

The System

your printable companion

This is where the method becomes a to-do list you can actually finish.

You **don't need this PDF** to make it work — a notebook and a pen do the job perfectly. What these sheets add is a tidy place to lay it all out: ready-drawn lines, tick-boxes already there, and room to breathe. *Print what you like, ignore the rest.*

ONE PROMISE BEFORE YOU START

This takes a while, and that's the point. You'll likely end up with dozens of zones, and at a sane one or two spots a week, that's months — possibly the best part of a year. Nobody else says that out loud. We do, because knowing it up front is exactly what stops it feeling impossible. **You're not behind. You're doing a big job at a human pace.**

turn the page → the whole thing, in one minute.

How it works

Your home is a set of **zones**, and each zone has **spots**. You build the list once, then walk it three times — a different question each pass.

Two levels *the unit you write down · the unit you tick*

Zone **A section of home.** A room, sometimes — but often a *part* of one, or somewhere that isn't really a room at all: "kitchen", "hall (lower)", "the cupboard under the stairs", "loft", "car", "porch". Whatever's true for your place.

Spot **The specific place you actually sweep.** The drawer by the sink, the top shelf, the basket under the bed, the windowsill. *The spot is the unit you tick.* Break it down small — "tidy the bedroom" is a wall; "the left bedside drawer" is a thing you can finish on a Tuesday.

One list, three passes *same list, sharper eyes each time*

G **Gathered.** Bring like to like — pull each kind of thing into one place. This is where you finally see it: you've got more than you thought, and it's scattered in all the wrong places. **No throwing away yet.** Just gather.

O **Optimised.** Now decide. Keep what you need, let the rest go, and give the keepers their best home — on purpose, not "where it's always lived".

V **Verified.** A quick last look. Is everything that belongs here, here? Tick, and that spot's done.

The golden rule: list first, decide later. On the first pass you're only *making the list* — naming zones and spots. Don't work out where things should live yet. You honestly can't know until you've gathered. So resist the urge to tidy as you list; just map.

How to use these sheets

A Zone Sheet is one A4 page per zone — and a separate Category Tracker for the things that scatter across many zones. Here's the order.

- 1 **Walk round your home and name every zone.** A room, a part of a room, or somewhere that isn't a room at all. Don't overthink — just write down what's there.
- 2 **Print one Zone Sheet per zone.** Five bedrooms? Print five. A studio? Print three. Only what your home actually has.
- 3 **Standing in the zone, list the spots.** You'll spot bits you'd never have planned from the sofa — that's the point. Your *eye* catches the things your *memory* forgot. Leave plenty of blank lines; you'll always find one more.
- 4 **Leave "what lives here" blank for now.** You fill that in later, once you've gathered and you know what genuinely belongs.
- 5 **Tick as you go: G → O → V.** Gathered, Optimised, Verified. Three ticks and the spot is done. The boxes mean you can stop any time and pick up exactly where you left off.

The Category Tracker. As you gather, the same kinds of thing pile up across different zones — cables, mugs, chargers, scissors. Jot each category on the Tracker with a rough tally. That's where the truth lands: you don't believe you own fourteen USB cables until they're in one heap. The Tracker is how a category gets gathered from *everywhere* before you decide its home.

PACE IT · ONE OR TWO SPOTS A WEEK

That's the realistic unit of work — not "a whole room", which is what's defeated you every other time you tried this. A spot is small enough that you'll do it even on a tired Tuesday, and small enough that it can't quietly grow into a weekend-blitz you'll never start. (Feeling brave on a good day? Do five. The system never minds going faster — it just refuses to ask for it.)

A worked example

Here's a real zone, listed and partway through. Notice the spots are **specific**, the "what lives here" column is **still blank** on the un-gathered spots, and there are **empty lines at the bottom** because you'll always find one more.

Zone: *Hall (lower)*

- G** Gathered — pulled like with like
- O** Optimised — cut to what you need, gave it its best home
- V** Verified — a quick last look, nothing half-done

Spots are the exact places you sweep — break it right down: drawers individually if they're huge, shelf by shelf, top of the unit, the floor.

#	SPOT	WHAT LIVES HERE (fill in later)	G	O	V
1	Console table drawer	keys · post · sunglasses	☒	☒	☒
2	Console table baskets (the bit below)	gloves · scarves · the dog's lead	☒	☒	☒
3	Floor & window ledges	(later)	☒	☐	☐
4	Bookcase — top & shelves	(later)	☒	☐	☐
5	Bookcase — cupboard	(later)	☒	☐	☐
6	Unit on wheels	(later)	☒	☐	☐
7	Space next to stairs	(later)	☒	☐	☐
8	_____		☐	☐	☐
9	_____		☐	☐	☐

Spots 1–2 are done. Three ticks each — gathered, optimised, verified. They earn their place; "lives here" is filled in.

"Lives here" stays blank on those. You can't know the best home until you've gathered the whole category across every zone.

Spots 3–7 are gathered. Whole-house gather first — you can't truly know what belongs anywhere until you've seen it all. Optimise comes next.

Empty lines at the bottom. You'll always spot one more when you're standing there. Leave room for it.

Zone Sheet

Zone: _____

A room, or part of one — the kitchen · the loft · landing (upstairs) · landing (downstairs) · the garden shed.

- G** Gathered — pulled like with like
- O** Optimised — cut to what you need, gave it its best home
- V** Verified — a quick last look, nothing half-done

Spots are the exact places you sweep — break it right down: top of the wardrobe · left bedside cabinet · under the sofa · coffee-table drawer · the cupboard under the sink · bookcase, shelf by shelf.

#	SPOT	WHAT LIVES HERE (fill in later)	G	O	V
1			☐	☐	☐
2			☐	☐	☐
3			☐	☐	☐
4			☐	☐	☐
5			☐	☐	☐
6			☐	☐	☐
7			☐	☐	☐
8			☐	☐	☐
9			☐	☐	☐
10			☐	☐	☐
11			☐	☐	☐
12			☐	☐	☐

First pass = just list the spots. Leave "what lives here" blank until you've gathered. Print one per zone at turndownthetap.com/system — Zone Sheet, Category Tracker, The Accountability Bet and The Maths of Your Mess are all free.

The Maths of Your Mess

Pick a collection, a hobby category, or honestly anything you own a lot of. This is the **loft-maths** from the book, pointed at your own stuff. A biro and five minutes, no measuring tape, no square footage. Be honest, and be kind about what you find.

What are we counting? _____

One category per sheet — vinyl · LEGO sets · yarn · unread books · unpainted minis · bikes · trainers...

Sum 1 The stockpile *how much future have you already bought?*

How much of it do you actually own?

Realistic rate you use, build, wear or play it, per month:

So you have **months' worth** already — which is about **years' worth**.

Sum 2 The joy maths *what does the good stuff actually cost?*

Roughly what have you spent on it overall? £

How many of those items have you **genuinely enjoyed** in the last twelve months?

Cost per genuinely-enjoyed item this year: £

Sum 3 The rented tap *only if you pay for storage outside your home*

Skip this one guilt-free if everything lives at yours. Your own cupboards, loft and shed are free, and using them well is the whole point of the system. This sum is only for space you pay for.

The unit or locker costs, per month: £ and you've had it **months**.

So you've paid about £ so far.

And re-buying what's actually in there would cost, roughly: £

THE HONEST QUESTION — THE ONE THIS WHOLE SHEET EXISTS FOR

Would you buy it again, at today's cost-per-use?

If the answers made you wince, that's not a failure — it's information. The wince is the start of turning the tap down on purpose, instead of by accident. No skip required, no big blitz. Just a tap, turned.