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*Live. Life. Well.*

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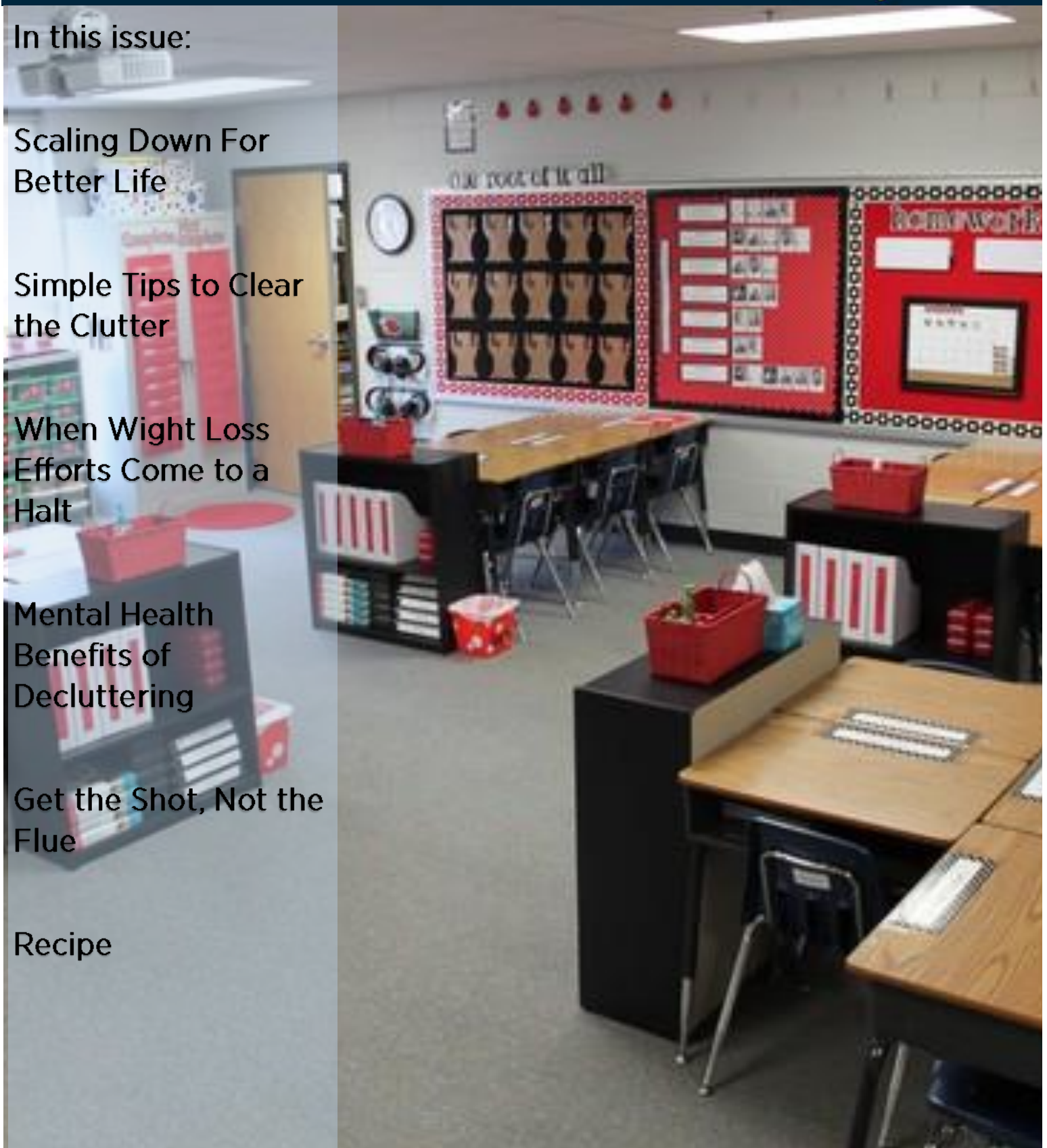
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## SCALING DOWN FOR BETTTER HEALTH

### Scaling Down Your To-Do List

Do you ever feel like no matter how hard you try to whittle down your to-do list, it just keeps getting bigger? As soon as you cross one item off your list, two more appear in its place. Most of us feel overwhelmed from time to time, but if your to-do list regularly triggers anxiety within you, it might be time to make some adjustments.

When your weight loss efforts come to a halt, focus on these areas to continue making progress toward your goals.

#### Prioritize

Consider adding a prioritization hierarchy to your tasks, like "A B C" or "1 2 3" to denote which items are most important. This will keep your attention focused where it is needed most.

#### Combine

Use your time more efficiently by grouping similar tasks together. This reduces the amount of time wasted shifting back and forth between tasks.

#### Deconstruct

Break bigger tasks down into smaller ones to make them more manageable. If some of the items on your to-do list feel daunting, it may be helpful to deconstruct them into smaller chunks.

#### Eliminate

Assess the items on your to-do list and determine if any of them can be eliminated altogether. To determine this, ask yourself the following question: Will this task move me closer to my goals or improve my life in some way? If not, it might be best to eliminate it.

#### Delegate

Delegate any tasks that are not a good match for your skillset to someone who is better suited to complete them. Return the favor and offer to exchange tasks to help lighten their load as well.



*There are many ways to scale down your to-do list. A few simple adjustments may free up some time, so you can do more of the things that bring you joy.*



## Simple Tips to Clear the Clutter

Marie Kondo's book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* popularized the notion of maintaining tidy spaces. At its core, Kondo's **philosophy**<sup>1</sup> of living involves removing anything in your life that does not spark joy.

One of the reasons decluttering is so appealing for many is that disorganized spaces can be distracting. We are already distracted by our always-on digital devices, and when we find ourselves surrounded by piles of paper or rooms full of knick-knacks, it has a compounding effect.

With more and more things vying for our attention, it is important to be mindful of what you surround yourself with. Some experts believe that cluttered workspaces lead to cluttered minds. One **study**<sup>2</sup> in particular found that orderly spaces can encourage healthier choices.

### Here are some simple tips to help you clear the clutter:

#### Create an evening cleanup routine

Tidy up your spaces at the end of each day. This way, you can return to your projects with a clear perspective. Just remember: Tidying up does not necessarily mean completely clearing your workspace. If leaving out a few supplies or resources helps you reconnect with your creative flow, then keep doing what works.

#### Hire some help

If scaling down or organizing your belongings proves to be more challenging than you imagined, it may be worth hiring an organizational consultant. These experts can help you develop criteria for what stays and what goes, and bring order to the chaos.

#### Honor your preferences

Pay attention to how you feel in cluttered versus uncluttered spaces, and honor your preferences. After all, not everyone is sold on the idea of keeping tidy spaces. Author **Lawrence Peter**<sup>3</sup> may have a point: "If a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind, of what, then, is an empty desk a sign?"



1. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-origin-story-of-marie-kondos-decluttering-empire>

2. <http://differential.dub.wdfiles.com/local-files/meetings/Vohs%202021%20Order%20produces%20Healthy%20generous%20conventional%20choices%20Psychological%20science.pdf>

3. <http://quotingeinstein.blogspot.com/>



## When Weight Loss Efforts Come to a Halt

Weight loss can be extremely challenging, and it never seems to happen as quickly as most of us would like. According to the CDC, nearly half<sup>4</sup> the U.S. population is trying to lose weight at any given time.

Most experts agree that a healthy rate<sup>5</sup> of weight loss is one to two pounds per week. The trouble is, around the six-month mark, weight loss plateaus are common. When we fail to see positive results despite putting in a lot of effort, it can be demotivating. Setbacks often lead to feelings of frustration, and a lack of progress can lead us back to old, familiar behaviors that are misaligned with our goals.

Understanding how weight loss works can help you reframe your goals and expectations, so you can make earlier adjustments to your approach at key points along the way.

**When your weight loss efforts come to a halt, focus on these areas to continue making progress toward your goals.**

### Exercise

The general recommendation for physical activity is about 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week. However, if you are maintaining a previous weight loss, research<sup>6</sup> has shown that you will need to bump that up to at least 300 minutes each week.

### Nutrition

Eating a nutrient-rich diet that is high in fiber can help ensure you meet your nutritional needs without feeling hungry between meals. If you are working toward weight loss, choose minimally processed foods that are low in sugar, and watch your alcohol intake.

### Sleep

Studies<sup>7</sup> have linked insufficient sleep (less than 7 hours daily) to weight gain. Lack of sleep is believed to influence food cravings that can lead to overconsuming calories over the course of the day. Getting enough high-quality sleep is key if weight loss is among your goals.

### Commitment

Staying committed to your goals is essential in order to reach them. While we know a lot about the physiological changes that occur with weight loss, it can be mysterious and unpredictable at times. Give yourself grace when you experience setbacks, and stay connected to the reasons behind your goals.



*Having realistic expectations is essential when it comes to any goal, and weight loss is no exception.*

4. [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/losing\\_weight/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/losing_weight/index.html)

5. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db313.htm>

6. <https://mocc.edu/pdf/dan103/1%20Diet%20and%20exercise%20for%20weight%20loss.pdf>

7. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5714285/>



## Mental Health Benefits of DeCluttering

If you're looking for an easy way to reduce stress, decluttering your environment may be a good place to start. Getting rid of excess stuff can benefit your mental health by making you feel calmer, happier, and more in control. A tidier space can make for a more relaxed mind.

**Benefits of Decluttering** Untidy environments often increase stress for most people. In one study, women who described their homes with positive language had a lower level of the stress hormone cortisol than women who described their homes as cluttered or unfinished. Still, the case for decluttering isn't clear-cut. Another study found that, while orderly environments are more linked to healthy choices, disorderly environments promote creativity and fresh ideas. If you value creativity, you may want to allow yourself to be a little messy in certain areas of your life. For most people, decluttering can promote productivity and improvements in mental and physical health. Benefits of decluttering include:

**Better focus.** Clutter makes it difficult to find what you need. It may also distract you. Getting rid of visual clutter can help you focus better on any task at hand.

**Higher self-esteem.** When you have trouble staying organized, you may feel out of control. Improving your living space can restore feelings of competency and pride.

**Better relationships.** Conflict with family or roommates often occurs when one person can't control clutter. Also, you may be more comfortable inviting friends into your home when it is tidy.

**Lower risk of asthma and allergies.** You may think your house is messy but not dirty, however it is hard to clean around piles of belongings. Decluttering can prevent pests and reduce dust, mold, and mildew, which may trigger asthma and allergies.

**Improved lifestyle and well-being.** It is easier to prepare healthy meals in an orderly kitchen. And most people sleep better in a neat room with a tidy bed.

**Tips for Decluttering Your Spaces.** You will enjoy the mental health benefits of decluttering more if you make the process low-stress. Use these tips for decluttering:

**Start small.** If you pick one drawer or cabinet to organize, you will be less likely to get discouraged. The pleasure of seeing and using a well-organized space will serve as positive feedback, prompting you to do more.

**Build in structure.** If you invite friends over for dinner, you will be motivated to declutter your kitchen. If you schedule someone to take your unneeded items, you will have a target date for completing your decluttering. Make sure you allow some extra time, as decluttering can take longer than you expect.

**Don't strive for perfection.** There is no need to hide items that you use a lot. Also, try not to judge your spaces against those of other people.

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*Consult your physician before making changes in your lifestyle or health care regimen.  
Vaccinations are subject to availability at participating pharmacies.*



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# RECIPE

## Cocoa Peanut Butter Banana “Sushi”

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup shelled pistachios
- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- 4 bananas
- 1/4 cup cacao nibs

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Roughly chop—1/4 cup of pistachios
2. Spread 1 tablespoon of peanut butter in a thin layer on top of each banana
3. Evenly sprinkle 1 tablespoon of peanut butter in a thin layer on top of each banana
4. With a sharp knife, cut banana into “sushi” rounds

Total Time:

15 minutes

Servings: 4



### NUTRITION INFO

(per serving)

Calories kcal	244
Carbs g	36
Fat g	12
Protein g	6
Sodium mg	85
Sugar g	17

Source:

[Kid Approved: Cocoa Peanut Butter Banana “Sushi” - PrepDish.com](https://www.prepdish.com/recipe/cocoa-peanut-butter-banana-sushi/)



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