

WELL-BEING

Conquer your clutter, improve your health

If you're weighed down in clutter, you're probably weighed down in fat, too.

Excess in our homes is linked to excess on our hips, says celebrity decluttering guru Peter Walsh, author of "Does This Clutter Make My Butt Look Fat?"

"Clutter and fat — one is a reflection of the other. We spend too much, we buy too much, we eat too much," says Walsh matter-of-factly, taking a break from shooting a decluttering segment in California for the Oprah Winfrey Show.

We're buried in fat, buried in debt and buried in stuff — "and there's no room left for happiness."

Ultimately, clutter robs us of the sense of life, of peace and of harmony, says Walsh, adding, "it leaves one with a sense of being paralyzed and overwhelmed. It incapacitates and overwhelms many people and robs them of the ability to live the life they might."

He adds: "Food, like clutter, promotes everything but delivers nothing." Walsh has found that often those who trim the "fat" of what they own, impact their weight and

"Weight and clutter are definitely connected — I'm overwhelmed by both and can't seem to get out from under either one. I've given up right now."

To deal with her unhappiness about being fat, she buys stuff. To deal with the overwhelming stuff and lack of control, she eats.

Clutter anxiety is a burgeoning affliction, according to a new study from Australia. The explosion of stuff piling up around us is causing 40 per cent of people to feel anxious, guilty or depressed.

According to professional organizer Judi Culbertson, clutter can create unhappiness and a feeling of being at the mercy of your environment. "Clutter robs you of the sense of being in control of your life. It's frustrating to not be able to find something you know you have, especially when you then have to replace it and create even more clutter."

It's actually toxic to a person's well being. Walsh, star of TLC's Clean Sweep and a regular on the Oprah show, says that "when we

talk about clutter, we use very specific language — 'I felt suffocated in that room with all that stuff' or 'There was so much stuff in that house I could hardly breathe' or 'You feel buried every time you go into that space.' This is no accident."

According to Walsh, "we are all caught into an orgy of consumption. Buying things is the new recreational sport and we excel at it!" Clutter is filling, but not fulfilling — it leaves us empty.

"We live in a society that says that more is better. If one is good, two must be great. The supersize-it mentality is pervasive," says Walsh. "Our culture says that a sign of suc-

QUICK AND EASY TIPS

Take Peter Walsh's tips on conquering your clutter and getting healthier:

Before buying an item, ask yourself: "Does this thing move me closer to the vision I have for the life I want to be living?" If so, great; if not, why are you buying it?

Honour and respect the space you

cess is the acquisition of more stuff. Things are cheap and credit is easy." Culbertson, author of "The Clutter Cure," recommends keeping things current — only what you love to look at and use regularly.

"It helps if you can visualize the way you want your home, or even one room of it, to be. If you have an image in your mind you can work toward it, discarding everything that doesn't fit, without pain."

She stresses to remind yourself that stuff is only stuff and that, unlike relationships and experiences, it can always be replaced.

— Joanne Richard, Sun Media

have; no matter how hard you try, you can't fit 10 cubic feet of stuff into five cubic feet of space.

Set limits to the amount of stuff you will bring into your space.

Focus on the quality of your relationships, not the quantity of your stuff.

Every year go through your home; if you haven't used an item in the last 12 months, do you really need it?



well-being too.

"Decluttering is the path to a richer, fuller life."

Toronto resident Sarah D., 53, is weighed down by obesity and clutter, both at home and work. Things comfort her and so does food: