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If there's one word that would make a maximalist shudder, it has to be "decluttering." Anyone in this camp will likely pooh-pooh the idea of storing (or tossing) their collections—whether they're hand-picked rocks, vintage knick-knacks, mismatched paintings, or something else—in the name of organization. But at the same time, research has demonstrated that clearing clutter and sorting the items in your space can boost your mental health, productivity, and creativity. So, what's a maximalist looking to create a wellness-boosting home to do? Enter: clustercore.

This new design trend emerging from social media combines the best of both freeform maximalism and blank-slate minimalism, applying a layer of organization to the former. As its name implies, clustercore encourages you to thoughtfully group and display your items in *clusters*—and it can level up both the design of your space and the way that you feel within it.

What is clustercore?

Clustercore is a design style that involves creating vignettes of various items throughout your home in a way that feels intentional and true to you. In doing so, you're encouraged to curate

That means you might collect your favorite trinkets or tchotchkes from a trip in a couple clusters on a coffee table, gather items that remind you of a loved one on a tray in your living room, or group together your favorite baubles along a windowsill. So, rather than hiding bits and bobs in drawers or otherwise decluttering surfaces (as plenty of modern decor trends might suggest), clustercore involves highlighting the things you've acquired in visible displays.

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“Clustercore is about finding a way of bringing all the things that are important to you into a mindful design aesthetic,” says [Laura Britt](#), an interior designer who specializes in wellness-based design. “It’s about embracing a color palette, like-minded objects, or a theme that resonates with you, and then building in a sense of layers, pattern, and color.” And in that way, it’s just the opposite of a sterile or modernist approach, she adds.

While clustercore certainly involves embracing a bit of clutter, it’s not to be confused with cluttercore, another [design trend to emerge from TikTok](#), which takes a “controlled chaos approach,” says Britt. Cluttercore is less curated and has more of a purposefully clashing aesthetic (think: more is more), while clustercore is all about creating thoughtful collections. And the process of organizing your space à la clustercore can be a particular boon to your mental health.

5 ways that embracing clustercore in your home can benefit your mental health

1. It fosters feel-good energy

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Because clustercore involves filling your space with things you value and enjoy, it can conjure positive energy and a sense of comfort. “The mental benefit comes from the spark of positive emotion,” says Britt. “Seeing a cluster of things from a trip or from a loved one [can serve as] a reminder of a happy experience or time in your life, evoking those [warm] emotions.”

2. It encourages (loose) organization

With clustercore, you get to define what organization looks like to you, and what level of organization you want to embrace. This provides a greater sense of control over the things in your space.

And this sense of control has ripple effects for your mental well-being. “Being in control of your own decor and creating your own vignettes or creative arrangements can increase your self-esteem by giving you a sense of accomplishment,” says [Reena B. Patel, LEP, BCBA](#), a licensed educational psychologist and board-certified behavior analyst.

3. It inspires you to be a more mindful consumer

For better or worse, maximalists have a tendency to collect things. Because clustercore involves displaying your ever-evolving collection, it asks you to ponder whether each new purchase will be able to jibe with or enhance your existing curations.

If the answer isn't clear or there's a chance that the new item will detract from the things you already cherish and display in your home, then there's no sense in spending money on it. In this way, clustercore encourages more mindfulness when it comes to spending, which can be, in itself, deeply rewarding.

To that end, there's a big difference between collecting stuff for the sake of having stuff and showcasing thoughtful clusters of beloved treasures. When you eliminate or stop buying items that don't authentically resonate with you, the things you actually do adore will be all the more prominent in your home for you to enjoy.

4. It keeps you curious and wonder-filled

One of the reasons why maximalists collect is because they're filled with a sense of wonder and curiosity. This is true whether they're fascinated by odd-shaped rocks, old watch faces, books in colorful bindings, or peculiar items that might make you do a double take.

Showcasing things in your home that conjure a genuine, “Wow!” will keep you marveling as long as they're in sight.

“Clients almost always comment on how everywhere they look [in my office], there’s something interesting to see, and that this helps their minds roam,” says licensed therapist [Bonnie Scott, LPC](#), who decorates her space in a clustercore style. She adds that her clusters of items and vignettes are also often great conversation-starters for visitors.

5. It gives you permission to be yourself

At the heart of clustercore is the idea of creating design clusters however *you* see fit. And in granting you that license to express yourself, the design trend also has the power to boost creativity and comfort—both of which support happy moments and good mental health, says Scott.

“The highly curated minimalist spaces we’ve seen as the aspiration for so long are fine for the people who want that look and who feel comfortable in that look,” says Scott. “But for those of us who don’t, the pressure to keep that perfection [can be] overwhelming and limiting.” By contrast, a style that encourages you to fill your space with items you love could feel incredibly freeing.