

Create a Relaxation Retreat in Your Home

When you create a space that promotes relaxation and stress recovery, your home can be a refuge from the fast pace of life. Even if it is a small area in a larger room, it is important to have a place specifically created for you to unwind.

Focus on comfort. Choose furniture you love that evokes feelings of relaxation, including roomy sofas and chairs upholstered in luxurious materials.

- Paint the walls soothing colours and keep furniture within a complementary colour scheme.
- Purchase a soft area rug and place it where you can enjoy the added comfort beneath your feet.
- Keep your favourite throw blanket close by for added warmth and comfort.

Create ambiance with the right lighting. Bright light can impair our ability to relax. The right lighting helps put your mind at ease and allows you to rest and recharge.

- Natural light is a mood booster, especially during the winter months. Open your curtains during the day to let light in.
- Candles add a meditative vibe to the space. If you're not comfortable with regular candles, flameless candles provide the same level of ambiance.

Add natural elements. Plants not only enhance the space, but help clean the air as well. Purchase low-maintenance plants, such as peace lilies, mosaic plants and ZZ plants. Also, consider purchasing seasonal winter plants, such as poinsettias and orchid cacti to add colour and a pleasing scent to your space.

Thinking of enhancing the look of your home?
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Create a relaxation nook if space is limited. A cozy nook is all you need to decompress. A nook gives family members alone time when the other areas are bustling.

Add touches of comfort to every room.

In the bedroom: Purchase soft and comfortable bedding, including more pillows and blankets and high-thread-count sheets.

In the bathroom: Use high-quality towels, install a towel warmer and add a plant or two.

In the kitchen: Make the kitchen a clutter-free zone by storing misplaced items in a bin and confining paperwork to a basket on the counter.

Tip: If you want to redesign your interior, **Hutch** is an app that allows you to see what your space would look like with new furniture and more. Upload a photo of the room in question and use their 3D tool to swap out furniture and décor. You can even shop from the app, making it a one-stop shop to complete your design projects. The app is free and available for iOS and Android.



The unplug zone

Although technology makes it easier to communicate and be informed, it may also make us feel disconnected from one another and drained. We're addicted to checking our texts, email and social media. Studies show we check our phones every six minutes.* Instead of making us happier, our gadgets may make us feel worse. Take a break from technology and create tech-free zones in your home that allow you to recharge your own batteries and connect with friends and loved ones.

The benefits of unplugging

- 1. Your brain has time to process.** Setting aside technology gives your brain the opportunity to process the information it received throughout the day, so it can be sorted and stored.
- 2. You can enjoy the present.** Take time to appreciate and notice life around you. This will allow you to take in the general rhythm of your home and neighbourhood.
- 3. You can interact with your loved ones.** Enforcing tech-free time in the household creates opportunities to have a conversation, joke around and connect. The family can focus their attention on one another, which is the greatest gift one can give.
- 4. You can find peace.** Without distractions, you may be able to finally relax and unwind from a constant flow of input.

*Source: Becoming Minimalist



3 tips for unplugging

- 1. Let people know** you won't be responding to texts, emails or social media during a certain time of day.
- 2. Schedule regular tech-free times** with your family, during dinner or other special events.
- 3. Go on a social media diet** and sign out of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for a month.

5 Ways to Relax

- 1. Write away your worries.** Write down what's on your mind and return to the topic another day when you have more clarity and resolve.
- 2. Focus on your breath.** Take slow, deep breaths to help lower your heart rate and create calm in the body.

- 3. Do a body scan.** Starting with the top of your head, focus on relaxing your muscles one area at a time. Work through each body part until your body feels stress-free.
- 4. Daydream.** Think about something that makes you feel happy and calm, bring it into your awareness and focus on it for a few minutes at a time.
- 5. Look outside.** Simply observing nature can help you relax and create an inner calm.



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