

# TODAY'S LIVING<sup>®</sup>

For Client Name

finding joy

## IN LESS

### PLUS

Discover simplicity in  
your cooking, career,  
landscaping, and more

### RECIPE

Mix & Match  
Taco Trio



**Agent Name**

Title  
Business Phone  
Cell Phone  
Email  
Tagline

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find beauty in

***SIMPLICITY***

## LOW-MAINTENANCE LANDSCAPING

Having a welcoming yard or outdoor living space at home can give you the daily opportunity to reap the benefits of fresh air and sunshine. However, sometimes your lawn and landscaping might seem more like an overwhelming chore than something to be enjoyed.

“Looking at your garden should not make you think of your to-do list,” says Julie Farris, a landscape designer based in New York. Applying the minimalist principles of simplicity and sustainability to your yard can cut down on the time it takes to maintain your landscaping, freeing you up to simply enjoy the outdoors more often. Start building your minimalist landscape design by following these three guidelines.

### 1. EMBRACE YOUR CLIMATE

The best landscaping plan for your yard largely depends on your region and climate. Research the typical weather and soil conditions in your area, and build a design around those elements. Try to include as many native plants as possible, since they will naturally establish themselves more quickly and require less special treatment in order to thrive. In drier climates, consider replacing some of your grass with an attractive rock garden accented with low-maintenance succulents.

### 2. THINK YEAR-ROUND BEAUTY

With a little bit of planning, you can create a landscaping design that looks attractive through every season – and for many years to come. When you are selecting plants, opt for long-lasting perennials, hardy evergreens and groundcoverings that can slowly take the place of grass. Consult a local nursery for recommendations for your area.

### 3. INCORPORATE HARDSCAPE

One of the easiest ways to cut back on yard maintenance is to decrease the size of your lawn. Stepping stones or concrete pavers spread out among the grass can be a practical way to add character to your yard. Although it requires an upfront investment, installing a brick patio or a composite-wood deck will lessen upkeep while creating a space to relax and entertain. Large pavers encircling an area of small stones or gravel create a focal point for a fire pit surrounded by lounge chairs.

**Once your minimalist landscape is complete, make it a priority to gather with loved ones to savor the outdoors together.**





# LET **MINIMALISM** **TRANSFORM** your cooking

Although minimalism is usually associated with home design or cleaning out the closets, cooking is another area of your everyday life that could be revolutionized by a simplified lifestyle.

A minimalist approach to mealtimes involves simplifying both the foods you eat and how you cook them. Rather than relying on complicated recipes or an abundance of kitchen gadgets, simple cooking

focuses on eating more fresh, whole foods that are easy to prepare. Similar to how “capsule wardrobes” filter out excess clothing, you can take the guesswork out of cooking by relying on staple ingredients.

Jennifer from Simply + Fiercely writes about how her “capsule kitchen” has reduced stress and made cooking more enjoyable. She says, “The idea behind a capsule kitchen is simple: stock your home full of ‘go-to’ foods that you know you love eating *instead of shopping for meals.*”

Keep your kitchen stocked with grocery staples, then supplement each week with proteins and fresh produce. Master a few simple meals that are easy to intermix flavors, such as soups, stir-fry, tacos, rice bowls, salads, or pasta. Each day, you can decide what cuisine sounds appealing and use the food you’ve already purchased to put together a meal.

With this approach to cooking, you’ll enjoy more nutrient-rich ingredients rather than processed foods. You can also reduce the frequency of trips to the store, saving you both time and money. Simple cooking can help you to enjoy preparing meals instead of enduring it as a chore.

“  
**Eating foods with fewer ingredients can improve your health and minimize your environmental impact.** – Rachel Jonat  
”

## GROCERY STAPLES

### 1 PANTRY:

- Rice
- Beans/legumes
- Lentils
- Pasta
- Bread or tortillas
- Spices
- Broth
- Condiments/sauces
- Canned tomatoes

### 2 FRIDGE/FREEZER:

- Milk (dairy or milk substitutes)
- Butter
- Eggs
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Frozen fruit
- Frozen vegetables

### 3 PROTEINS:

- Chicken, whole or parts
- Ground beef, turkey or chicken
- Lean cuts of lamb, pork or beef
- Fish or other seafood
- Soybeans, tofu or edamame

### 4 PRODUCE:

- Onions
- Garlic
- Potatoes
- Leafy greens
- Seasonal vegetables
- Seasonal fruits



# MIX & MATCH

# TACOS

Tacos are one of the most versatile meals to prepare. Endless flavor combinations can be created inside a tortilla by swapping proteins, spices and toppings.

## CARNE ASADA TACOS

2 Tbsp. soy sauce  
2 Tbsp. lime juice  
2 Tbsp. avocado oil, divided  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
2 tsp. chili powder  
1 tsp. ground cumin  
1 tsp. dried oregano  
1½ lbs. skirt steak, cut into ½-inch pieces

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together soy sauce, lime juice, 1 Tbsp. oil, garlic, and spices. Put steak pieces in a gallon-size bag, pour in soy sauce mixture and seal. Refrigerate for 1-4 hours.
2. Heat remaining oil in a large skillet over medium high. Add both steak and marinade to skillet. Cook for 5-6 minutes, stirring frequently, until steak has reached desired doneness.
3. Serve in tortillas topped with chopped onion, fresh cilantro and Cotija cheese.



## SWEET POTATO TACOS

1 lb. sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces  
2 Tbsp. avocado oil, divided  
¼ tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. salt, divided  
½ yellow onion, chopped  
½ red bell pepper, chopped  
2 tsp. chili powder  
½ tsp. ground cumin  
1 (15 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed  
1 cup frozen corn  
¼ cup water

1. Preheat oven to 425° F and cover a baking sheet with foil. Place sweet potatoes on prepared sheet and sprinkle with 1 Tbsp. oil, pepper and ½ tsp. salt. Toss to combine and spread in a single layer. Roast for 20 minutes, then flip sweet potatoes over and bake for 10 minutes more.
2. Meanwhile, heat remaining oil in a large skillet over medium high. Add onion and bell pepper, and cook for 3 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients, cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer for 5 minutes, then cook uncovered until liquid has evaporated.
3. Add roasted sweet potatoes to black bean mixture and serve in tortillas.



## THAI SHRIMP TACOS

1 Tbsp. sesame oil  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
¼ cup lime juice  
1 tsp. fish sauce  
2 tsp. Thai red chili paste  
1 Tbsp. sugar  
1 lb. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined  
1 cup tricolor coleslaw  
1 Tbsp. rice vinegar

1. In a large wok or sauté pan, heat sesame oil over medium. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute. Stir in lime juice, fish sauce, chili paste, and sugar. Simmer for 3-5 minutes.
2. Add shrimp and cook for 2 minutes, then flip and cook for 1 additional minute, or until internal temperature reaches 140° F.
3. Toss coleslaw with vinegar, spoon into tortillas and top with shrimp.



finding joy

# MINIMALISTS

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**W**hile the old adage “Less is more” may seem worn out from overuse, what if its wisdom is even more true today than it was 150 years ago? What if a life filled with joy really stems from a simpler, less cluttered lifestyle? Could the core principles of minimalism be one of the keys to experiencing the happiness we all crave?

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identify

## YOUR VALUES

**D**ictionaries often limit their definitions of the term “minimalism” to styles of music, art and design. However, descriptions of the minimalist lifestyle abound on websites and blogs dedicated to its promotion. While emphasis and techniques can vary, most explanations of minimalism share similar sentiments.

Joshua Becker, best-selling author and founder of *Becoming Minimalist*, defines minimalism as “the intentional promotion of the things we value and the removal of anything that distracts us.”

While many people initially regard minimalism as a lifestyle of restriction, most leading minimalists agree that the lifestyle should instead be viewed as one of abundance. By reducing much of the “extra” from your schedule and environment, you’re better able to embrace more of the life you truly want. Breaking out of the modern mindset of busyness and consumerism frees up more of your time, attention and money to invest in what matters most to you.

At its foundation, minimalism is about intentionally living a fuller life that revolves around your priorities. In order to achieve that goal, you have to start by identifying your core values. Only after you have a clear vision for what you really want your life to look like can you begin to eliminate the excess that stands in the way.

To begin, the *Minimalism Co.* blog suggests reflecting on times in your life when you felt the best. Examining all of the circumstances around those moments – where you were, who you were with, what you were doing, what you were thinking about – can help you

determine what’s most important in your life. Make a list of your values and post it in multiple places to keep these priorities at the forefront of your mind.

Consider what it could look like to focus on your values in your daily life. If your family is a core value, how could you create more time to spend together and build deeper relationships? If travel and new experiences bring you joy, how can you invest more time and money into pursuing those? If your physical health is a high priority, what do you need to incorporate into your routines to pursue good nutrition and consistent exercise?





eliminate

# DISTRACTIONS

Once you've identified the values you want to be central in your life, it's time to begin trimming the excess that keeps you from prioritizing them. Most people begin this process by decluttering their closets and home. This provides a productive, tangible starting point for eliminating the surplus stuff that's crowding your life. Numerous decluttering tips can be found in books or online tutorials, but always remember to let your values drive your decisions as you make space for what brings you true joy.

After you intentionally minimize your physical possessions, begin to evaluate other areas of your life that could be

preventing you from embracing your core values. Perhaps changes need to be made in your schedule, diet, career, friendships, hobbies, or technology usage.

Fully embracing a minimalist lifestyle won't happen overnight and requires consistent effort and re-evaluation. Although it may be a lifelong journey, the results will be worthwhile. As Daisy Rosales, founder of *Simplicity Relished*, says, "Simple doesn't always mean easy. I think we often equate the two . . . But living according to your convictions – whether that means resisting clutter, choosing generosity, or protecting your health – is not easy. It's worth it."



***Minimalists don't focus on having less, less, less; rather, we focus on making room for more: more time, more passion, more experiences, more growth, more contribution, and more contentment.***

– *TheMinimalists.com*



benefits of a

# MINIMALIST LIFESTYLE



**Financial freedom** – By spending less money on stuff you don't need, you'll have the freedom to enjoy experiences in the present and invest more in your future.



**Reduced stress and anxiety** – Physical clutter has been linked to anxiety, and the stress of strained finances can steal your joy. Clearing your home of unnecessary possessions and curbing your spending on nonessentials can reduce those anxious feelings.



**More free time** – When you have less to clean and organize, you have more time to engage in relationships and activities you enjoy. Reduced spending can also allow you to potentially cut back on work hours, increasing your rest and leisure time.



**Environmental impact** – Reducing your consumption of goods and services has a positive impact on the planet and helps you to live a more sustainable lifestyle.



**Increased generosity** – In addition to donating your excess items to nonprofits during your decluttering phase, spending less money on new stuff also allows you to give more generously to those in need on a regular basis.



**Amplified joy** – By focusing on what you truly value, you will find greater joy in daily living. The burden of needing to compare your life to others' can be lifted, enabling you to embrace yours to the fullest.





why living simply is good for the

# PLANET

When you first begin to embrace living minimally, you'll probably expect to own fewer things. What you might not anticipate is to simultaneously live in a way that's good for the environment. Though they begin with different goals, both minimalist and sustainable lifestyles have strikingly similar end results: less consumption and less waste.

Minimalists are frequently motivated to consume less for the potential mental and emotional benefits, while people who seek to live sustainable or zero-waste lifestyles are driven primarily by the impact their habits have on other people and the planet. Both philosophies strive to choose products that will last, resist mindless consumerism, and either repair or repurpose items as much as possible.

Over time, minimalists naturally find themselves moving in the direction of environmentally-conscious living, because when you stop buying excessively, you use less of the earth's resources and fewer items wind up in the landfill. Once you understand the personal benefits of living with less, you can begin to think more broadly about the implications of the different goods and services you consume.

If you want to incorporate more sustainable practices into your daily life, here are some tangible ideas to help you get started.

- Extend the lifespan of your possessions by making efforts to repair broken items instead of just tossing them out. When it's time to replace something, try to find a high-quality product that you can see yourself enjoying for a long time.
- Buy items secondhand from local thrift stores or online retailers like thredUP or Poshmark. Some companies like Patagonia and REI also offer used apparel lines.

Slow down so you can be more mindful about your purchases. Consider disabling the "one-click" buy option from online retailers and instituting a mandatory waiting period before making large purchases to help curtail impulse spending.

As you use them up, try to replace disposable products with reusable items, if possible. For example, plastic bags can be replaced with silicone options and dish sponges swapped out with compostable bamboo brushes.

Before making an online or in-store purchase, try to research the quality of the materials used and also the environmental impact of creating the product. Find out if the item can be recycled at the end of its lifespan.

Look for companies with sustainable labels, such as USDA Organic, Certified B Corporation or Fair Trade Certified. Likewise, try to seek out organizations that offer extended warranties and free repair programs.

The goal of sustainable living is intentionality, not perfection. Making small changes one step at a time will lead you down a path of significant impact.

## WHERE TO SELL, DONATE OR RECYCLE

Keep items out of your local landfill by selling, donating or recycling as much as possible. Consider the following suggestions.

**Toys:** Day cares, schools or foster care centers

**Books:** Libraries, used book stores, senior centers, or *Powells.com*

**Household items:** Local nonprofits, Goodwill, The Salvation Army, Facebook Marketplace, or OfferUp

**Electronics:** Best Buy, Apple, Amazon, Decluttr, or local recycling centers

**Shoes & clothing:** Foster care clothing closets, Big Brothers Big Sisters, homeless shelters, or Soles4Souls



approach work like a

# MINIMALIST

Taking steps to begin simplifying your personal life and living more intentionally can produce numerous benefits for your mental, emotional and physical health. Imagine if you applied the same mindset to where you spend the majority of your time each week – your work.

Minimalism is all about simplifying how you approach life, so that may mean looking for ways to make your work routines as efficient as possible. Not only will you personally benefit from *less stress* and overexertion, you're also likely to become *more productive* at work.

Ryan Mitchell, founder of The Tiny Life, offers several practical suggestions for implementing minimalist methods in your job. "The biggest piece of advice I can offer is: question everything," he says. "The most dangerous words in business (and life) are, 'That's the way it's always been done.'" By questioning the process of every project you take on at work, you can examine the necessity of each and every step.



In doing so, you'll likely discover some tasks that can be eliminated entirely. When that's not possible, look for ways to simplify or automate steps. For example, create forms that can be quickly filled out, write templates for reports or emails you send often, or add an FAQ section to your website. While creating these streamlined processes will require time upfront, it will consistently save you time down the road.

Setting up standard procedures for regular tasks will also improve your productivity. Find a method that helps you systematize your daily projects, such as checklists, digital calendars, tracking sheets, or a project management app. Intentionally choose to reduce distractions and focus on the task at hand. Minimize the number of browser tabs you have open, and make it a goal to complete a task before moving on to the next item on your list. Schedule specific times for each project and avoid multitasking, which actually decreases your productivity.

If you attempt to implement these strategies and it still doesn't seem possible to achieve a minimalist mindset in your current position, conduct an honest evaluation of your career path. Does it bring you joy? Is it worth the sacrifices? If not, consider exploring other options for your future.

## PRACTICAL TIPS TO IMPLEMENT

**Declutter your workspace.** Get rid of unnecessary items on your desk, create a filing system for essential paperwork, and only display photos and decorations that inspire you.

**Give yourself less time.** You've likely heard the phrase that work expands to fill the time available. Try giving yourself less time to complete a specific task. You may be surprised to learn that you will most often work more efficiently when you have a shortened time frame.

**Minimize notifications.** Not every message needs an immediate response. If your role allows it, consider turning off email notifications and setting aside specific times throughout the day to check your inbox. Communicate your plan to your teammates so they know to call you with urgent needs.

**Take a break.** Making time for regular breaks can help you to regain focus and develop a new perspective on projects. Several times per day, prioritize getting up from your desk to stretch your legs and clear your mind.



**Dear Client Name,**


In a society where constant entertainment, information and opportunities are at our fingertips, clutter threatens to overtake our mental and physical spaces. This issue of *Today's Living* explores the many benefits of a minimalist lifestyle and offers practical suggestions for simplifying your daily routines.

**Discover how minimalism can help you find greater peace and joy by making room for what you value most in life.**



Thank you for your business and your trust. Until we work together again, the referrals of your family and friends are always appreciated.

*Sincerely,*  
**Agent Name**

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