

# HOW ABOUT?

with Louise Howland



For things to get better they sometimes have to become worse first – this was very much the case when Louise Howland embarked on home de-cluttering mission in the lead up to an extension.

Our home is crowded – I think I may have mentioned that before. Extensions are in the offing and I am determined that the new space will not be used to simply store an overflow of stuff.

There is not a single minimalist in our home, and mostly that's a nice thing. We have our passions and our interests, our crafts, hobbies and books, musical instruments and tools, clothes, and did I mention the books ...?

I didn't want to negotiate my way through cupboards and shelves and I didn't want to discover the hidden storage space was full of stuff too, but it was time to clean. With the exception of the wardrobe, my attacks were short, sharp 15-minute bursts.

The wardrobe was nothing short of ghastly; clothes that I was waiting to lose five kilos before wearing, or old items I had paid too much for so kept in case they came back into fashion one day ... really?

Strangely the craft and embroidery section was the simplest. We brought an old wardrobe down from the shed and painted it white. I lined the inside of the doors with pegboard then hung tools and threads, stretched cords across and hung things from the cords, screwed my old-fashioned spice rack onto the pegboard and filled the jars with beads and sequins. I drilled holes and bought those little pegs to shelve the hanging space.



Some stuff I sent to a friend who was having a table at the Stash and Treasure Recycler's Market. This market supports the Miracle Babies foundation too so it felt extra good posting off nice things that I just won't use.

And how's this for a revolutionary idea? I de-cluttered by actually completing some projects.

Anything I could not untangle or that had a teensy bit of stuff left I chucked. They could have waited for a school holiday craft day but school is just back and I figured chucking is part of the therapeutic feeling.

Computer bits and pieces went to Computerbank.

I tend to overdo the saving of recyclable jars too, for the once- or twice-yearly jam or chutney making, so the lovely roadside farm shop now has 90 per cent of my dear-little jar collection. Gradually I'll buy them back, full of better lemon curd or

blackberry jam than I could ever make!

Sell it on eBay, friends say. Great idea – it's a shame I just can't be bothered. Likewise with a garage sale. I have envisaged that scenario many times as an only mildly grown-up form of playing shops, but I must be too lazy for that too. Some people say they make thousands of dollars, others say they stand there all day in the heat/rain and end up carting it all to the tip anyway.

I've dumped a lot of perfectly good clothes into bags for the op-shop, and while it's a good solution it seems verging on cruelty to give the kind and generous volunteers the task of sorting everything.

I also sent new and good-as-new bras that I'm too fat or thin for to Project Uplift. I felt uplifted too.

Until next month,

*Louise*