



**Great use of a Small Space
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Great use of a small space Success Secrets

Living in a smaller property is almost a fine art, one that will take practice, discipline and commitment to master. With house prices drastically on the increase (certainly increasing faster than your average pay rise) we now are buying and living in smaller spaces.

So, as house prices increase living space usually decreases and the need to keep your clutter under control increases.

I have had clients living in almost every size property available, from studio flats to 5 bedroom homes and **yes they all had clutter**. So much clutter in fact that it was having a negative effect on their lives.

Are you embarrassed to have friends over for dinner?

Is it impossible for guests to stay the night?

Do you dread arriving home after a stressful day only to open the door to a messy, cluttered, frustrating house?

All of these issues can be improved on. It will require commitment from you to do what is necessary, time to put these secrets into action and willingness to start enjoying your smaller space.

Making better use of your limited space will:

- Help to ease any negative feelings you have about your house.
- Change the view you have about how bad your house is looking
- Lessen any negative comments you hear from your inner critic

These secrets will be focusing on those of us living in a smaller space and how to make it work for you.

De-Clutter

As mentioned in the introduction, no matter what size property you call home it has the potential to be filled up with clutter.

The smaller your living space the more you need to stay on top of the situation. Especially as there will be no spare space or room in which to hide the clutter away and help you ignore the increasing problem.

The situation can quickly get out of control and this will have an effect on:

Your space.

Your stress levels.

and

Your health - which will have a knock on effect on the rest of your life.

The negative effects of clutter are limitless. I'm sure you can think of an occasion when you have felt your anger and frustration rise while fighting through piles of 'stuff' looking for what you need.

In a smaller property the benefits of sorting your clutter will be seen quickly and felt immediately.

Just think how great it would be to arrive home after a hectic day at work and know that you have a **calm, sorted, comfy home** just behind your front door.

To utilise the most of your small space start off with a major de-cluttering session.

Get rid of:

- Anything broken
- Single socks (why do we keep them?)
- Items you don't like or use
- Anything that is not bringing happiness or joy into your life.

Then once the clutter is under control maintain it by having regular mini de-clutter sessions and introduce my top success secret of all which is to 'stop buying'.

Clear pathways

In smaller properties it is practical to keep your pathways, hallways and any open space free from clutter, unneeded furniture and mess. You will then avoid tripping over *'stuff'* as you head to the kitchen to make a cup of tea during a commercial break.

Bumping and tripping around your clutter and possessions can cause great frustration with your home (which hopefully is your own bit of paradise). This is capable of increasing your stress levels and is not the most relaxing way to enjoy your evening in.

When you follow the previous secret and are de-cluttering, pay a bit of extra attention to your hallways and open spaces. Get rid of anything that does not need to be there, especially the items that have been left *'just for now'* (deadly when it comes to clutter)

In the next secret we look at creating better habits. This will also help in keeping clear paths.

Habits

A vital tool for the greatest success with your smaller space is discipline. I mentioned in *de-clutter* that any space can get filled. When it is smaller it can quickly get out of control and you could lose the happy, warm, comfy haven (remember your little bit of paradise) which you want your home to be.

Spend time on deciding which areas are the quickest to get out of control. Look at introducing habits that will prevent the clutter having a chance to appear in the first place.

The habit can be as simple as:

- Putting your keys in the same place every time
- Sorting the post as it arrives,
- Hanging your clothes up at the end of the day.
- De-cluttering and sorting out regularly
- Getting rid of what you no longer need, straight away.

Good habits will help to prevent your unwanted clutter from invading your valuable space and – equally important- your *peace of mind*.

Multiple purposes

When space is at a premium you need to **think outside the box**. Invest in pieces of furniture that can be used for more than one purpose.

Consider a **coffee table with drawers** that can be used to store CD's, DVD's or magazines.

In the living room have a **sofa bed** that is comfortable enough to relax with a drink and **watch a movie** but can fold out to a bed for **overnight guests**.

Have a **foldaway table** with enough room to accommodate a dinner party that will collapse down and double as a sideboard, decorated beautifully with flowers and photos.

Invest in a **flexible footstool** that can also be used as a coffee table, an extra seat or provide more storage space by lifting the lid.

Before you buy any furniture, spend some time thinking about what you need to use your space for.

- Does it need to work as a living room/dining room/ guest room?
- Does your bedroom also have to double as a office?
- Does your office sometimes need to double as a guest room?

Figure out what you want the room to do. What is the best use of the space and realistically what furniture can you fit in that space. Once you have a better idea about what you want and what will work, you are ready to find multiple purpose furniture that will work well with your smaller space.

Proportions

Furniture that is far too big for a space will cause you great frustration and drastically shrink the size of your room, making it look smaller than it really is.

In one way it **is frustrating** because you are continually bumping into the oversized furniture when walking in the room.

In another way you can **feel cramped, squished and over powered** by the furniture

I am sure you have seen the joy that is the marshmallow living room furniture that looks like it has taken over the room, leaving no space for anything else. Or, for instance, the king-size bed that fills the whole bedroom.

Not only should you keep the proportion of the furniture in keeping with the size of the room, it is also important to **again think outside the box** with regards to what pieces of furniture you choose.

If we look at your living room furniture, remember there is no law saying that you must have a three piece suite (even though that is how several companies sell them). Select the pieces that work best with your own personal space, which could be using two 2-seater couches or perhaps 3-seater and a comfy chair.

Smart storage

Keep storage simple and make life easier for yourself by storing what you need in the room where you will be using it:

- Dishes in the kitchen
- Toiletries in the bathroom
- Clothing in the bedroom
- Detergent near the washing machine

It may not always be possible to do this in smaller properties but do try to whenever possible, then it will be much quicker to find what you need.

What you need

As much as we all love a good bargain, if the bargain is costing you extra stress and frustration because the products are getting in the way, then you have to ask yourself whether they really are a bargain at all?

When space is short try to avoid the necessity of storing extra supplies such as:

- Pasta sauce
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Laundry soap

..... possibly for months till you eventually need them.

There is a good chance that you will even forget what you have (unless you are following Purely Peppermints storage ideas) then go out and buy more. This is a waste of your hard earned money and a waste of even more space.

Make sure to only buy what you need and have space for. Replace anything you are low on just before it runs out.

Think high

It is important to utilise every spare space available in a small property. Once you have stored what you can under your bed (yes, we all do), it is a great idea to **start looking up - way up**.

Take advantage of the space near the ceiling and above the door by putting up a few single shelves or multiple shelf units that reach to the ceiling. This will introduce extra storage and make use of what was previously dead space.

Remember when storing items:

- Place what you use less frequently on the higher shelves
- Place what you use regularly on the lower shelves so that you can get your hands on them quickly (more of that in the next section)

In a child's bedroom a good way of **thinking high** is to invest in a flexible bunk bed. These are the beds that only have the top bunk, leaving space underneath free to use however is best. It could be set up as a work station for homework, extra storage for toys and clothes or home a sofa bed where your teenager can lounge with friends.

Label storage

To make items easier to find, clearly label the boxes that they are stored in. This is especially important for anything as mentioned in 'thinking high' that you have stored on a top shelf or at the back of any of the lower shelves.

If you can see what you have then this will prevent you from pulling things down and making clutter and a huge mess while digging for what you need.

Having your boxes and storage labelled is a great time saving habit.

- It will save time when you don't have to clean up the mess you would have created when frantically looking for what you need.
- It will save time when you are able to see what you need instantly.
- It will save time when you are able to sit down and have a cup of tea and appreciate the extra time you now have, thanks to your effective storage system.

You can use whatever labelling method is best for the type of storage units you have. That can be anything from writing directly on a box, taping paper on plastic containers or strips of tape on glass jars (ideal for storing food like pasta and flour in kitchen cupboards)

Xtra storage

There is a boom in self-storage companies, which shows that either homes are getting smaller or we have too many possessions. I have a feeling that too many possessions may be the main reason.

If you really, really need it and only, only if you absolutely need it (can you tell I am trying to discourage you?), hire yourself some self-storage space. Make sure it is for items you need and use. The sort of items you only use once or twice a year like Christmas decorations or suitcases. It would be pointless to spend money on storing your junk and clutter.

In Conclusion

I hope you have found Purely Peppermint's

Success Secrets

helpful and have already put some of them into practice.

As I mentioned at the start, living in a smaller property is almost a fine art, one that will take practice, discipline and commitment to master. You now have skills necessary to master that art.

If you need any further assistance, or want some professional hand-on assistance, then contact Purely Peppermint as we are here to help.

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