

House *proud*

with
Anthea Turner



In the first of her regular homes column for *Surrey Occasions*, Anthea Turner gives us her top tips on navigating your way through the annual spring clean

The daffodils are blooming and the cobwebs are thriving, so it can only mean one thing: spring has sprung. Unfortunately, it sprang too early – two months too early! So, it's time to dust off those dusters and prepare to embark on the annual spring clean.

Make notes

Start by listing every room of the house, including those places you might otherwise try to avoid, such as the dreaded cupboard under the stairs, or the utility/storage room. Break the list down further by making a note of all the tasks that need to be done in each room. Keep in mind that this is a spring clean, so you are going beyond the typical dust and vacuum – think about skirting boards and walls, windows and frames.

Then you can simply revel in the satisfaction of watching the list get shorter and shorter.

Sell, ditch, donate

One of the most significant aspects of a spring clean is getting rid of clutter. If it's not useful, beautiful or seriously sentimental, get rid of it. There are plenty of options when it comes to de-cluttering; donate to charity, sell at a local car boot sale or via a sale page such as eBay or Gumtree. Or simply take it to the tip.

It's a good idea to create piles of items you want to keep. Then create further piles labelled 'sell', 'bin' or 'donate', to help you sift through the clutter. You can then deal with each pile accordingly. For anything you decide to keep, consider useful storage solutions, so they don't just sit gathering dust. My NEAT range of storage might throw up a few ideas.

Check and chuck

When it comes to de-cluttering, the kitchen cupboards can often be forgotten. Don't be fooled that pulling things out, cleaning the cupboards and then putting things back, is enough. Check sell and use-by dates. Whilst you think the icing could be useful for your next big bake, it could have expired soon after the last!

Remember, if in doubt, throw it out. If you don't know how long it's been there, it's probably been too long.

When you put things back, put a system in place so that those with short sell-by dates are at the front. That way you'll find there is much less waste when you come to do it again.

The same applies for bathroom and medicine cabinets. Consider donating those toiletries from Xmas 2010, and dispose of the half-used bottle of cough mixture from last winter!

Room by room

Always tackle one room at a time to avoid unfinished jobs. If you flit from room to room, you will never find yourself satisfied and will find yourself chasing your tail.

Equally, work from top to bottom where possible. There is no point dusting the skirting if you are then going to coat it in cobwebs from the ceiling, or washing curtains to then cover them in grime from the windows.

Remember that a spring clean means reaching those places that you might choose to ignore such as light fittings and curtain poles. Empty the contents of your drawers, pull things from under beds and dare to lift the sofa cushions – you never know, you could end up with some loose change to boot.

Get kitted out

Lastly, be prepared! There is nothing more frustrating than embarking on your spring clean only to find you don't have all the necessary cleaning products. Whilst you may have the basics, think about items such as window cleaner, oven cleaner, or those specialist items such as bicarb and white vinegar for those tough areas that shop-bought products just can't beat. With all these tips in mind, the time-honoured spring clean will be done and dusted in no time!