of each item in your life, you will appreciate each one more. In turn, when you know what's

important, you'll develop a stronger sense of well-being that pervades throughout your life. You'll be able to focus on the most valuable aspects of your life which will, necessarily, be those things which make you feel good.



Minimalists have better relationships with those around them and this, too, is an important personal benefit. Everyone needs to have a strong network of friends and family around them be happy and content in their lives. One of the greatest dangers of the modern world is that people often struggle to forge and maintain positive relationships with those around them in the real world.

Friends often feel side-lined because you're too strongly focused on other activities. Family members and partners may feel rejected because you're too committed to your job and trying to accrue more money so that you can buy more stuff which the marketers and media tell you that you need to be happy and successful.

With minimalist living this becomes a problem of the past. You no longer feel obliged to acquire more and more items in pursuit of happiness. Instead, you can focus more on the things which really count, and which have true value when it comes to finding personal happiness and satisfaction.

Free up Your Time for Better Mental Health

People who have minimalist lifestyles free up a significant proportion of their time. When they no longer take on as much work, they can spend longer with their loved ones. When they own fewer items, they need to spend less time cleaning, tidying and sorting them. It also means that they can stop taking pleasure in owning things and start taking pleasure in enjoying life experiences instead.

The quality time spent with a good friend, a child, a parent or a partner is infinitely more valuable to you than any amount of time spent working on household chores or in completing a task for your employer. You'll begin to recognize this as soon as you start getting rid of things that are unnecessary in your life.

The minimalist lifestyle is also free from the excess pressure and stress that has become all too common in the modern world. Too many of us today struggle to accomplish all the tasks that are expected of us. We cannot possibly handle the mountain of work tasks that pile up on our desks daily. We cannot possibly fit in all the activities that we seem to think are so important for our well-being and for protecting the status that we believe we should maintain.

When we free ourselves from those stresses and pressures, however, we find that we enjoy much greater physical and mental well-being. Stress is a serious problem in people of all ages today. Stress leads not only to a raft of serious mental health problems, but also to a variety of unpleasant medical conditions which can prove to be difficult to live with, or even life-threatening in a worst-case scenario.

Without the pressure to keep up with the neighbors and to push yourself harder to achieve and accumulate, you'll enjoy a greater

sense of peace, with less anxiety and depression ruining your life. As a result, you can live a happier, more positive and more productive lifestyle that is truly worth living.

CHAPTER 5

HOW TO EMBARK ON A MINIMALIST LIFESTYLE



Chapter 5 - How to Embark on a Minimalist Lifestyle

If you've read this how-to guide so far and love the idea of what you've discovered, you might be wondering how you too can embark on a minimalist lifestyle and reap all the benefits that it represents.

There are no hard and fast rules about how to start living minimally. However, there's one thing to be aware of – it isn't something which you can achieve overnight. Most of us today have spent years accruing a lifetime of possessions. It would be unrealistic and unwelcome to even think about getting rid of them all in one fell swoop.

When it comes to starting out with minimalism, it can feel very overwhelming. You may even be reading this in your living room, surrounded by a lifetime's worth of possessions, and wondering how you can ever get started with cutting them down to only the necessities and basics. The good news is that you can take your

time. There's no need to rush into anything. In fact, adopting minimalist living can be a time-consuming process, and there's no need to worry about that or rush through it.



Your Top Tips

Here are some top tips to help you to launch your new, simpler way of living.

- Set an end goal. It's important to know what you want to achieve when you adopt a minimalist way of living. This will vary between individuals. While some people want to truly

embrace minimalism to its furthest degree by cutting down their possessions to an absolute minimum and shedding the trappings of the 21st century completely, others are simply interested in cutting back on frivolities and to free up some space and time in their lives so they can enjoy themselves and have better overall well-being.

Neither of these approaches is wrong, but you need to think about what really matters to you before you embark on the process. This will enable you to take a focused course of action that makes sense for your end goal.

- Set yourself a timeline. Once you're aware of what your end goals are in adopting a minimalist way of life, you need to set yourself a timeline to work through. When do you want to have completed the process of eliminating the clutter from your life?

Again, there's no right or wrong answer to this question, and there's no need to feel pressured into rushing through the process. It's important, however, to set a timeline which is realistic for you. Set yourself small targets to work towards – for example, to declutter one room in your home every week – so that you can experience a positive sense of accomplishment

every time you tick another item off your list. Try to speed up the process and it'll only add more stress to your life and increase the risk of giving up at the first hurdle.

- Think about changing your home. The first changes that you can make will take place in the home. It's usually easier to start with physical clutter rather than mental or emotional clutter. Look around your house or apartment and determine how many of your existing possessions you want to keep and how many you'd prefer to get rid of.

Start with one room then move on to the next once you've finished. This will help you to feel as if you're accomplishing something worthwhile. Run an objective eye over each space and think about how you can make changes. Are your counters covered in appliances? Are your bookcases overflowing? Are there toys on the floor which need to be picked up every time you vacuum? These are all possible areas for decluttering that, when cleared, will free up space and time.

- Begin decluttering. Once you've planned your strategy and determined the areas in your home which need to be focused on and decluttered it's time to begin the physical process of

getting rid of all the excess possessions and items that you no longer need, value or want. It's important to acknowledge that this can be a difficult process. Not only is it hard to decide which items need to be eradicated, it's equally difficult to make the commitment to getting rid of them. We naturally want to hang on to the things that we have, even when we know deep inside that we neither want them nor need them.

It's important to get over those feelings and push on with the process of decluttering. A cluttered home means a cluttered mind, and a cluttered mind cannot be truly appreciative of all the positive things that surround it every day. So, be brave and take the plunge! While the process may be a challenging one, it'll be well worth it afterwards.

- Reduce gradually over time. It's rarely a good idea to leap straight into eliminating all the clutter in one go. For some people, this would be practically impossible due to the sheer volume of possessions which would need to be dealt with.

For others, the process is more of an emotional challenge. Taking the decision to get rid of the things that you've accumulated over time can be difficult and you don't need to rush it. Start slowly. Start by getting rid of the items which you

won't miss then work up to weighing up the value of the more contentious items. Once you get into the habit of weighing up the importance of everything you own, it'll become second nature and you'll find it becomes easier to take decisions about whether an item should be kept or removed from your life.

- Reuse and recycle. Although the minimalist approach involves getting rid of clutter and items that are of no value in your life, that doesn't mean that you should throw them away. In fact, that's contrary to the eco-friendly aspect of this kind of lifestyle.

Reusing and recycling are two key components of minimalist living. Think about how each item that you own could be used for several purposes. Could an item be upcycled and used for something else rather than thrown away if it isn't needed in its current form? Could someone you know benefit from your unwanted items?

CHAPTER 6

HOW TO TAKE A MINIMALIST APPROACH AT WORK



Chapter 6 - How to Take a Minimalist Approach at Work

While some people are under the impression that the minimalist lifestyle is all about the home, in fact that couldn't be further from the truth. In order to truly embrace this way of living, you need to ensure that your approach pervades through every aspect of your life, including the workplace. It's only by doing this that you can reap all the maximum benefits.

The Problems of the Workplace

The workplace is one of the areas of your life in which you can experience most stress. Mental clutter can be at its worst when you're sitting at your office desk, and the time pressures involved in your working life can only serve to compound the problems of 21st century living that arise in other areas of your lifestyle.

It's important to remember not to end your minimalizing efforts when you leave the front door of your home. Take an objective look at your working life and determine where cuts can be made to improve your mental and physical well-being and to adopt a more minimalist approach.

De-Clutter Your Physical and Mental Workspace

Where do you begin with this? The first port of call could be to examine your desk and workspace. Is there physical clutter to get rid of? Are papers piled up? Are there files everywhere? Notes and pens littered across the surfaces?

Working surrounded by mess limits your productivity and only serves to increase your stress levels. By simply eliminating unnecessary items, clearing the surfaces and keeping items in your space to a minimum you can free up your time and your mind to handle tasks in a more efficient way.

However, the clutter doesn't always have to be physical. Take a closer look at your calendar. Do you have commitments that are

sapping your energy and adding no value to your life? Then it's time to consider dropping those activities so that you can focus on the things that are more important and productive. If you work for yourself, you can exercise that greater freedom to get rid of clients who are a drain on your energy.

At the end of each working day, transfer your saved items to a cloud storage space. Shut down all your tabs and move all your unwanted emails into the trash and empty it. All these things are minor and will take seconds to achieve but will make a big difference both in the smooth running of your working operation and in the clearness of your mind.

CHAPTER 7

HOW TO MANAGE
MINIMALISM
IN YOUR
PERSONAL LIFE



Chapter 7 - How to Manage Minimalism in Your Personal Life

When your home has been decluttered and re-organized into a minimalistic zone, and your working life has been simplified so that you can be as productive as possible in the workplace, it's time to take a closer look at your personal life.

In many ways, decluttering your personal life is one of the most important aspects of implementing a minimalistic approach. It isn't enough to eliminate only physical clutter. You must look at other areas of your life which need some attention to bring them in alignment with your new principles. So, where do you begin when it comes to bringing your personal life in line with the concept of minimalism?

You can start with the way that you approach your everyday living. What do you wear? What do you eat? What do you do? These things can all be adapted to match your new-found minimalist principles.

Pare Down Your Closet

Look at your wardrobe. Most of us have far too many clothes. If you riffle through your clothing now, you'll almost certainly find several items that you've never worn as well as several outfits which you haven't put on for years. There's no point in hanging on to things which you won't wear. Be tough on yourself. If you haven't worn it for a year it has to go.

If you're finding it difficult to determine which outfits to eliminate you can try this clever technique: Hang all your clothes in your closet with the hangers facing towards you. When you've worn the item and are ready to replace it in the closet, hang it with the hanger facing away from you. At the end of the year, you can see at a glance which clothes haven't been worn in the past 12 months. You can then get rid of all those items with a clear conscience.

A capsule wardrobe is the ideal solution. With a few simple, key pieces you can put together an outfit suitable for every occasion without having to invest in countless items. Anything which doesn't fit into your new capsule collection can be given to charity, given to friends or even recycled – for example, you can cut old t-shirts into strips to make rugs or bags.

Rethink Your Diet

While you're taking a closer look at your personal life, you should consider your diet. Many of us buy all kinds of exotic foods as we give in to pressure from the media and marketers telling us that we ought to be experimenting with the latest products. Yet many of these processed items are full of unwanted ingredients and chemicals which could be bad for your health. They're also very expensive. You can eliminate this problem by opting for a more minimalistic diet.

By choosing wholefoods rather than processed ones, you can enjoy better overall health as well as a healthier bank balance. A minimalist diet is also easy to prepare. Many of us tend to eat the same things on a regular basis anyway.

Do you eat the same cereal every morning for breakfast? Do you have the same sandwich every lunchtime? Are there a handful of evening meals that you prepare repeatedly? This isn't something to be ashamed of. Embrace it!

The media and advertisers pressure us into feeling as though our regular diet is dull and boring. However, if you acknowledge which foods you prefer to eat and plan your weekly menu accordingly, you can eliminate a lot of clutter from your kitchen

cabinets and a lot of pressure from your mind. If you've ever worried about what you're going to be prepare for dinner after a long day at work, you're sure to be relieved by the idea of knowing exactly what you'll be eating every day of the week without any uncertainty or complex thought processes!

Overhaul Your Finances

Another area of your personal life that could benefit from a minimalistic overhaul is your financial well-being. Living up to the demands of 21st century living can be expensive, so it isn't too surprising that most of us are in debt. Loans, overdrafts and credit cards are commonplace.

While these are part of the essential trappings of modern life, they only serve to contribute the clutter which piles up on our shoulders. Debt is a burden on the mind which prevents you from living your best life and enjoying yourself to the full. When you need to think about paying these increasing bills, your stress levels rise, and your mind becomes more occupied. As a result, you can't truly be present in your own life or in the lives of those around you who are most important to your well-being.

Work towards becoming debt free in order to pursue a true minimalistic lifestyle. By eradicating your debt and preventing any more from accruing, you can enjoy complete peace of mind. Without a credit card, loan or overdraft you may not be able to afford new things.

However, with the minimalist lifestyle that isn't a problem. You don't need to add that extra pressure to your life. If you can't afford something, you can't buy it. You'll be surprised by how often you realize that you can live without something that you believed was essential when you no longer have the means to purchase it.

Consider Your Approach to Technology

Consider your overall approach to technology. The way in which you relate to the digital world can have a major impact on your overall well-being, so eliminating digital elements from your lifestyle could be the minimalistic move you need to make to improve your life.

Do you have a TV? The answer is probably yes. Do you have a TV in every room? Again, the answer is most likely to be in the affirmative. Think again about whether you really need so much access to technology. Wouldn't just one TV set be enough for the whole house? Without a TV in your bedroom, you can enjoy a calmer and healthier sleeping environment. Without TVs in your kids' bedrooms, you can all enjoy more quality family time together. The benefits are easy to see.

What about your phone time? Do you seem to have your smartphone permanently glued to your hand? Here in the 21st century, we tend to believe that we always need to stay connected.

However, this is not actually the case. If you try to minimize the length of time you spend using your cell phone, you'll probably be surprised by how long you can go without it before feeling any negative effects.

Try to implement a regime of set time ranges within which to use your phone. Outside those time slots, physically turn your notifications off and either switch off your phone or put it into airplane mode. This will help you to focus more of your time and energy on the people in the real world around you who matter

most, and to enjoy more positive relationships with friends and family members.

Social media is another element of digital clutter which can be addressed via a minimalist lifestyle. If your social media feed is full of dull posts and messages from people who add no value to your life, it's time to start a cull of your followers and friends. Keep your friends list to only those people who make your life more interesting, more valuable and more fun.

While considering social media, delete any platforms you no longer use. You might want to try coming off all social media for a week or so to see whether it makes any difference to your life. You'll almost certainly be surprised by how well you can cope without it and you're sure to find better ways to fill all the time that you'll save when you're not checking up on posts and messages.

CHAPTER 8

HOW TO BALANCE YOUR MINIMALIST LIFESTYLE



Chapter 8 – How to Balance Your Minimalist Lifestyle

While reading this guide, you've probably been convinced of the many benefits that switching to a minimalist lifestyle can bring. The problems, however, begin to arise when you start thinking about how to implement those changes without causing problems in your everyday life.

The key to minimalism and its long-term success is to find the right balance. This is why people who adopt too ascetic an approach often end up failing to maintain their lifestyle in the long-term.

The Problem with the Ascetic Approach

People who think that minimalism is all about eradicating possessions and items in their life to the extreme are almost

certainly on a path to failure. There are very few people who can cope for any length of time without any home comforts. If you minimize all your possessions into only what can fit into a single bag, you might have gone too far in your pursuit of simplicity.

As already mentioned in an earlier chapter, minimalistic living doesn't need to be about doing without the basics like a home or a car. It should rather be about doing away with anything which lacks importance and value.

You can opt to rent a home rather than buy one if this gives you greater peace of mind and greater freedom from debt and worry. However, doing without a home at all is certainly something which isn't suitable for everyone. Although there are some people who are looking for this degree of minimalism, they are the exception rather than the rule.

Finding the right balance in your minimalistic lifestyle involves weighing up your external resources alongside your internal resources so you can find true happiness. Your external resources are the things outside yourself that you value, and which add pleasure and joy to your life. Meanwhile, your internal resources are the things inside yourself which add happiness to your life. For most of us, the perfect balance will involve a little

of each to achieve true happiness and the right minimalistic approach.

It's clear to see that minimalism doesn't mean going without. It means getting rid only of the things which are unimportant, valueless or unneeded in your life. It's only by doing this that you can create enough room for the things which are the most important to you.

When you get rid of only the right things and consciously work to change your thought patterns and the way you feel about your possessions, you can reap all the benefits without ever feeling like you must do without. This is what balance means.

Minimalism for Everyone

The minimalistic way of life isn't just for certain people. Everyone can achieve balance in their own way when it comes to taking a minimalist approach to living. They simply need to find the most appropriate form to suit their lifestyle. Realistically, a growing family won't be able to narrow down all their possessions into a single backpack.

That doesn't mean that they can't adopt a minimalist approach to life. It's more about a change of attitude rather than a sudden rush to eradicate items from your home and life. Get the balance right for your individual circumstances, and you'll find that there is nobody who cannot benefit from the advantages that minimalism brings, whether they're young or old, single or part of a family.

There are no rules when it comes to minimalism. Those who think that there is only one way to achieve the minimalist lifestyle goal are wrong and may be doomed to failure in the long-term. The rules can be tailored to meet the need of each individual or their family. If balance can be found by intentionally focusing only on what's most important and letting go of everything else, peace of mind will follow.

You can begin to find the right balance for you by starting with the basics. Clear the physical clutter in your life and then progress towards clearing the digital clutter and then the mental clutter which pervades your mind. Make sure you keep only those things which you truly love and value in your life and bear in mind the mantra of "quality not quantity".

The right balance of minimalism isn't found by getting rid of everything, but it also can't be found if you refuse to cut down on

your clutter at all. The key is to consider quality over quantity every time. While having some possessions in your life is essential and even pleasurable, those possessions should be good quality items.

Avoid the Disposable Economy

All too often, we're tempted to buy into the disposable economy. We buy cheaply made products at low prices and then replace them when they stop working or when we simply don't want or use them anymore. This is completely contrary to the minimalist philosophy.

Instead of opting to buy more low-cost products which can be cast aside without a thought, opt instead for more expensive but better-made items which will stand the test of time. When you prioritize quality over quantity, you will be certain of having the things you love most around you for longer and of getting the greatest value from every single purchase you make.

Another element which is important when it comes to finding the right balance in a minimalist lifestyle is to have a "one in one out" philosophy. Rather than adding to your possessions, only

replace. When something breaks, you can replace it with something new.

Otherwise, restrain yourself and avoid buying even more items to add to your existing collection. If you avoid the urge to buy a few times, you'll soon realize that you can manage without those things which once you would have snapped up in a second. By adopting this revolutionary approach to buying, you can achieve the optimal balance of items in your life without unintentionally building up clutter and mess in your life.

CHAPTER 9

THE PROBLEMS OF
MINIMALISM AND
HOW TO
COUNTERACT THEM



Chapter 9 – The Problems of Minimalism and How to Counteract Them

Although it's clear that there are many benefits to adopting a minimalistic lifestyle, one of the greatest problems arises when it comes to implementing the necessary changes. Minimalism represents a completely different mindset to that which we are so used to here in the 21st century. Not only does minimalism require a change in your physical lifestyle, it also demands a change of attitude and mind. This can be the hardest thing of all to take on board.

The Challenges of the Minimalist Life

Why is it so challenging to adopt minimalism? There are several problems that you're likely to encounter if you decide to take the plunge. Here are just a few.

- It's difficult to end the purging. Clearing away all the clutter in your life by donating, selling, tossing or recycling can seem to take forever. Even when you think you've finally achieved your goal there will, inevitably, be more stuff to add to your collection over time regardless of how mindful you are in your purchasing regime, and this, too, will eventually need purging.
- Deciding what to let go can be tough. Making decisions about what to keep and what to get rid of is always going to be hard at the start of your process. If you're especially attached to your possessions, this is especially hard, and if the items are shared with a partner or amongst other family members, it can be even more difficult to come to a decision.

What do you do if one person is more strongly attached to an item than the others? Discussion becomes essential, and this can be very time-consuming and stressful. At the end of the day, it's never worth getting into a major argument over

whether to keep or get rid of a specific item. If it's so hard to let it go, it may help to ask questions such as how often you use it, whether it makes you happy or whether it serves a valid purpose. This should help you to make a final decision.

- You face family challenges. While it may be relatively simple to embrace minimalism if you're single or even part of a couple, when you have children and pets it can become more complex. Extended families, by their nature, accumulate more items and possessions, and this makes it harder to stick to your minimalist principles. For example, what do you do when the children have their birthdays?

Do you give into temptation to buy them the latest toy which they'll probably discard within days? What happens when they receive gifts from other people? How do you address this issue? It can appear rude to ask friends and family members not to buy gifts but if you don't, you could end up with piles of unwanted clutter in your home. You need to consider what your approach is going to be at an early stage so that you don't face additional stress when the situation arises.

- Avoiding temptation. Not only is there temptation involved when it comes to younger members of the family, it can be an issue for anyone of any age who is trying to adopt a minimalistic lifestyle.

Marketers are good at their jobs, so it can be all too easy to fall prey to their adverts and distractions that they place in our way. It's important to be prepared for this eventuality and to keep your goals and motivations firmly in mind when heading to the store or making a purchase.

Minimalism is an ongoing philosophy which must be adopted at every level of your life. You need to keep this close to your heart when tempted to make a purchase and remember that you shouldn't buy more than you need. Fighting the urge to accumulate possessions may well be an ongoing battle, so there are a few questions that you can ask yourself before you take out the cash to pay for any item.

Do you really need this item? Why do you need to purchase it? If you can answer these questions and come up with a realistic and valid response, you can go ahead and make the purchase. Otherwise, you'll have given yourself the time you need to make the right choice and to put the product back on the shelf where it belongs.

Embrace the Concept

Maintaining a simple, minimalistic life requires you to put in a lot of hard work. After all, it's not something which is commonly seen in the modern world, and the concept can be extremely alien to all of us who are ready to make changes. This means that fear of the unknown can hold us back.

We are so used to accumulating more items rather than getting rid of them that it's only natural for us to feel some apprehension or even abject terror at the idea of doing something so contrary to what we're familiar with. What if we need those items at some future point? What if we accidentally throw away something with sentimental value? What if we're just filled with regret afterwards?

Even if you're fully committed to eradicating useless and valueless items from your life, identifying which of your possessions fall into those categories can be more difficult than you ever imagined. We tend to overthink things and try to associate importance with items that don't deserve it. This makes it extremely challenging to take the final step of getting rid of non-essentials.

The modern world is a highly pressured place. We feel the sway of marketers and the media telling us that we should be working towards accumulating more possessions, not getting rid of them. That somehow, we're failures if we don't have a house that's overflowing with the latest products.

While we may know at some level that this is nonsense, it's hard to go against the common belief when it has become so engrained throughout society today. To truly adopt a minimalistic approach to life, you must learn to go against the accepted norm and take the brave steps towards eradicating everything but the items which are most important to your happiness and well-being.

Most of all, you need to understand that adopting a minimalistic approach to life is something which takes time. It certainly isn't something which you can simply achieve overnight. It's an ongoing process of thinking, evaluating, acknowledging and eradicating. It won't always be easy, but if you accept this fact and go with it anyway, you're sure to reap the benefits in the long-term of your newly changed way of life.

CHAPTER 10

**TAKING THE FIRST
STEP TOWARDS
A MINIMALIST
LIFESTYLE**



Chapter 10 - Taking the First Step Towards a Minimalist Lifestyle

Would you like to start living in a more minimalist way? If you've been convinced of the benefits that the minimalist lifestyle can bring but aren't sure how to get started, you could probably do with some expert tips to point you in the right direction.

- Go through your closet and identify all the clothes which no longer fit, which you no longer wear, or which are just too old. Once you've pinpointed the items which are surplus to requirements, you can look for ways to get rid of them, while always keeping sustainability and eco-friendliness in mind.

Some unwanted items may be suitable to be given to friends or family members. Others may be able to be given to charity while some could be used for other projects or around the home as cleaning cloths.

- Declutter your home. Your home should be the very first place you begin your minimalizing operation. A quick look around any household will almost certainly turn up a lot of items which are no longer wanted or needed. Take a structured and methodical approach to the decluttering process. Start in one room and be ruthless.

Empty every shelf, drawer and cabinet and separate everything into three piles – to keep, to donate and to throw away. Be strict – it's important not to give into temptation otherwise you'll have failed at the first hurdle! When one room is complete, move onto the next one. You're aiming for a living space with plenty of open floor space and empty surfaces.

- Digitalize as much as you can. These days, there's no need for a chunky photograph album or piles of DVDs and CDs. You can digitalize all these things to online media and streaming systems. The Cloud is an amazing resource which is just perfect for anyone who wants to adopt a minimalistic lifestyle.

Upload as much as possible to the Cloud so you don't have to think about physical files, photographs and other items. You can rest assured that all your precious things and memories are safe and well-preserved, and you'll even have the added

benefit of being able to access them at any time and from any device no matter where you may be.

- Don't be tempted to take on too much. In this busy modern world, most of us feel pressured on all sides to take on more and more responsibility. We feel obliged to accept additional work from our managers, and we feel as if we must accommodate the family's every need.

In between keeping the boss happy by plowing through piles of paperwork long after your finishing time and dropping off the kids at endless after school activities, it can seem as if you never have any time for yourself. Yet having time to work on yourself and your own happiness is a key part of the minimalistic lifestyle. Be brave and take the step of saying no.

If you're being asked to take on more than you're able to cope with, it's time to take a good hard look at your attitude to your life. It's important to look after yourself and to focus on your own well-being. Minimize your work life and your personal life and you'll soon reap the benefit of having more time to spend with the people you value most.

- Eliminate toxic relationships. All of us have people in our lives who do us no good at all. Whether that be a partner who is jealous and demanding, or whether it be a friend who asks too much of you or who causes you trouble by talking about you behind your back, it's important to eradicate those toxic relationships from your life.

Part of living a minimalistic lifestyle involves culling the people around you who aren't good for your well-being. If someone is adding no positive value to your life and is not contributing to your happiness, it's time to think about how you can cut them out of the picture.

Eliminate those people from your social media feed and from your physical life and don't be afraid to say no to them. Caring for yourself is one of the most important factors in living a minimalist life.

Conclusion

While minimalistic living isn't exactly a new concept, it's certainly one that has attracted a lot of interest over the past few years. More people than ever before are beginning to recognize the benefits that come from simplifying their lives and cutting down on the amount of clutter that pervades their thoughts, emotions and physical space.

If you've ever wanted to live a more peaceful, fulfilling and positive life, you should certainly consider switching to a more minimalistic approach. It's the best way to surround yourself only with things that make you feel happy, and it's an efficient way to minimize the things which stress you out.

Although it may feel alien at first to adopt a minimalistic way of living, once you've persevered for a few weeks and months, it'll soon become second nature. You're sure to appreciate the difference that comes with having less to think about, worry about and deal with. When you have fewer possessions, you have fewer problems. With fewer problems, you have less stress and

with less stress in your life, you can experience greater joy and greater peace.

It may be challenging at first to identify which items you can eradicate from your life, but once you've taken the plunge, you're sure to delight in the experience of culling all the people, activities and things which have been causing you grief.

Whether you're eradicating toxic relationships from your life, getting rid of troublesome clients from your business or removing all the unwanted clutter from your home, you're sure to find that your mind is clearer and your life is full only of the things that you appreciate and value.

With only the essentials remaining, you'll finally be able to dedicate time and energy to the things which are most important – your own well-being, and your relationships with the people who surround you. While you may have fewer possessions, you'll be rich in thoughts, memories and experiences that will stand you in good stead for a lifetime.

While it goes against everything that 21st century culture expresses, the minimalistic life proves that less is most definitely more. If you're ready to pursue it for yourself and reap the

benefits that this simpler approach to life has to offer, follow our expert how-to guide and enjoy your new, happier lifestyle.