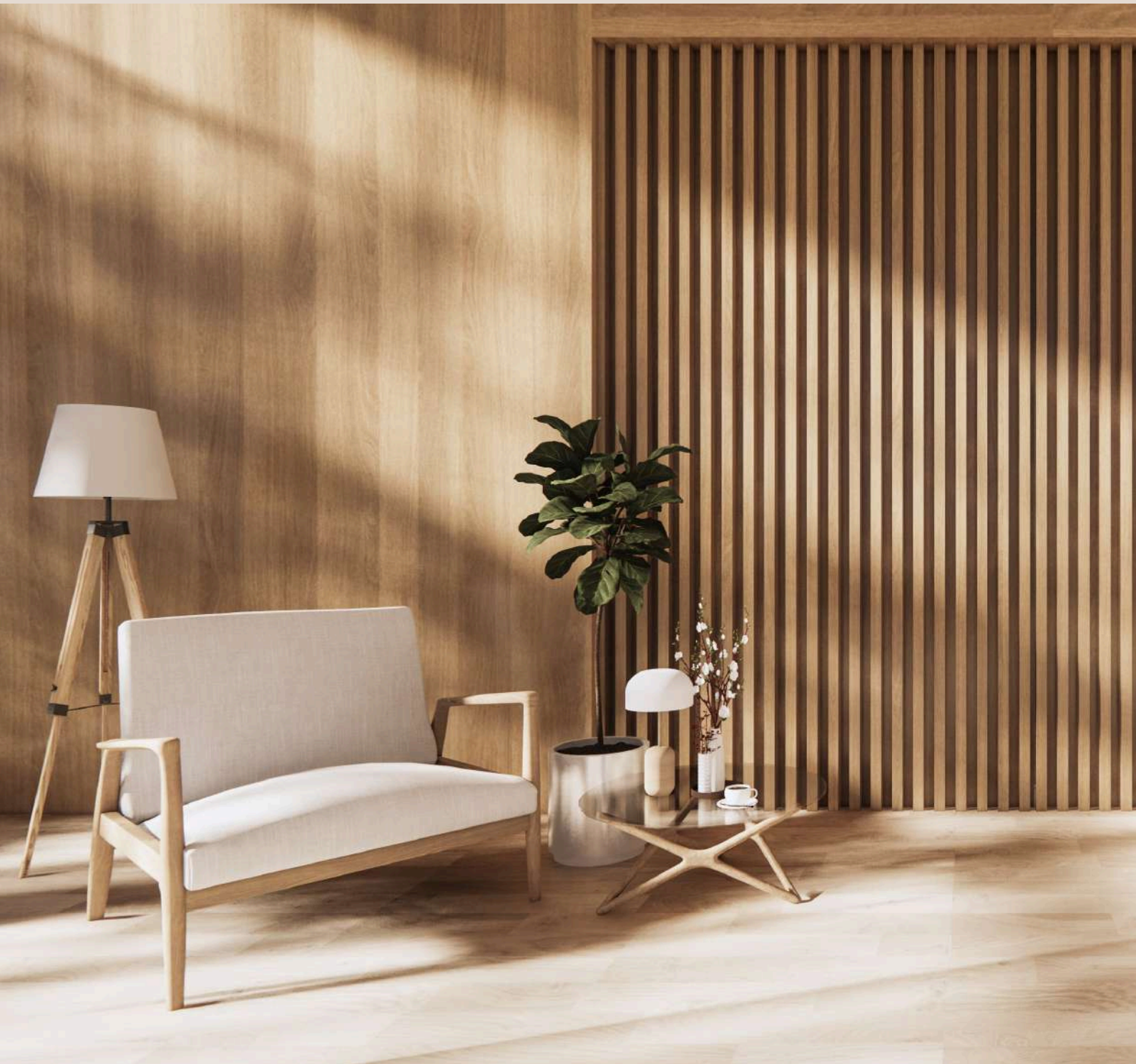


MINIMALIST LIVING

DECLUTTERING WITH FUNCTIONAL FURNITURE



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ABSTRACT

In an era characterized by overwhelming consumerism and material excess, the minimalist lifestyle has emerged as a counterbalance, advocating for simplicity, intentionality, and mindful consumption. Central to this ethos is the concept of decluttering, the deliberate process of removing unnecessary possessions to create space and clarity in one's environment and mind. While decluttering often begins with discarding unused items, it is equally important to reevaluate the functionality and purpose of the furniture within a living space.



This paper explores the intersection of minimalist living and functional furniture design, emphasizing the role of multifunctional pieces in facilitating a clutter-free existence. By investing in furniture that serves multiple purposes, individuals can optimize their living spaces while minimizing the need for excessive possessions. Examples include modular seating arrangements that transform into guest beds, storage ottomans that conceal clutter, and convertible dining tables that expand or contract according to need.

Furthermore, the paper examines the psychological and environmental benefits of embracing a minimalist approach to furnishing. Beyond the tangible advantages of increased space and organization, minimalist living promotes a sense of tranquility, mindfulness, and appreciation for the essentials. Additionally, by curbing consumption and prioritizing durable, high-quality furniture, individuals can reduce waste and contribute to a more sustainable future.

In conclusion, the integration of functional furniture into a minimalist lifestyle offers a practical and holistic solution to the modern-day challenge of excessive clutter. By embracing simplicity and purposeful design, individuals can cultivate spaces that not only reflect their values but also enhance their overall well-being and environmental stewardship.

LET'S GET STARTED

"Minimalist Living: Decluttering with Functional Furniture" explores the symbiotic relationship between minimalist principles and functional furniture design. It delves into the concept of decluttering as a core tenet of minimalist living and highlights the importance of reevaluating the functionality of furniture within living spaces. By investing in multifunctional pieces, individuals can optimize their environments while minimizing the need for excessive possessions.



The paper discusses various examples of functional furniture, such as modular seating arrangements, storage ottomans, and convertible dining tables, emphasizing their ability to serve multiple purposes and maximize space efficiency. It also

examines the psychological and environmental benefits of adopting a minimalist approach to furnishing, including increased tranquility, mindfulness, and sustainability.

Ultimately, the integration of functional furniture into a minimalist lifestyle offers a practical and holistic solution to the challenges of clutter and consumerism. By prioritizing simplicity and purposeful design, individuals can create spaces that reflect their values, enhance their well-being, and contribute to a more sustainable future.

WHAT IS MINIMALIST LIVING?

Minimalist living is a lifestyle philosophy characterized by simplicity, intentionality, and the deliberate reduction of material possessions and distractions. At its core, minimalist living emphasizes the prioritization of what is essential and meaningful, while minimizing excess and clutter in one's life.



Key aspects of minimalist living include:

1. **Simplicity:** Minimalist living encourages simplicity in all aspects of life, from material possessions to daily routines. By simplifying their lives, individuals can reduce stress, enhance focus, and cultivate a sense of clarity and purpose.

2. **Intentionality:** Minimalist living involves being intentional and mindful about the possessions, activities, and relationships one chooses to engage with. It requires thoughtful consideration of what truly adds value and meaning to one's life, and letting go of anything that doesn't align with those values.

3. **Decluttering:** Central to minimalist living is the practice of decluttering, which involves systematically removing unnecessary possessions and streamlining one's environment. Decluttering not only creates physical space but also promotes mental clarity and emotional well-being.

4. **Quality over Quantity:** Minimalist living prioritizes quality over quantity when it comes to material possessions. Rather than accumulating numerous items, individuals focus on investing in high-quality, durable goods that serve their needs and bring long-term satisfaction.

5. **Freedom from Consumerism:** Minimalist living challenges the culture of consumerism by advocating for conscious consumption and resisting the urge to constantly acquire more possessions. Instead of seeking fulfillment through material goods, individuals find contentment in experiences, relationships, and personal growth.

6. **Environmental Consciousness:** Many practitioners of minimalist living also embrace environmental sustainability by reducing their consumption, minimizing waste, and making eco-friendly choices in their lifestyles.

Overall, minimalist living is not just about owning fewer things; it's a mindset that promotes greater freedom, mindfulness, and fulfillment by focusing on what truly matters in life.

HOW TO BE A MINIMALIST AND LIVE WITH LESS?

Ironically, the very concept of minimalism – living with fewer possessions – seems to be associated with whole countries: Sweden, Denmark, Japan. You don't have to move to the northern hemisphere to be a staunch minimalist, but you might find you have to relocate. (At the very least, move outside your comfort zone...)

Becoming minimalists was certainly a mental and geographical shift for Inga and Mike Campbell who, a few years ago, made a move that would change their lives

forever. “We lived in [inner-city suburbs] Surry Hills and Darlinghurst in Sydney, and loved being in the thick of it,” Mike says.

On a fortuitous trip to Newcastle on the New South Wales coast, they stumbled upon an open house that ended up being theirs less than a week later.

“We left our jobs that we loved [Inga was the art director at a fashion magazine and Mike was the national publicity manager at Universal Music], and moved up three months later. Just like that.”

And so the shift began, albeit in a thoroughly undesigned way. “In retrospect, and without knowing it at the time, this was the start of our minimalist journey,” Inga reflects. “Even though we didn’t know what minimalism was back then, we had made the decision to put lifestyle and a lower mortgage first. But that was just the beginning.”



Most surprisingly, this sudden shedding of objects freed the Campbells up for escapades they didn’t even know they wanted. “One evening, Inga suggested we live in North America for a year. A thought that only months earlier would have seemed ridiculous, we now gave considerable consideration because we never had to think, ‘What are we going to do with all of our stuff?’” Mike says.

It was an idea that proved too hard to disregard and the family set off for 12 months on the road. “The special sauce of living with less is the mental space it generates,” Mike explains. “While we were travelling we didn’t have TV for six months and we realised how little we missed it. Apart from the odd movie, we don’t watch it at home anymore. From the moment we started on this minimalist journey to now, we’ve purged almost 80% of our belongings.”

HOW TO LIVE MINIMALLY WITH KIDS?

Inga and Mike have a daughter, Andy, and culling worldly possessions with a small human in tow isn’t the easiest of tasks. “You can definitely pull out the parent card and start throwing away whatever toys you don’t like,” Mike says. “But we all know that isn’t going to go down well, and you’ll just tighten your kid’s bond to possessions!”

The answer, the Campbells reckon, is letting them come to you. “When we first played the 30-day game, we didn’t ask our daughter Andy if she wanted to join in, we simply collected our items each evening,” Inga says. “She was curious and asked us what we were doing,” Mike adds.

“I said, ‘Mummy and I feel like we have too many things, so we’re collecting the ones we don’t use to donate them. Do you have any toys you want to donate to children less fortunate?’

“I went into her room and she handed me a few toys she didn’t play with anymore. But what was even more beautiful was a few days later when she brought out a whole pile of toys she wanted to donate. Even now she will come up, hand me a toy and say, ‘You can give this to the kids, Dad. I don’t play with it much.’”

Minimalism can help you spend less money

Downsizing their mortgage, their belongings and even their wages hasn’t been as terrifying as the Campbells expected. “One of the biggest eye-openers has been money,” Mike says. “We’re not adverse to spending money – we’re more than happy to spend it on experiences, skiing, weekends away, that sort of thing – but we don’t worry about the ‘things’ that used to consume us.”

Asked if they miss anything, Inga and Mike smile before shaking their heads. “Not at all,” Mike says. “I think this is how life is meant to be.” If that isn’t a convincing catalyst for a garage sale, we don’t know what is.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM MINIMALISM?

How often have you heard someone wish for “a simpler life?” Most people desire fewer commitments and less mess, muddle and mayhem. Maybe the first step in clearing life’s clutter is to apply the “subtraction” concept to decor. Instead of focusing on what to add to a room, why not consider removing items? Let’s talk about the benefits of a less-is-more decorating approach and how to bring it home.

- Simplicity draws attention. Simplicity can be visually exciting and fun to live with. Plus, beautiful things can look more beautiful in uncomplicated rooms. Frank Lloyd Wright put it succinctly: “Space is the breath of art.” Galleries use negative space to accent an exceptional piece by displaying it in an otherwise empty room. Apply this idea to shine a light on a sensational chair, rug, picture or other feature you want to show off.
- Simplicity is calming. You may think calm, uncluttered spaces are impossible if your home is a hive of activity. But serenity is within reach even in the midst of chaos. Make one spot yours to practice the art of less — no unnecessary furniture or visually stimulating artwork. See how entering it from the hurly-burly of the rest of the house instantly changes your mood from uptight to unruffled.
- Simplicity inspires creativity. Removing the distractions of objects concentrates the mind wonderfully. Perhaps that’s why many masterpieces were penned or painted by impoverished artists and writers in spartan attics. Tap into your creative spark or come up with your next brilliant idea in spaces free of superfluous visual interference.
- Simplicity reduces “designer anxiety.” Creating an attractive home is high on many lists and is an engrossing and important part of life. But when it begins to verge on an obsession, stress and discontent take over — is this color wrong; what if I move this; what if I add that? Learn to prune back

decor to its essentials and then sit back and enjoy it — or better still, accept its idiosyncrasies.

- Simplicity is thrifty. A few quality pieces that you love to see and use may trump a house full of unremarkable and less durable items that need to be replaced more often.
- Simplicity is low-maintenance. Housework time is significantly reduced when there is less to clean. Clear the decks for more meaningful pursuits, family activities, reading, sleeping, exercising or hobbies. A room where a quick vacuum and wipe do the job has it all, over one where you have to move objects around and clean lots of high-maintenance surfaces.

BENEFITS OF MINIMALISM

Life gets messy.

Between a busy work schedule and personal responsibilities, things start to pile up — whether those are physical items like dirty dishes and old nick-nacks or mental ones like overdue tasks and unread emails.

A minimalist lifestyle can help you clean up the extra clutter, guiding you to keep only the things you need. It can give you deeper mental clarity, reduce stress, and ultimately enhance your overall well-being.

Embracing minimalist tips and living with less doesn't mean getting rid of all your things or living with the bare minimum. The long-term goal is to audit bad habits and thoughtfully assess what you truly need. By prioritizing the things that add meaning to your life, you enhance efficiency and emotional balance.

Minimalism is a movement with the goal of reducing physical and mental clutter on an individual basis. People who practice it own fewer items and try to find more purpose in the things they own or practice, developing enhanced organizational skills to guide day-to-day decisions more efficiently.

To better understand the concept, here are some examples of what a minimalist person is or sometimes looks like in pop culture. They're someone who:

- Lives in a small home, cutting down on space and possessions and saving time on maintenance

- Carefully manages a budget, allowing them to invest and save money to develop a stronger financial foundation for the future
- Prioritizes experiences over material possessions, choosing to invest in hobbies and quality time with loved ones rather than accumulating items
- Avoids unnecessary digital distractions, like excessive social media or cell phone use, to focus on more fulfilling free time activities
- Only purchases reusable products and builds personal responsibility about adopting more sustainable habits that create less waste
- Adopts organizational routines to improve efficiency and avoid burnout, like putting items away after using them or breaking the day up into different productivity blocks



Lifestyle changes are never easy. They require patience, flexibility, and careful planning. To help you take the plunge and learn how to live as a minimalist, here are 5 benefits to consider:

Less clutter, less stress

Messy spaces aren't just inconvenient. An article in *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* reports that mess creates cognitive overloads that signal the

release of the stress hormone cortisol, which pushes your body out of its natural homeostasis.

Over time, chronic and acute stress negatively impacts your body and mind, from decreasing your memory function to lowering the effectiveness of your nervous system. Keeping a clean space is one simple step to supporting better physical and mental health.

Improved collaboration

Arriving late for work because you lost track of your keys, or losing time searching through stacks of disorganized documents, are avoidable time-wasters. These bad habits could end up poorly reflecting your work ethic and reputation. Relationships are built on trust and respect, and streamlining your spaces could help you show up for the people who depend on you.

Enhanced productivity and focus

Your brain is constantly processing information and stimuli, and the more physical objects you have in your space, the harder your brain works to filter them out, according to research from the Journal of Neuroscience. The extra work can make you tired and reduce your productivity. Organizing and avoiding clutter saves you time and mental effort.

Happier life

Insights from Social Indicators Research reveal that satisfaction with your standard of living helps define your life satisfaction. Materialists might define their standard of living based on how they perceive their wealth or material possessions, while minimalists might define it as happiness or contentment with what they have. The latter fosters a culture of gratitude that can make you overall happier.

Better budget

For many households, the cost of food, housing, and healthcare have increased exponentially faster than wages, according to a report from CBS that analyzes data from 2022. Buying less and selling items you no longer use can help you save. By spending your paycheck on functional items and experiences, you have extra money for saving or investing in your financial wellness.

DECLUTTERING TIPS – TRIED AND TESTED WAYS TO TIDY AND ORGANIZE YOUR HOME

Decluttering is a job that should be done regularly – but of course, most of us don't have the time to rationalize and reorganize our drawers, cluttered corners, and over-stuffed rooms that often. In fact, for many of us, it's a once-a-year, post-Christmas event.

Decluttering a whole house so you can implement your home organizing ideas can seem incredibly overwhelming, but if you approach the job a little at a time and invest in some excellent storage ideas, it immediately becomes more manageable.

Here, we bring you a range of decluttering tips from experts in the field, from getting into the best mindset for the task to tackling your decluttering on a room-by-room basis.



TIPS:-

Decluttering isn't just about clearing your home of clutter, period. For many of us, decluttering can have a positive impact on mental health. A recent survey of homeowners showed that 44% of us experience 'mess-stress' at least weekly and 72% of 'naturally tidy' people have experienced stress from an untidy home over the pandemic*. Furthermore, a cluttered house will make your house look cheap.

Allocate A Decluttering Time

'Start off by allocating some time each day that works within your daily schedule; it could be five, 10, or 30 minutes. Setting a timer and putting my phone down helps keep distractions at bay and allows me to work through the area swiftly,' advises organizing guru Nicola Lewis of This Girl Can Organise.

Make A List (And Take Before And After Photos)

'Decluttering and organizing can seem overwhelming at first but the good news is, the more you do it, the easier it gets,' advises Kathryn Lord, Home Organizer from More To Organising

'Start by writing a list of the rooms and prioritize the ones you use the most or that cause you the most difficulties. Then within that room, do the same.

Certainly! Here are some decluttering tips to help you streamline your possessions and create a more organized living space:

1. **Set Clear Goals:** Before you begin decluttering, define your goals and priorities. Decide what you want to achieve, whether it's creating more space, reducing stress, or simply simplifying your life.
2. **Start Small:** Tackling an entire house or apartment can be overwhelming. Begin with a small, manageable area, such as a single room or even a specific category of items (e.g., clothes, books, kitchenware).
3. **Use the KonMari Method:** Inspired by Marie Kondo, the KonMari Method involves going through your possessions category by category and keeping only those items that "spark joy." Hold each item in your hands and ask yourself if it truly brings you happiness and serves a purpose.
4. **Declutter in Stages:** Break the decluttering process into manageable stages or sessions. Set aside dedicated time each day or week to focus on decluttering, and gradually work through your possessions until you've achieved your desired level of minimalism.

5. Sort and Categorize: As you declutter, sort items into categories (e.g., keep, donate, sell, recycle, trash). This can help you make more informed decisions about what to keep and what to let go of.

6. Be Ruthless: Be honest with yourself about what you truly need and use. Let go of items that no longer serve a purpose or bring value to your life, even if they hold sentimental value. Remember, decluttering is about creating space for the things that matter most.

7. Limit Storage Space: One effective decluttering strategy is to limit the amount of storage space available for your possessions. This encourages you to prioritize and only keep what you truly need and love.

8. Take Before and After Photos: Documenting your decluttering progress with before and after photos can be motivating and help you track your achievements. It's also a great way to celebrate your success and stay inspired to maintain a clutter-free environment.

9. Develop Good Habits: Once you've decluttered and organized your space, focus on developing habits that prevent clutter from accumulating again. Regularly review your belongings, practice the one-in-one-out rule (i.e., for every new item you bring in, remove an old one), and avoid impulse purchases.

10. Celebrate Your Progress: Decluttering is a journey, not a destination. Celebrate your progress along the way, no matter how small, and recognize the positive impact that decluttering has on your life and well-being.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE?

Sustainable architecture is a general term that refers to buildings designed to limit humanity's impact on the environment. An eco-friendly approach to modern-day building encompasses every aspect of the planning and construction process, including the choice of building materials; the design and implementation of heating, cooling, plumbing, waste, and ventilation systems; and the integration of the built environment into the natural landscape.

Sustainable architecture defines a building designed and built to significantly reduce the damages inflicted on the health of its inhabitants and the environment. A sustainably designed building is important because it uses substantially less energy and water long-term and it's built using fewer chemically toxic materials.

Characteristics of Sustainable Architecture



Eco-Friendly Energy and Water Usage

Eco-friendly energy and water usage is a primary component of sustainable architecture. The goal is to minimize wasteful, harmful energy consumption by using renewable energy sources, such as solar panels, natural heating and cooling, and ventilation systems. In designing a sustainable building, the architect seeks to have one that produces at least as much energy as it consumes for a net zero effect. Water conservation systems, such as rainwater collection and gray water recycling are also implemented.

Use of Regenerative and Eco-Friendly Materials

Sustainable architecture incorporates the use of renewable, regenerative, and eco-friendly materials, such as bamboo, hemp, cork, flax, soy, recycled and upcycled

materials, and eco-friendly insulation. Replacement of conventional materials can be achieved with sustainable alternatives in both architecture and home decor. For example, concrete can be replaced with hempcrete (made from hemp, lime, and water). Conventional plastics can be replaced with innovative bioplastics made from algae.

Adaptive and Modular Spaces

Another aspect of sustainable architecture is the use of adaptable, modular spaces, many of which are made from natural materials that can be easily broken down and repurposed or recycled. Tiny houses, micro-apartments and other small structures that help address the appetite for more sustainable housing and use less land mass and energy are examples of this. Alternative housing solutions, such as homes and apartment buildings constructed from recycled shipping containers are also sustainable. Floating architecture on waterways around the world can help address housing shortages in dense coastal areas.

Incorporation of Plants and Nature

Incorporation of plants and nature via living walls, tree-covered residential towers, and green roofing materials to help cool existing buildings and create healthy biophilic environments for humans is another primary characteristic of sustainable architecture. Native plants play a vital role in the landscaping of sustainable architecture. They promote local biodiversity, reduce soil erosion, and require less maintenance because they already grow in their native environment.

Examples of Sustainable Architecture

Wood might be an ancient building material, but cross-laminated timber, made by gluing layers of lumber together, has become a sustainable alternative for city towers and prefab houses in Europe and the United States. If the 20th century was defined by the steel and glass skyscrapers of cities like Chicago and New York, the 21st century might come to be defined by the timber skyscrapers like Mjøstårnet by Voll Arkitekter in Brumunddal, Norway.

Even recycled materials can become the building blocks of structures large and small. Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese architect Shigeru Ban uses recycled cardboard tubing to build emergency shelters. He utilized the same material to

create his world-renowned Transitional Cathedral, built in 2013 in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Another example of cutting-edge sustainable architecture is CopenHill in Copenhagen, Denmark, which bills itself as "the cleanest waste-to-energy power plant in the world." It includes a façade built for climbing, a roof you can hike across, and an actual ski slope.

UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS OF PROFESSIONAL UPHOLSTERY CLEANING



It is difficult for a home with dirty upholstery to look visually appealing. Clean furniture can easily transform the way your house looks, making it stylish and functional. However, it gathers dirt and grime quickly. It can also trap allergens and pollutants like pollen, pet dander, and dust mites. Furthermore, these pollutants can be released into the air if the upholstery is disturbed, like sitting on the sofa. So, this makes the cleaning part even more crucial. But it is easier said than done. Cleaning upholstery is one of the most dreadful experiences for most people. If you are one of them, it is better to hire professional end of lease cleaners in Canberra for house and upholstery cleaning. Let us help you understand the

benefits of professional upholstery cleaning. It will make you recognise the importance of investing in such services to make your life easier and better.

1. Extends The Life Of Your Furniture

Buying is not enough. You need to take care of your stuff. The better you are at maintaining, the longer your items will last. However, furniture gathers dust quite often and needs thorough cleaning frequently. If the contaminants stay on the upholstery for long, it becomes difficult to remove them leading to the breakdown of the furniture's fibres. To ensure this does not happen, getting professional help is ideal. The experts have the appropriate tools, experience, and expertise for cleaning, which helps extend the lifespan of your furniture. Routinely taking their help can make your furniture look great while preventing it from stains and damage because they use advanced equipment, such as the rotary agitation machine.

2. Improves Indoor Air Quality

Over time, upholstery not only gathers dust but also absorbs smell, which makes your furniture release unpleasant odours. Once the dust particles enter your home, they can cause multiple health issues like respiratory issues and allergies, especially in the warmer months. Frequently cleaning upholstery is important to ensure you are breathing fresh and clean air. Professional end of lease cleaning in Canberra involves deep cleaning of the fibres of the sofa. It helps remove pollen, dust, etc., that are harmful to you. It ensures that there's low to no risk of allergic reactions. With the help of experts, you can get rid of harmful contaminants, leading to a healthier environment for you and your family.

3. Improves Appearance Of The Furniture

No one likes a dirty home, and if people visit your place regularly, dirty furniture will not help them feel comfortable, and they will be reluctant to visit. Additionally, the furniture can become worn and faded if not cleaned regularly, further reducing its appeal. That is why, it is best to get professional help. Professionals can easily remove the stains and spills from your furniture using their advanced tools. They have the skills and knowledge to deal with all the marks

accumulated on the upholstery. Frequent furniture cleaning helps restore the fibres and increases the chances of furniture maintaining its original appearance.

4. Saves Money In The Long Run

Upholstery cleaning services are affordable as these companies no longer use manual tactics that are laborious and time-consuming. They have modern equipment that is time-efficient and much more effective than old methods. This is the primary reason behind the affordability of this service. Furthermore, regular cleaning prevents your furniture from getting worn out ahead of time. If you don't get it cleaned regularly, you may need to repair or replace it soon. Since it extends the life of your furniture and is affordable, upholstery sustainable cleaning service saves you a lot of money in the long run.



5. Environment-Friendly Cleaning Practices

Expert end of lease cleaners in Canberra put a lot of emphasis on environmental protection. Most of them have incorporated sustainable services that minimise the impact on the environment. For instance, most people use detergents containing harmful chemicals such as ammonia, chlorine, and phosphates for cleaning. Similarly, traditional cleaning machines consume significant energy, contributing

to increased greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, the machines and cleaning solutions used by professionals are safe for your family and the environment, leading to better chemical management. Hiring experts is ideal for people who want to protect their family and the environment from being exposed to harsh chemicals.

Wrapping Up

Although the cleaning services come at a cost, it is still a worthwhile investment, especially if you consider the benefits offered in terms of allergic reduction, cleanliness, etc. There is no better way to clean upholstery than getting professional help. Additionally, if you are moving out of your rental property soon, hiring end of lease cleaners in Canberra for this job is the best option.

CONCLUSION



"Minimalist Living: Decluttering with Functional Furniture" underscores the symbiotic relationship between minimalist principles and functional furniture design as a pathway to creating harmonious living spaces. Through the deliberate reduction of material possessions and the integration of multifunctional furniture, individuals can cultivate environments that prioritize simplicity, intentionality, and mindfulness.

Furthermore, embracing minimalist living and functional furniture design extends beyond the physical realm to encompass psychological and environmental benefits. The promotion of tranquility, mindfulness, and sustainability underscores the holistic nature of minimalist living, enriching not only individual well-being but also contributing to a more sustainable future for our planet.

In conclusion, "Minimalist Living: Decluttering with Functional Furniture" advocates for a mindful approach to furnishing that prioritizes simplicity, purposeful design, and environmental consciousness. By embracing minimalist principles and investing in functional furniture, individuals can create spaces that reflect their values, enhance their quality of life, and contribute to a more sustainable and harmonious world.

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