

## The Power of 15 Minutes

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A while ago I began making a list of the basic daily tasks I needed to do to keep the house under control. At the time I decided that I would write up an index card for each of the areas of my home with a list of basic chores that would take no more than 15 mins to complete, then aim to work on as many of those cards as I could in a day - slotting some in around other things, and doing some in a block. What I wanted to share with you here is what happened with my front porch....

I had decided to make my entry/foyer and porch one area, assigning it one card. The foyer wasn't too bad, but the porch was the pits! You see, at the time, my porch (really a covered verandah along one side of the house) was a MESS! There was stuff piled up everywhere, and the worst part of it was I couldn't bring myself to deal with it. But I decided I would just apply the 15 minute rule - each day I would put on a timer for 15 minutes, work on the entry first, then on the porch, and when the timer went off I was done for the day.

The first two days were HARD! I really didn't want to deal with all that mess. But I knew I didn't want my porch to stay that way, so as soon as the entry was done, I forced myself to start at one end of the porch and simply pick up and deal with one item at a time. When the timer went off, I was GLAD to stop! But by the end of the second day, I'd made a noticeable dent in the mess, and it got a little easier after that. By the end of the week, the porch was clear! And that's the power of 15 mins! Now, when I started using those cards, I wasn't really sure how long it would take me to do the little list of chores on each one, so I started by doing the chores, then writing down on the card how long it took me that day. What I noticed was that to start with, it generally took me just a little longer than 15 mins to complete each card, but by the end of the first week, it was taking less and less time for some areas, because there was less to do due to the daily maintenance. It was the same way with the entry and porch - the first day, the entry took about 10 mins, only leaving 5 to start on the porch. The next day, the entry took only 5 mins, so I spent 10 on the porch. By the end of the week, when the porch was decluttered, I could do the whole lot in 5-10 mins, so long as I kept it up daily. Now, the really power of the whole concept of spending 15 mins on tackling a decluttering task is that, no matter how big the task, if you will consistently work on it for 15 mins a day, it WILL get done! And 15 mins is not a long period of time, but it is long enough to make a difference. So, as you work on decluttering your home over the coming weeks, each day pick one of the tasks you put on your list for the week, set a timer for 15 mins, and go work on it, whether you feel like it or not! ☺

And another powerful concept is this: if you spend just a few minutes each day maintaining each of the main areas of your home, then the mess will seldom get overwhelming, and you will feel a lot more relaxed! ☺

Love

*Cynthia*