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Sorting out your junk from your treasure

### Ditch the junk

**Under the bed, stuffed in cupboards or hidden away in the loft - we're a county of horders holding onto junk, just in case 'it comes in handy one day'. If that sounds like you, then you may need to call on Julie, a professional de-clutterer.**

Most of us hoard something from books and magazines to records and videos. But when the clutter gets out of control it's time to get in the experts.

Professional de-clutterer Julie Gingell from Braintree is called in by people to clear-up when the junk takes over.

An untidy desk can lead to a drop in productivity at work, while at home it can lead to stress, anxiety and arguments.

"A study has shown that anyone who has a cluttered desk can actually spend anything up to an hour and a half a day sifting through looking for things," Julie explains.

In 2005 Julie was made redundant from her job in London. She had lots of psychometric tests - looking at your personality and skills - because she didn't want to go back to commuting into London every day. Julie's organisational skills came out as 'extreme'.

After doing some research, Julie came across professional organisers, who were mainly American based. So, she decided to set up something in Essex.



Avoid stress - clear the clutter

"I gave myself three months and if I didn't get any work in that time I would go back and get a proper job," says Julie. "I haven't looked back since."

These days Julie finds herself helping individuals and businesses, organising events and de-cluttering spaces.

"Recently I've been called in to a lot of businesses because they're looking for new clients and they feel their offices are so cluttered and disorganised," says Julie.

"I've gone in to reorganise their offices and clear a lot of the clutter, so that they can move forward and get new clients."

Julie is a firm believer in practice what you preach. Her home is clutter free, if things are not in the right place she finds it very stressful.

"If things aren't in their place, things get lost and I don't like that," says Julie. "If you have a place for everything nothing is ever lost and you don't waste time looking for things."

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**Listen: Julie takes a look at the BBC Essex office**

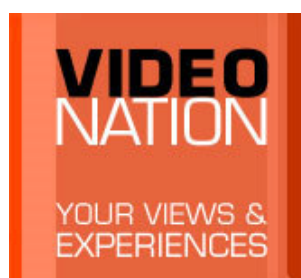
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## Julie's top tips

- Make sure everything has a home. Because if it has got a home you're more likely to put it away.
- Get into the habit of putting things away at the end of the day or at the end of the week so things don't build-up. Five minutes spent putting things away will save you hours in the future.
- If you haven't used something for 18 months to two years; get rid of it, because if you're saving it for 'one day', then it will probably never come. If it does come you'll probably forget you even had it in the first place.
- Try to identify what your worst clutter sin is, ie, is it something that you don't put away at the end of every day? Try to change your habits so you actually focus on trying to change it.

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