

# OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Wayne Terai

## De-Clutter for Optimal Health and Happiness

*Dr. Terai focuses on caring for the whole person. This often involves suggesting lifestyle changes that promote physical and emotional well-being. For instance, Dr. Terai encourages patients to de-clutter for optimal health and happiness.*



Lack of organization creates unnecessary anxiety and impairs productivity. Hours are spent searching for lost items — prompting feelings of frustration, agitation and helplessness. Constant bombardment with these emotions often triggers stress-related disorders. Clutter is also a money-drainer.

### De-Cluttering Can Make You Richer

An exciting “side effect” of de-cluttering is that it is likely to save you money — as well as generate additional income. A clutter-free home is more comfortable and enticing; resulting in more time spent at home and, in turn, lower dining out and entertaining costs.

Selling superfluous items on eBay®, Craigslist, or other Web sites — or at

a consignment store or yard sale — can also generate additional income. And, people who operate in clutter-free environments tend to be more productive at both home and work, which may lead to a bolstered income.

### Clutter = Stress

One of the many unique aspects of chiropractic is its holistic approach to well-being. Often, this means encouraging patients to identify the sources of stress in their lives and curb anxiety.

While it is difficult to eliminate all stress, Dr. Terai suggests that patients begin by focusing on one major stressor.

For many, that means taking inventory of their surroundings and banishing “clutter zones.” The adage is correct:

A cluttered home produces a cluttered mind. Fortunately, harnessing control of the external environment quiets internal chaos.

### Stress and Wellness

Imagine if you left your car running — parked in the driveway — with a device attached to the accelerator that kept the engine revving at 70 miles per hour. The engine and related components would soon be destroyed. Unchecked, stress can have a similar effect on your body.

Clutter is a major cause of emotional stress. Stress enhances the production of adrenaline and the hormone cortisol, both of which are part of our bodies’ “flight or fight” mechanism.

### Clutter-Busting Tips from Dr. Wayne Terai

- ☺ Start small. You don't have to re-haul your entire home in one afternoon.
- ☺ Create your own reward system. When you master a particularly challenging area, treat yourself to a nature walk, bubble bath or similarly relaxing activity.
- ☺ When a new magazine or catalog arrives, recycle an old one.
- ☺ Delete or file e-mails, texts and voicemails as they arrive.
- ☺ Have a separate folder (preferably red or other bright color) just for bills and important papers. When bills come, don't leave them on the kitchen counter or shove them in a drawer. Instead, open them, recycle the envelope and unnecessary papers. If you can, pay the bill immediately. Otherwise, file it.
- ☺ Open all mail as you receive it and recycle or file it that day.
- ☺ Consider purchasing file cabinets and other storage units.
- ☺ Sell unwanted items on Web sites such as Craigslist, eBay® — or donate them to charity.
- ☺ Follow the “two-year” rule for clothing. If you haven't worn it in two years, it's time to let it go.

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When this mechanism remains constantly engaged, it destroys this natural balance.

Stress triggers a wide array of pain disorders, such as low-back pain, headache, neck pain and carpal tunnel syndrome. Left unabated, constant worry also bolsters vulnerability to infections such as bronchitis, influenza and the common cold.

Emotional strain triggers high blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, neck ache, allergies, depression, insomnia and asthma. Stress also plays a pivotal role in irritable bowel syndrome and other digestive problems (*Am J of Physiol* 2001;G519).

### Stress' Spinal Link

Researchers are discovering that many stress-related disorders involve a spinal component. Specifically, stressed-out individuals are at a heightened risk of a condition called **vertebral subluxation**. This common malady occurs when spinal movement is restricted or spinal bones (vertebrae) become misaligned.



Chiropractors are experts at detecting and correcting vertebral subluxations and the disorders associated with them. Doctors of chiropractic use safe and gentle maneuvers called **chiropractic adjustments** to restore balance to the spine.

### Clutter = Procrastination

Clutter is simply a form of procrastination. The most effective way to overcome procrastination is to start small, with a manageable task. It doesn't matter which room you choose — or whether you simply start with your wallet or purse. The important thing is to just dig in and begin.

Look around you. Is there a drawer, closet or corner of a room that you avoid because you don't want to deal with the mess?

Start by picking up a single paper or item. If you automatically know you don't need it, toss it. (Or, better yet, designate it for recycling or charity.) If you use the item regularly, determine a logical place to store it: a clearly labeled box in the basement, file cabinet or desk drawer. Make a decision. Then, pick up the next paper or item.

### Expert Advice

In her book *Organizing From the Inside Out: The Foolproof System for Organizing Your Home, Your Office and Your Life*, author Julie Morgenstern suggests a three-prong approach to de-cluttering:

- Analyze** — take stock of the situation
- Strategize** — create a plan of action
- Attack** — get the job done

Morgenstern describes the process of getting organized as an incredible “cleansing and empowering process — an exhilarating way of freeing yourself up and maintaining a steady life course in a complex world.”

### Electronic Clutter

Clutter is not limited to material items. Electronic clutter is a major source of disorganization as well.

Cut down on electronic clutter by maintaining spam filters on your computer. In addition, delete or file e-mails, texts and voicemails as you receive them.

Taking a few minutes to organize your computer's desktop and file folders will also eliminate electronic clutter.

### When You Can't Stop Cluttering

Does the thought of organizing the clutter in your life send chills up your spine and leave you feeling paralyzed? If so, you're not alone. Accumulating clutter due to lack of organization or a frenzied-paced life is normal.

For most people, untidiness is simply a bad habit. The remedy is a step-by-step, systematic change of routine. However, psychologists warn that some “mess-aholics” may be responding to a childhood psychological crisis.

As a youngster, were you constantly at odds with your parents about your disordered room? Was a messy room your way of rebelling against authority and asserting your independence? If so, some of these feelings may still be lurking under the surface and blocking your efforts at getting organized.

In rare cases, clutter buildup may be a sign of a psychological disorder called compulsive hoarding, which is a manifestation of obsessive compulsive disorder. Compulsive hoarding often strikes individuals who have suffered a past traumatic life event (*Behav Res Ther* 2007;45:2581-92).

If you are concerned that your clutter collection is out-of-control, ask the doctor for a referral for a mental health professional.

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