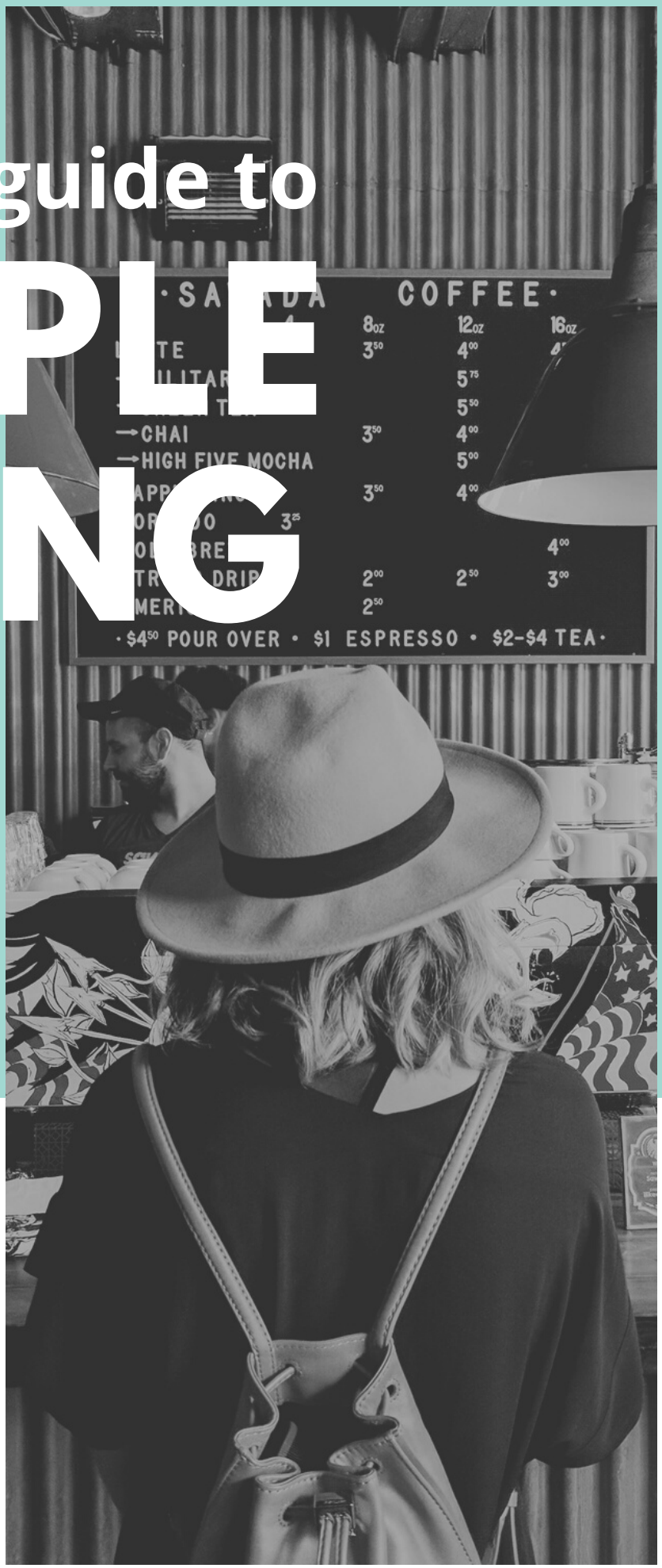
A simple guide to SIMPLE LIVING



by beeco

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Haven't we all wished we could drop everything for a simpler life? Well, some ingenious people have done just that.

Simple living is not a new concept, but it could be just what you need to turn your life around.

Cut out the cr*p from your life and focus on what really matters. Maybe you'll save some money too.

Our simple guide to simple living is a foundation you can use to understand the basics and make those first steps towards a blissfully simple lifestyle. But before we move on to the ins and outs of decorating and living in a simple home, how confident are you in what simple living really entails?

The definition of simple living

Simple living is a simple concept.

But there's a bit more to it than just switching up your home for minimalist furniture.

Simple living is more of a lifestyle, where the choices you make are about focusing on what brings joy and quality to your life and the world around you... and dropping what doesn't.

It's about simplifying your life (obviously) to achieve that joy.

Being happy with less, choosing quality over quantity, choosing what you need rather than what you want.

And once you apply simple living to your life - not going on that shopping spree, saying "no" to commitments you don't need, and just choosing the simpler, wholesome path - you'll find those unexpected benefits that everyone has been searching for.

Moments of happiness, calm, and contentment that were missing in your fast-paced living.

So it's not the same as minimalism?

Nope.

Minimalism is about reducing excess stuff and learning to live with less - **physically**.

Sure, it's a noble pursuit. But simple living encompasses far more than that.

Think of it like a philosophy to live your life by.

It may include minimalism, where you strip back your home to the basics, but it can also include aspects like self-sufficiency and reducing consumption.

While minimalism typically applies to the tangible objects in your life, simple living is a way of life.

Simple living is not about living in poverty and denying yourself those little luxuries to reduce your spendings. But it doesn't necessarily mean spending a fortune on white paint and upcycled furniture to redecorate your home either.

There is no rule book to follow. Your version of simple living won't look the same as your neighbours - and that's okay. We kinda think that makes it even better!



How is simple living eco?

Simple living has endless benefits for you (we'll dig into those below) but it can be pretty epic for the environment too.

A core part of simple living is doing more with less and choosing the simpler, more wholesome path. And that's awesome because it's coincidentally better for the entire world around us.

Some of the examples we've found:



Cooking with seasonal produce instead of imported goods, or even growing your own. Gardening is a simple, mindful and rewarding hobby!



Saving money by holidaying in the UK instead of abroad.
P.S. did you read our sustainable travel guide?



Cycling and walking to the shops instead of driving, which is a great way to slow down your day, take a break, and save fuel.



And then there are your usual everyday purchases. Why purchase plastic razors every week when you could use a single sustainable one? How about compostable coffee pods? Plastic-free toothpaste? Reusable nappies?

You'd be surprised how much responsible consuming ticks boxes for both simple living and eco-friendly lifestyles. Reducing the purchases you make simplifies and saves money, time and energy - essential resources for your life and the planet!

Simple living for your mind



For a lot of people, simple living conjures up images of white-washed walls, mason jars filled with dry goods, and a home completely free of clutter. Don't worry, we will get to the aesthetical side of simple living below, but there's so much more to the concept.

And that's a good thing!

It shows that simple living isn't tied to those who can afford the physical items that simplify life. Practicing mindfulness and monitoring your activities (how you live your life, not just the things you spend money on), are just as important as making the big decisions about how to simplify.

Quality over quantity applies to your time as well as your belongings.

In the next 2 pages, we introduce a few areas you can re-evaluate. Depending on your lifestyle, values, and goals for living a simple life, only a few may apply.



Diet - does a simpler diet mean a healthier one? Or maybe it just means reducing your shopping list. Spend time cooking with the kids. Maybe it means prepping meals in advance.



Routine - what commitments do you have that cause more stress than joy? This might mean taking the bus or walking instead of driving - turn unused time into quality time for mindfulness.



Family - simple living is different for everyone, but many choose to simplify their time so they can be around loved ones.



Social Life - including dating, how much time do you spend with friends face-to-face? Apply simple living here by cutting out toxic people, learning to say 'no' when you would normally feel obliged to take part in something you dislike, and maybe carve out time for a good ol' fashioned chit chat.



Time - how much time do you waste on Candy Crush? Simplifying how you spend your time might mean cutting out time wasters completely, or setting an allocated time each day for simple pleasures, so they don't get out of hand.



Work - this is a scary one! Would you be willing to switch jobs (or even careers) to simplify your life? It's okay to say no and focus simple living on other areas of your life - but don't be afraid to say yes if you think simplifying your work life will massively benefit you.



Money - how much money is enough? Think about how you treat your money. Move away from throwing money at unnecessary objects and invest in things that matter. This doesn't mean cutting out all your luxuries (unless that genuinely sounds blissful), it might just mean spending more on family time outings and less on shoes.



Thought processes - the philosophy of simple living is not new and it has made its way into modern culture. Marie Kondo is one example, yoga is another. Meditation or just simply spending 5 minutes at the end of the day with nothing but a cup of tea and your thoughts. Spend a little time observing and you might just change your perspective on things you thought were important.

The last activity/mind related aspect we want to highlight is **online presence**.

After 2020, we're all a little more obsessed with tech than we should be! You work all day on your medium screen so you can stream that new show on your big screen, while chatting on the small screen.

There are a lot of screens in your life!

Digital minimalism might just be the biggest key to improving your mental health with simple living. Optimise your time online carefully.

Simple living for your home



Your home, and all the tangible objects inside, are often the focus point for simple living. Hey, who doesn't fall in love when they see a stunningly clean and relaxing home on their Instagram feed?

Let's start with your home itself.



House - is your house set up in a simple way? Is it too big for your family? Is it too small? Think about the physical structure of your home and work out what needs changing.



Interior Decor - how well does your home reflect you? It might be a bit chaotic right now, but even if you stripped back to the essential items, would your home still feel like a reflection of yourself and your values? Try not to just switch your current decor for what you think a simple living home should look like. The real task is to create a unique home that's just right for you.



Cleaning - a clean, tidy house can be more closely linked to a clean, tidy mind than you thought. Simple living might mean more time spent cleaning your home, using non-toxic cleaning products... or re-allocating money to hire a cleaner. We're not going to judge!



Wardrobes - this might be more important to some than others. Regardless, your wardrobe should reflect your values, be versatile, reliable and well-organised so you can feel comfortable in your skin and spend less time fussing over your blouse and more time living in it!



Beauty and Skincare - do you do this for yourself, or for others? Focus on what helps you feel good, and work out if that feeling is tied to other people's expectations.



Entertainment - do you want to spend less time on the sofa? Or maybe you have too many hobbies and can't feel fully satisfied with any of them? Closely linked to time and commitments, thinking about how you entertain yourself (and what's truly valuable) is essential.

So, the key isn't necessarily to buy less or throw away everything you own... but as you're beginning to see, simple living can be a bit of a purge. If the thought of losing your luxuries terrifies you, then you're thinking of it from the wrong angle.

Simple living isn't taking away... it's giving to and enhancing your life. Sometimes we need to strip back to the basics to see that.

How to start - 3 simple steps

1. Think, write, plan
2. Start with yourself
3. Begin the purge

Think, write, plan



Before you jump in, you need to take a moment to evaluate. Grab a notepad and pen and think about what makes you happy and what just causes more stress. There are probably at least two or three things you can think of immediately. More will come to you in time. Write that down.



Next, go through your day in your mind, from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to sleep. Write down what you enjoy and what you don't. Make a note of how much time you spend doing each activity - and how much time you spend procrastinating and daydreaming!



List all the commitments and essential tasks (from dinner with the in-laws to scrubbing the shower tiles) that you think you "need" to do. How much of this list is genuinely essential?



By this point, you'll have a clearer idea of your values - so write those down. Maybe it's spending time with your family, creating a de-cluttered space that soothes anxiety, or just creating more time, space and money.



Now, create a statement. It can be simple or detailed, but it needs to encompass all the reasons why you're venturing into simple living. Pour your inspiration and dreams into this statement - when you're considering giving up and returning to old habits, you'll need this statement to lift you back up.

Congratulations, you've completed step one. Simplifying your mind and finding some clarity!

Start with yourself

Simplify tasks, from your home life to work schedule. What needs doing and what doesn't? If it turns out that you're actually a super organised person and you can't drop anything, then prioritise. Pull out that notepad again and list your activities and commitments by most important to least.

Now, in line with your values, delegate. Could you hire someone to mow the lawn for you? Can your kids get a lift with a friend instead? This is a good way to focus your time and energy on the rewarding tasks and leave the rest.

You can also create a calendar, if that helps you feel more organised. Block out time where you need to do something and tackle things one task at a time. This includes your online tasks - limit social media time, for example.

Extra tip: block out time in your calendar to do nothing! Sometimes you'll be grateful for that 20 minutes to yourself, or it will give you flexibility to add something unpredictable to your life.



Now, begin the purge!

Do this in little steps (room by room) or dedicate a weekend to going crazy! Work through your belongings until you've decluttered and left only what's important.

If you ever feel unsure, just look at the statement you made in step one. If an item or activity doesn't fit with your defined values and new mission statement, it might not fit with your new life.

And if you somehow still feel so attached that you can't bear to throw away this item, have a deeper thinking session about why that may be...

Once this last step is completed, take a break, put the kettle on, and think about where you want your life to go next. Simple living is a continuous and purposeful concept. Be persistent and let your values and simple statement guide you through!



Creating a simple living home (AKA, the fun bit)



By now, you should realise that no two simple living homes will be alike. What's simple for an Instagram influencer might not be simple for you!

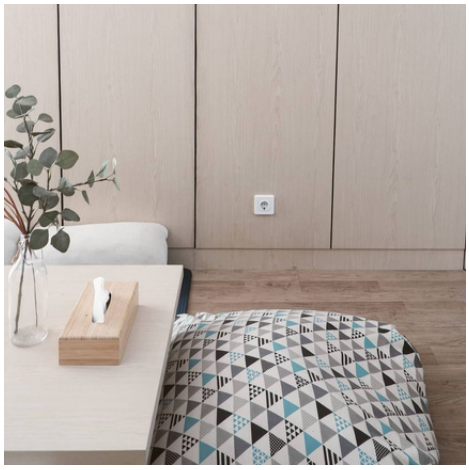
With that in mind, let the following beautiful simple living rooms inspire you to use your own creativity at home.

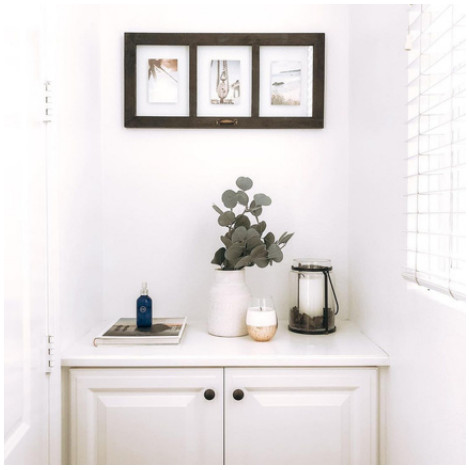
Click on a picture to open it on Instagram









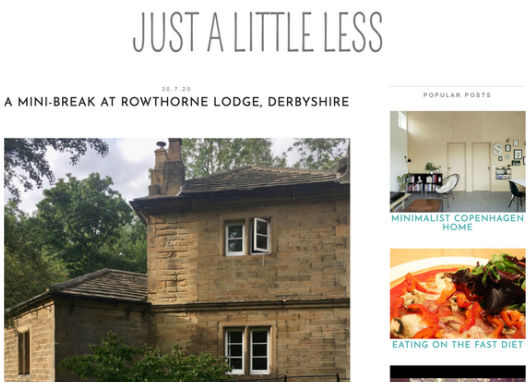






Need inspiration? 5 simple living folks to follow

Whether you need the motivation to keep on going (and resist that shopping spree) or some sparkly new inspiration for your dining room, these 4 simple living icons have got your back!



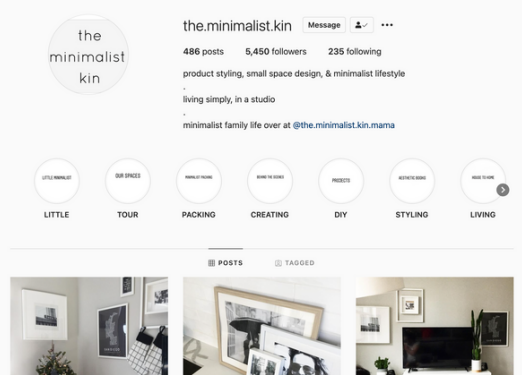
Just a little less is run by Claire for Staffordshire and celebrates the simple pleasures of life.



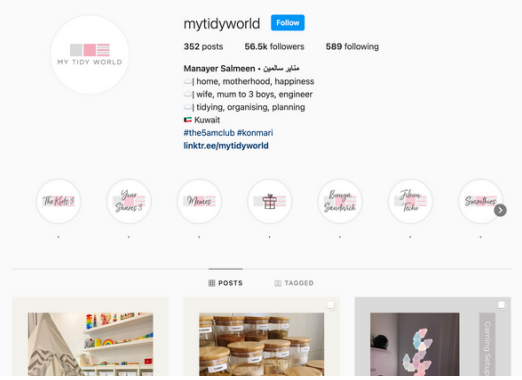
Jessica Rose Williams' blog is a beautiful journal of her simple living life that tackles everything from sustainable, responsible buying to what you should expect when you live slow!



This blog, simply living well, is your go-to place for recipes and advice on growing and cooking food for your simple lifestyle!



Get ready to see one of the cleanest, loveliest homes you've ever seen on "the minimalist kin" Instagram account.



The 'My Tidy World' Instagram account has some brilliant tips for organising, tidying and planning.



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Every little green step matters. Let's share that adventure together.

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