

# What I learned about moving into a small apartment at 38

If you'd told me I'd be entering my 39th year in a small apartment, I'd have laughed and rolled my eyes. *Sure.*

And yet, here we are.

Quite the change after 15 years of suburban townhouse living. Of trying to keep a garden alive and becoming increasingly lazy (and a little chunky) with fast food and grocery apps. Complex living has its perks. But it's also way too easy to stock up on things you don't need. And then, conveniently forget about them.

Let me tell you. Downsizing when you've used your garage as an extra storage room for the past eight years, is not for the faint of heart!

It's weird though...

Two years ago I went on a major decluttering mission. Did I see a premonition? Or maybe, I was just really inspired by Tidying Up with Marie Kondo. I donated over 200 books in one day. And, let's not even talk about the piles of papers and files and invoices neatly tucked away at the back of my cupboard. Or the bundles of "maybe-one-day" clothes. Holy moly.

That was all peanuts in comparison to this last week. But I won't bore you with the details. Let's just say, I'm very happy we now only have two cooking pots. And zero encyclopedias. I know. This move has been enlightening and surprisingly adventurous! (Not the actual packing or the stress of moving: that was hell on Earth and something I hope to not repeat any time soon).

## 3 Truths I learned about downsizing to an apartment

### **A garden isn't all that.**

There, I said it. A beautiful garden has always been on my dream home wish list. But when your neighbors cut down the big tree that doubles as a privacy screen and all you're doing is pulling weeds and reallocating slugs (because we don't kill things in our home), it doesn't really feel like a lovely little sanctuary. Gardens take work. And when you're juggling the balls of life, it can easily become one more chore on a list of many.

Now, our balcony houses a few (manageable) pot plants that create a mini jungle for Jinx to chill next to the sunshine. And I get to enjoy my coffee on the balcony with a view of the mountains – and our neighbours jumping rope or doing push-ups. (Hello fitness regime inspiration!)

## **Space is overrated.**

Another “must-have” I convinced myself I needed. More space equals more peace, right? Not necessarily. When the pandemic hit, my working from home life changed and I got a permanent coworker (which I love, by the way!)

But here’s the thing I’ve learned about living and working with someone else – and some extra space: It can make you too comfortable, surprisingly complacent, and an occasional anxious hermit. Not ideal for work, or your well-being. So here we are in this two-bedroom apartment where there’s no need to shout up the stairs anymore. We’re forced to communicate better. To respect each other’s space, to venture out for walks and take more breaks, and to actually get involved in life outside our little cocoon. And most importantly? Clutter gets instantly anighlated. *Peace.*

## **Our environment influences our mood.**

Towards the end of our stay in the townhouse, I felt like the walls were caving in. Noisy neighbours. Ugly security bars that made me feel trapped in my own home. And interior fixtures that were starting to fall apart. All the pot plants in the world couldn’t hide these eye (and ear) sores. I say this, because halfway through our first day of moving into the apartment, I felt like a massive weight had been lifted from my shoulders. Home. A kitchen with actual light that would finally inspire cooking again. A well-thought out layout and aesthetics that warm your soul.

I didn’t realise how long I’d been struggling. To try and be positive and stay motivated in a space that was slowly draining my spirit. A lovely space doesn’t have to be massive or expensive. It just needs light and a smart layout from architects who actually consider how people practically live (and work) at home.

## **Finding the fun in the unexpected.**

This last month has been an education. From finding a storage unit (not for clutter, mind you – family treasures and a cooler box. Yes, our apartment is that small!) – to investing in a step-ladder and researching apartment-friendly workouts. It’s an adjustment and not something I ever imagined at this stage in our lives, but I’m in love. Sometimes we’ve got to forge a path that’s the opposite to what we planned to really immerse ourselves in life, again. And sometimes, it’s not about starting a new chapter. It’s about clearing the bookshelf and starting a whole new library.