

FOCUS

HOW TO BE A MINIMALIST IN THE REAL WORLD

You don't need to live in a stark white box to enjoy the pleasures of a clutter-free life, writes **Kirsten Craze**



Leah Taylor from *The Minimalist* says spaces like this make your home a place of peace and tranquility.

Think minimalism and images of a barren room with one lonely stool may spring to mind — but it doesn't have to be quite that extreme.

"Minimalism is not living with barely anything. It's the removal of clutter and putting systems in place once the clutter is gone to ensure the home runs smoothly," says Deanne Sharp of *Free Time 4 Me Time*.

"There are two clear types of minimalism: those who are happy to live with the absolute bare minimum and those who want to live minimally with the items they need, love and use," she says.

Leah Taylor, a Sydney-based stylist who runs her Surry Hills-based online and bricks and mortar store *The Minimalist*, agrees.

"While there appears to be a scale (of minimalism), it doesn't really matter where you sit on that scale — what matters is how you feel," Leah says. "If you have just one little practice such as never allowing dirty dishes to pile up and that brings you joy, or if owning no more than 100 items brings you joy, you should follow that."

Carla Francis, creative director with *Spatial Property Styling* strips back interiors to make homes more attractive to buyers. She says her simple principles can be used in everyday life.

"It's about getting rid of things that clutter our lives, while holding onto what is important," Carla says. "The key is to reduce the amount of bits and pieces around the home and opt for a clean, simple and well-structured lifestyle. De-cluttering and organising your home is like a breath of fresh air."

Who's got what it takes?

"Not everyone has the desire, however most people, once they've created a minimalistic home find that they love it and strive to continue living in a calm, less stressful environment, which a lot of clutter can cause," Deanne says.

Lee Allcock, a showroom manager and home styling specialist with furniture brand *Matt Blatt*, says the trick is to be low key.

"Life is about the simple pleasures — a clear space is a clear mind," Lee says.

"Every household has an element of minimalism even if the people who live there don't realise it."

If it feels daunting at first, Leah says it's a good idea to start small.

"Even if it's just one room of the house — stick to what feels good for you," she says.

"To us, minimalism is about living in a calming space with things that bring you joy — and nothing that doesn't."

What's stopping us?

Space is the biggest obstacle to a streamlined life according to Lee.

"Smaller spaces lead to more careful thinking about function and style as a premium," he says. "Developers and residents are coming up with creative solutions to maximise minimal space."

Deanne adds that in many ways we are our own worst enemies.

"It's so easy to accumulate stuff. Shopping these days is so easy — it's a simple click of a button and it's delivered to you," she says. →

Lee Allcock from *Matt Blatt* says a clear space is a clear mind.



"Many people just want a comforting, simple space to unwind. Keeping it minimal is a great way to make sure"

"natural is a great way to make sure home is a relaxing space."

Lee Allcock, Matt Blatt



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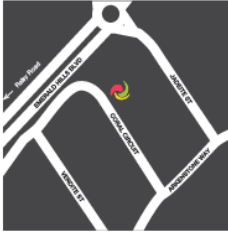
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