



The
organised
home

Special report

GET SMART

An efficient home is a happier home. Our expert tips will smooth the way, writes *Sarah Pickette*.

This time of year is ideal for taking a look around your home and deciding what can be improved upon. And for many of us, post-holidays, it's likely to be the amount of mess. "Clutter can have a negative impact in the home," says Dr Suzy Green, a psychologist with the Positivity Institute and an Officeworks spokesperson. "A high level of visual stimuli can overwhelm and result in feelings of stress," she says. "Physical space provides you with mental space; a clear and decluttered space, where everything's in its place, allows for productivity and efficiency."

Streamlining routines is the key to daily organisation, says Amelia Lee of Undercover Architect (undercoverarchitect.com). "Implementing storage and systems that make it easy to put your hands on what you need takes effort, but it's worth it for the resulting calm." ▶



1 BUY A SIMPLE BINDER OR DOCUMENT WALLET FOR STORING WARRANTIES AND INSTRUCTION MANUALS. YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID NEXT TIME SOMETHING BREAKS DOWN.



The Space Tower kitchen-storage system by Blum is available in customised widths, heights and depths.

KITCHEN SORTED

Keen to get your kitchen working like a dream? Here's what our experts advise:

✦ The key to a well-organised kitchen is tailoring the space to how you'll use it, says Perth interior designer Judith Barrett-Lennard. "For some, that might mean provision for spices right next to the cooktop, for others it could be deep drawers so your prep pans and trays are handy to your food-prep zone." One kitchen Barrett-Lennard recently completed had a small nook with a powerpoint built into the side of the island bench. "This was added so the owner could place her handbag there and charge her phone as soon as she got home."

'Extendable shelves in your pantry will allow you to reach everything with ease.' Judith Barrett-Lennard

✦ If space allows, include a butler's pantry with prep bench, says Sydney interior designer Andrew Waller. "This creates a separate work space, gives you somewhere to store small appliances and shifts the mess out of sight." Twin dishwashers either side of the main sink is one client request Waller had recently. "One is used for washing and the other is kept stacked – essentially as cutlery and tableware storage."

3 KITCHEN, HOME OFFICE, BEDROOM
AN AUSTRALIAN STUDY CONDUCTED IN 2015 FOUND THAT THESE ARE THE TOP THREE PROBLEM AREAS WHEN IT COMES TO DISORGANISATION AND CLUTTER. THE STUDY ALSO REPORTED THAT 86 PER CENT OF THOSE SURVEYED FELT SOME DEGREE OF STRESS ABOUT THE DISORGANISATION OF THEIR HOME.





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CHARGE AHEAD

If your home is overrun with energy-hungry devices, consider installing a Saturn Zen Smart Shelf and USB Charger (above) in your kitchen. It's designed to hold two smartphones or one tablet. It'll keep your devices charged and handy, and will double as a recipe stand while you're whipping up dinner. www.clipsal.com.au.



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HOT DESK

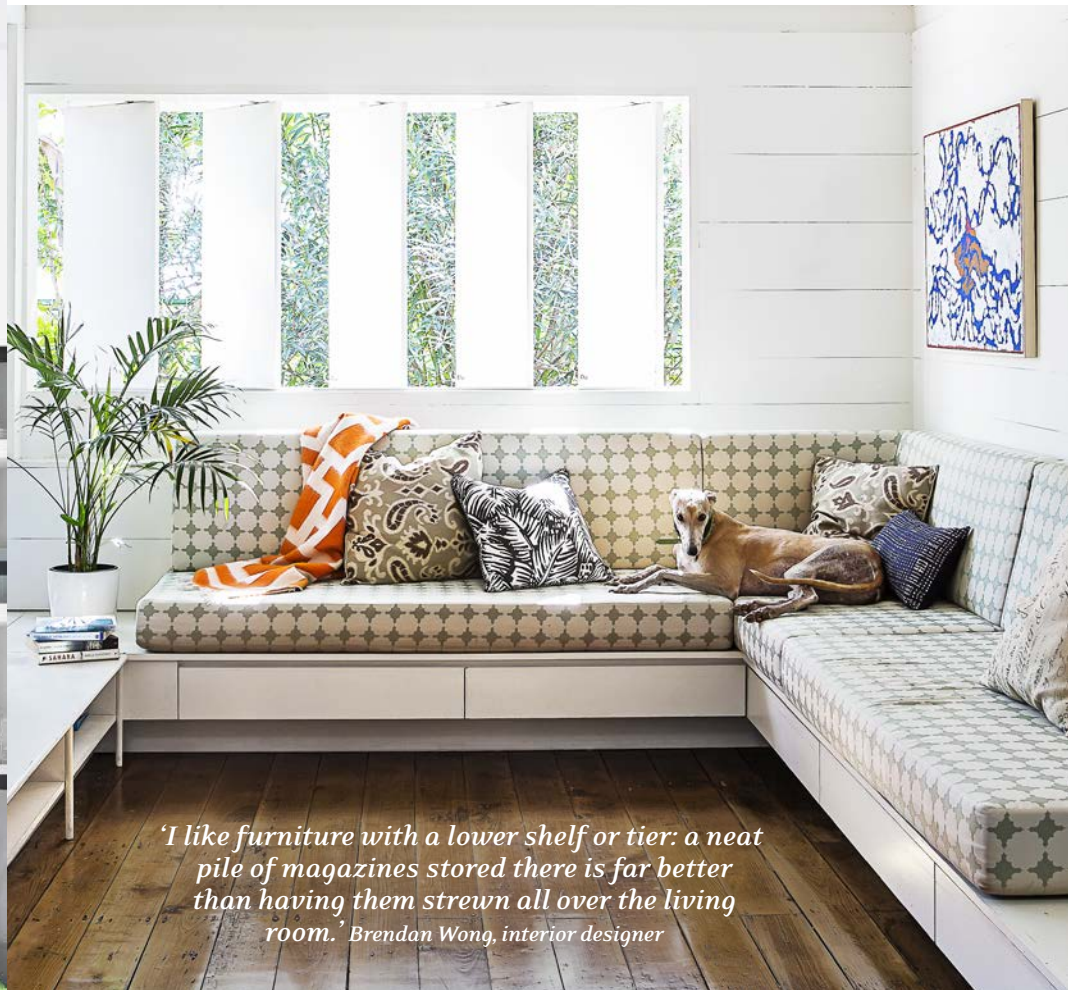
Great design makes organisation easy, as Melbourne interior designer Camilla Molders proves in the picture below. "The owners of this house wanted a desk area where kids could be supervised while they did their homework. Rather than giving them a desk area that will always look messy, I designed a unit behind the dining table that looks like a console but is divided into three sections (one for each child) with an old school-desk-type lid, so all the mess can be hidden away. Under the lids are pinboards so each child can decorate their desk as they like it, or put school notes and reminders there. I hear all my clients' friends now want one!" www.camillamolders.com.au.

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KID ZONE

Children are not generally known for their neatness. Professional organiser Georgie Rees of Clutterfly (www.clutterfly.com.au) offers these tips on how to keep their rooms under control:

- ✦ "Make sure there is a home for everything, so everyone knows exactly where things should go. One idea I find works well is to have a shelf just for 'special things' or the toys that need to be kept out of reach of younger siblings."
- ✦ Invest in a 'lost treasure box' into which any miscellaneous bits and pieces left on the floor are placed as you tidy up. "Then when your child urgently 'needs' a particular thing, you'll know exactly where to find it."
- ✦ "Keep a tub in your child's wardrobe specifically for outgrown clothes and drop them in as you come across them. When it's full, it can be stored for a younger child or taken to the charity bin." ▶



'I like furniture with a lower shelf or tier: a neat pile of magazines stored there is far better than having them strewn all over the living room.' Brendan Wong, interior designer

'UTILISE THE AREA UNDER YOUR STAIRS. YOU'LL NEVER REGRET SPENDING A LITTLE EXTRA TO CONVERT IT INTO A STORAGE ZONE OR STUDY NOOK.' AMELIA LEE, ARCHITECT



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LAUNDRY LOVE

Lauren Civelle, national cleaning buyer for Bunnings, passes on her tips for keeping your laundry neat:

- ✦ Think vertically: mount your machines or take your cabinets right up to the ceiling. Another option is to set your washing machine on a low set of drawers where you can stow detergents and other cleaning gear.
- ✦ One of the most useful inclusions in a laundry is a retractable clothesline for when the weather isn't in your favour.
- ✦ Pop-up or fold-down baskets mean your laundry hampers needn't take up space when they're not in use, rare as that may be.



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BEDROOM BLISS

"The owners of this Queensland home (above) love to dress well and prioritise keeping their clothes and accessories in order," says Judy Elliott, interior designer with Verandah House (www.verandahouse.com.au). "Their walk-in wardrobe is the ultimate. There are compartments in the island for ties, jewellery and scarves."

TRICKS FOR YOUR PICS

Mara Morrison, professional photo organiser with The Filing Fairies (www.thefilingfairies.com.au), offers this advice for protecting your precious memories:

- ✦ "Create a digital photo hub: one location where you store all your original images. Designating a 'hub' is the key to keeping your photos organised and backed up. It can be a master folder on your computer hard drive, an external hard drive or on the Cloud."
- ✦ "Remember that your digital photos may be stored on multiple devices. We have a checklist on our website to ensure you don't miss any."
- ✦ "Preserve your prints by storing them in acid-free albums or boxes in an airtight container in a dry, dark location. A lifetime of photos didn't become disorganised overnight so, realistically, you're not going to be able to sort them out overnight. Allocate a little time each week and you'll eventually get there."

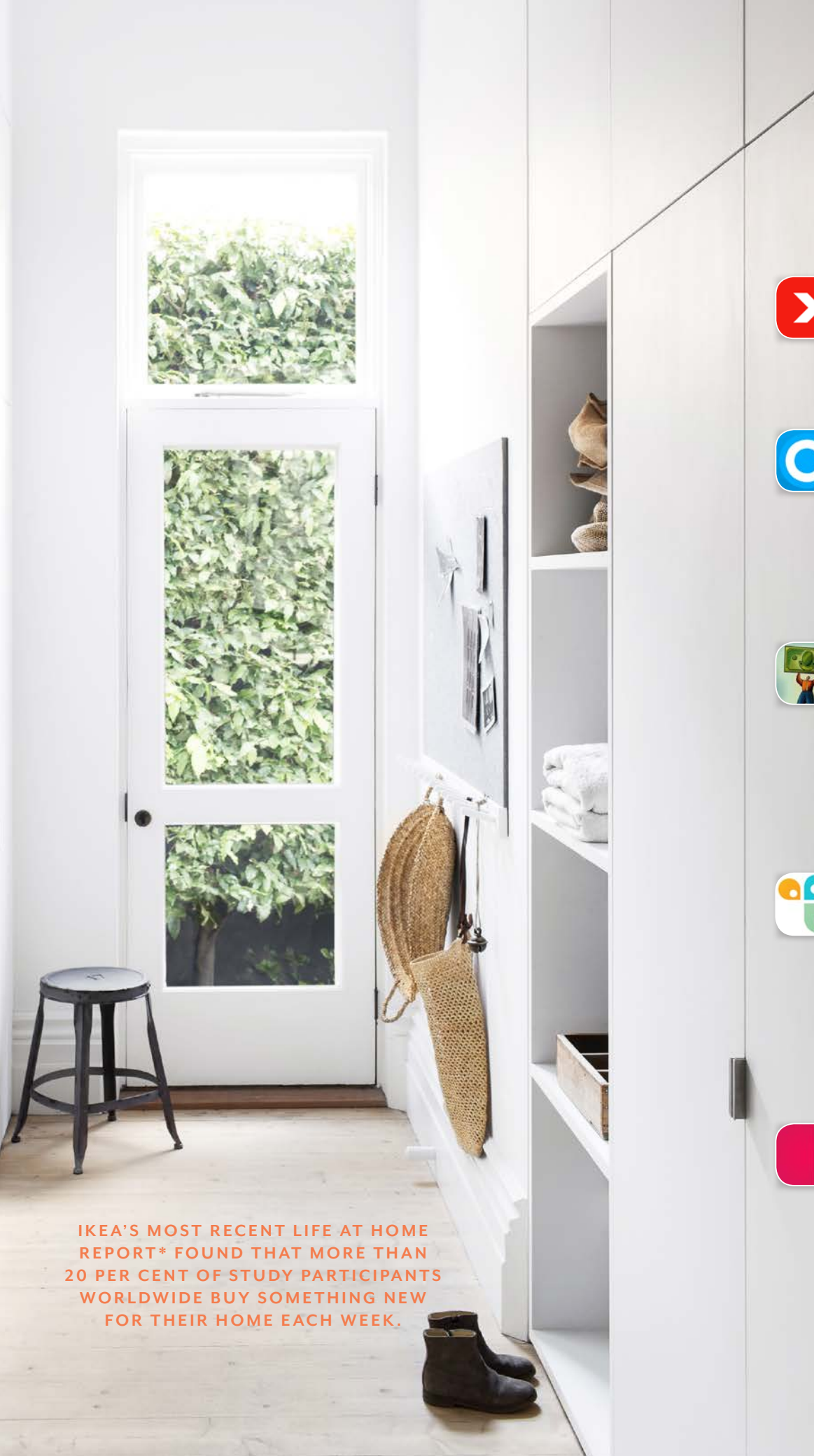
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EIGHT-MINUTE PLAN

Overwhelmed by the thought of organising your wardrobe? Professional organiser MaryAnne Bennie of In8 (in8.com.au) suggests you pop a timer on and break the job down into eight-minute tasks:

- ✦ Focus on your frustrations. "Work out what's most pressing to address and begin there."
- ✦ Break it down. "I strongly suggest you sort one clothing category at a time so you don't end up with your entire wardrobe dumped on the bed. Spend eight minutes on with coats and jackets, the next eight with skirts, then tackle pants and so on."
- ✦ Create a capsule wardrobe. "Choose three bottoms – maybe jeans, pants and a skirt – that don't clash. Then pick out seven tops that match all these bottoms. They could include a singlet, t-shirt, patterned top, jacket and cardigan. Do this and you'll have up to 30 outfits at your fingertips."
- ✦ Get smart. "Keep rolled-up hosiery in zip-lock bags to prevent a tangle of stockings in your underwear drawer. And always hang shirts with the top button done up, it helps keep their shape."

'Take things to the next level by adding layers of organisation. Section your wardrobe by season, by colour and by length.' MaryAnne Bennie, professional organiser



IKEA'S MOST RECENT LIFE AT HOME REPORT* FOUND THAT MORE THAN 20 PER CENT OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS WORLDWIDE BUY SOMETHING NEW FOR THEIR HOME EACH WEEK.

APP-LY YOURSELF

Keep your calendars, lists and planners handy – and consolidated in one place – with one of these five mobile apps:



Teux Deux Love a to-do list? This is the app for you. You can 'tick' off tasks on your phone and if you don't get to them, they automatically roll over to the next day. Set up recurring tasks and create custom lists. Free; Apple App Store.



Coach.Me This app is like having a life coach in your pocket. Its aim is to help you foster good habits. Nominate the activities you'd like to improve on, whether it's exercising, cleaning or meditating, and 'check in' when you've completed said activity. Very satisfying. Free; Apple App Store and Google Play.



Chore Bank Get the kids on board with helping out around the house – for a price, you understand. Set an amount of, say, \$2 for vacuuming and when it's done tap your app and you can keep a tally of multiple tasks, completed by each child. You can add interest for good behaviour and, of course, deduct... \$2.99; Apple App Store.



Cozi Family Organiser A simple-to-use app that keeps the whole family's activities and appointments in one place. Create and share shopping lists, store favourite photos, plan your weekly meals and import recipes (read them in Cooking Mode on the app and your screen stays lit so you avoid a grotty screen). Free; Apple App Store, Google Play and Windows App Store.



Pocketbook This is an Australian budget-planner app that offers you real-time control of your personal finances. It automatically sorts your spending into categories and alerts you when a bill comes in or if your bank has slugged you with a fee. Free; Apple App Store or Google Play. **H&G**