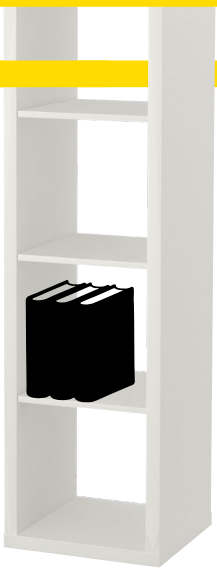
IKEA Home Life Monitor 2026

Living and keeping things organised in Switzerland



Editorial by Janie Bisset

Hej!

There’s hardly anything more ordinary and at the same time more personal than the moment we come home. We close the door, take a deep breath and leave the day behind us, at least for a little while. We are home.

Our home is more than just the place where we live. It is where we arrive, switch off and can truly be ourselves. At IKEA, we have always been interested in how people live at home and how their everyday lives can be made easier, more enjoyable and better, regardless of their budget. That is why the IKEA Home Life Monitor is once again taking a look behind the scenes. In its second edition, it becomes clear what people in Switzerland need from their homes and what helps them feel at ease there.

This year’s focus is on a topic that often remains in the background but reveals a great deal about life at home: tidying, storing and organising. After all, how we use our living space and store our belongings is not merely a practical matter. It also reflects what matters to us at home and what makes living together easier.

The IKEA Home Life Monitor 2026 reveals how much thought, pragmatism and personalised solutions people in Switzerland bring to organising their homes. Yet order is not something static. It changes with everyday life, with the people we share our homes with and with the space available to us. Order can offer more than clarity: it can make room for what brings us joy. This makes simple, functional solutions that adapt to changing needs at home even more important.

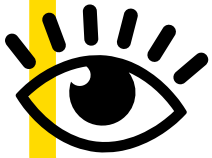
This year, too, the report is about more than presenting figures. We want to continue the dialogue about life at home and open up new perspectives on everyday living.

My thanks go to everyone who contributed to this report, in particular the many people across Switzerland who shared their habits, experiences and insights with us.

I warmly invite you to make yourself comfortable and discover the IKEA Home Life Monitor 2026.

Janie Bisset

CEO & CSO IKEA Switzerland



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1 IKEA Home Life Monitor 2026

1.1 About this study

The IKEA Home Life Monitor takes a closer look at how people in Switzerland live at home. How do they spend time within their own four walls, how do they organise their lives together and what makes a home a place where they feel truly comfortable?

As the Home Life Monitor 2025 showed, many people in Switzerland see their home as a private retreat. The first part of this study explores the moments when we return home and leave again. In the daily rhythm of coming and going, people move between two worlds: the private and the public. This study shows that the rituals marking these transitions often go far beyond taking off your shoes and closing the door. For people who have been out and about in an urban environment, for example, washing their hands is also part of the routine when they get home. Once home, respondents like their private oasis to be peaceful, but not necessarily silent. For many, music or other forms of audio entertainment are part of the experience. All these habits help turn a home into a personal place of comfort and well-being.

In this second edition of the IKEA Home Life Monitor, we turn our attention to something that usually remains out of sight. We look at storage and the places where things are kept, exploring hidden corners, dusty treasures and what people in Switzerland do with the things they don't currently need. Do they sometimes lose track of what they have tucked away and where? The study shows that even with these lesser-used things, order and tidiness tend to triumph. Even so, there is one place where people allow a little chaos to creep in: the junk drawer, home to all manner of odds and ends. The junk drawer says something about the Swiss approach to clutter: it, too, has its place, though it is one hidden from public view. After all, a little chaos is unavoidable – but keeping it under control and tucked

away is the key. And while people generally take a pragmatic approach to storage, there is a more personal side to what they keep: some things are kept private, while others are held onto for sentimental reasons. The possessions people value most are often associated with a particular memory.

The final part of the study looks at the tensions that can arise when individuals share a home. And, perhaps unsurprisingly in Switzerland, many of them revolve around tidying and keeping things in order. The biggest challenge to this penchant for neatness? Children, especially younger ones. However families try to work things out, toys have a habit of ending up everywhere. Tidiness remains an ongoing issue among adults, too. In mixed-gender households, women are more likely to report that their partner poses a challenge when it comes to keeping things tidy. Some women occasionally resort to a discreet tidying trick: if something gets in the way for long enough, sooner or later it ends up in the bin – usually before anyone notices.

The IKEA Home Life Monitor examines life at home based on an annual representative survey of the population. For the current edition, the research institute Sotomo surveyed a total of 2,410 people across Switzerland between 13 and 30 April 2026. The results are representative of the linguistically integrated residential population of Switzerland.

1.2 Key findings in brief

Coming home and unwinding

Stepping into your own world: When people come home in Switzerland, crossing the threshold is often just the start of a familiar routine. Almost everyone takes off their shoes first (Fig. 1). Three-quarters follow this with other small rituals: they wash their hands or change their clothes, leaving a little of the outside world behind in the process. People in large cities are significantly more likely to do this for hygienic reasons. By contrast, only half of respondents lock their door immediately after arriving home. It seems the outside world is not so much locked out as left behind. People living in family households are the least likely to lock the door, while those living alone are the most likely. It seems that having more people coming and going brings its own sense of security (Fig. 3).

Feeling at home: When do people really start to feel at home? For many, it's not when they step through the door, but when they take off the clothes they've been wearing outside. The bed seems to be where the distinction matters most. Very few people regularly sit or lie on their bed in outdoor clothes, although only six out of ten respondents consider this to be strictly off-limits (Fig. 6). The sofa, on the other hand, is where eight out of ten respondents are able to fully relax (Fig. 11). Around a quarter even find themselves unintentionally nodding off from time to time (Fig. 12). The right background sound can also help create a relaxing atmosphere. For example, one third of respondents listen to music in the background (Fig. 9), while in Italian-speaking Switzerland in particular, around half prefer the sound of the TV (Fig. 10). Despite these differences, one thing is clear: people in Switzerland feel at home in their homes (Fig. 7).

One last check: Many respondents also follow a familiar routine when leaving their home. Almost everyone locks the front door, and most switch off all the lights before heading out (Fig. 13). Younger people and those living in large cities are particularly likely to check the weather forecast before leaving. They are more likely to travel on foot, by bike or by public transport and are therefore more exposed to changes in the weather than motorists (Fig. 14 and Fig. 15).

A place for everything

Tidying up to feel good: What makes a home a place where you can feel truly at ease? For two thirds of respondents, the answer is clear: tidiness. And most people actually meet their own expectations in everyday life (Fig. 16). Around two thirds do a thorough tidy-up at least once a week, while half take a more improvised approach by simply putting everything to one side (Fig. 17). Younger respondents are more likely to opt for this quick-fix approach, while people tend to become more systematic as they get older (Fig. 18).

Everything has its place: The kitchen is where this desire for order is most apparent. In just over eight out of ten households, almost everything has its own designated place (Fig. 19). But even the tidiest kitchens have a blind spot: the food cupboard. The more people there are in a household, the harder it becomes to keep track of what is in the cupboard (Fig. 20). Switzerland's desire for order extends to recycling, too. Two thirds of respondents have an organised system for sorting all their recycling (Fig. 23).

Hidden corners

Where the clutter hides: Behind closed doors, however, things are less orderly than they might seem. Respondents find the basement and utility room particularly challenging to keep tidy (Fig. 24). Some things, such as documents, digital files or worn clothing, don't always get put away immediately in Switzerland (Fig. 25). In many households, worn clothes even make a pit stop along the way: more than half have a chair or armchair just for them, with an average of three to four pieces of clothing piled on top (Fig. 26 and 27). In other words, even things that haven't been put away yet have a place of their own. Three quarters of respondents have a junk drawer in their homes (Fig. 28), which is typically filled with small electrical items such as cables and batteries, along with stationery (Fig. 29). What you won't find there, however, are keepsakes: the junk drawer is very much a practical solution to everyday clutter, not an archive for memories.

Dusty treasures: People in Switzerland don't find it easy to let go of their possessions. Around a third tend to hold on to a lot of things, while only a quarter find it easy to part from what they have in their household (Fig. 30). Seasonal items and possessions with particular sentimental value are especially likely to end up in the basement (Fig. 34). This is particularly apparent in family households, with almost nine out of ten families holding on to things they only use on a seasonal basis. And as families grow, so too does the collection of things they accumulate. When asked about the most important personal items they have stashed away, respondents most often mention photos and keepsakes. For most people in Switzerland, it is the personal story attached to an object that gives it its value (Fig. 35). Once something makes it into the basement, it tends to stay there. More than half intend to clear out their basement or attic at least once a year, but fewer than four in ten actually do it (Fig. 36).

Things we keep hidden: Some things are tucked away for reasons that have little to do with tidiness. A third of respondents who live with others hide certain things from other household members, and this rises to four out of ten when it comes to family households (Fig. 37). Here, privacy begins at the front door and sometimes extends all the way to the bedside drawer.

Living together, staying organised

Everyone has their own idea of what tidy means: Neatness and tidying up are the most common sources of conflict in Swiss homes. For half of respondents, the issue causes tension at least once a month (Fig. 39). One reason could be that women have higher expectations around tidiness than men (Fig. 40). Women who live alone often manage to meet their own standards of tidiness. If they move in with a man, however, their homes become noticeably less tidy. By contrast, there is little change either way for men (Fig. 41). Moving in together means adapting, but not necessarily in equal measure. Women are more likely to be bothered by the untidiness of others (Fig. 43), and they are also more likely to take matters into their own hands. They are more likely than men to get rid of other household members' belongings, even if their owners aren't necessarily ready to part with them (Fig. 44).

When toys take over: Children bring life into a home. And toys onto the floor. Almost two thirds of parents with children under seven say their homes are often untidy (Fig. 45). By contrast, seven in ten households without children are usually tidy. Unsurprisingly, toys left lying around are a frequent source of disagreement, especially in families with children aged seven to thirteen. This is a weekly bone of contention for just under three quarters of respondents (Fig. 47). As children get older, family homes become almost as tidy as those without children, while parents are less likely to do the lion's share of the tidying themselves (Fig. 48). Chaos is part of family life, but it doesn't last forever.

2

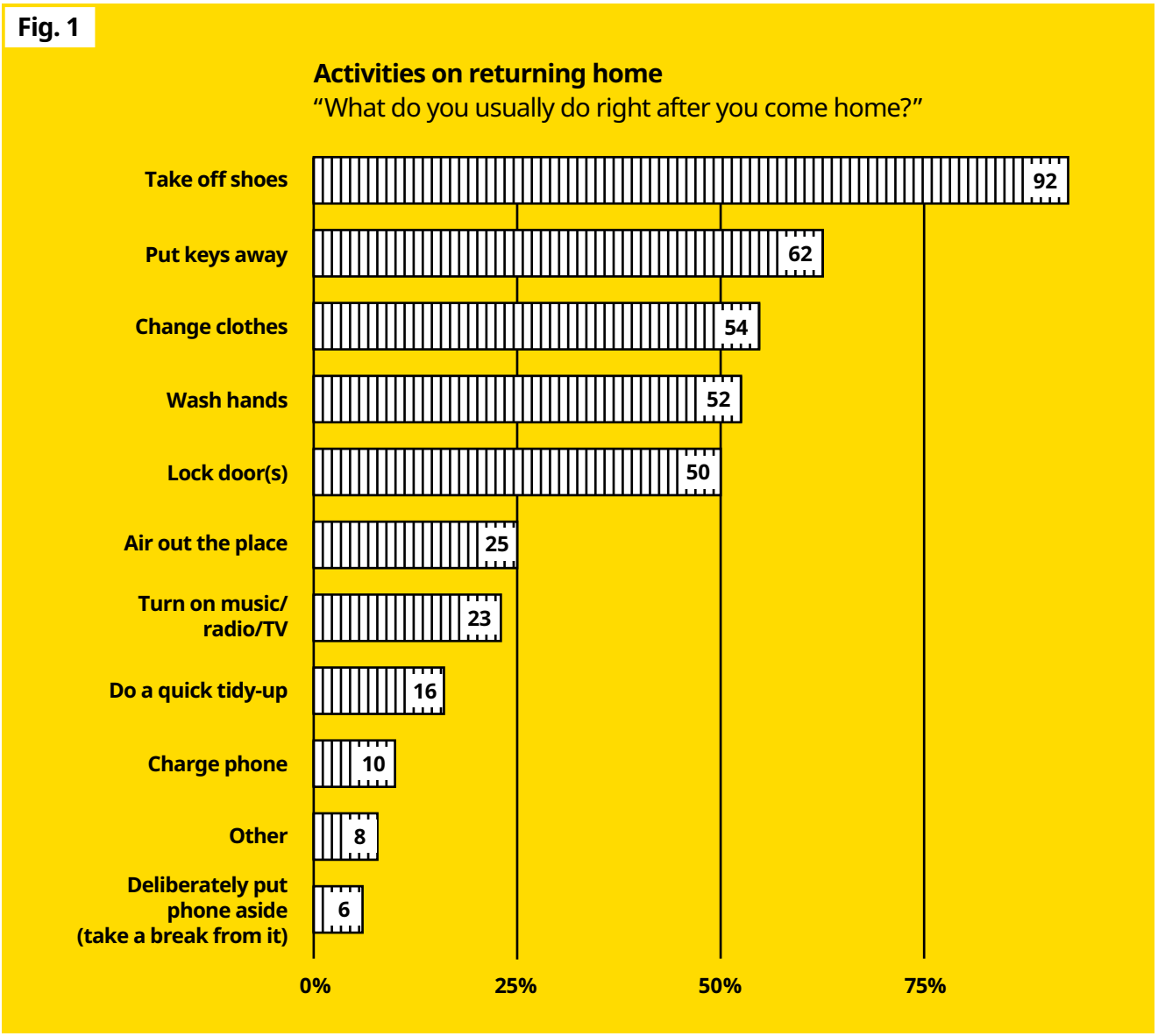
Coming home and unwinding

For people in Switzerland, home is far more than just a roof over their heads. It is where they can be unapologetically themselves. Once the door closes behind them, they leave the outside world behind, along with the demands and stresses of the day. Coming home and heading out again both follow familiar routines that mark the transition between public and private life. Once inside, almost everyone in Switzerland has one thing in common: they like being at home. Feeling at ease takes many forms, whether it's a tidy home, the right sound in the background or simply a favourite spot on the sofa.

2.1 Stepping into your own world

For most people in Switzerland, coming home means much more than simply stepping through the door. The transition is marked by a series of familiar rituals. The vast majority, 92%, take off their shoes when they enter their own private space. Surprisingly, only half of people in Switzerland lock their front door as soon as they get home. For many, shutting out the outside world is less about locking the door and more about leaving the day behind (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1



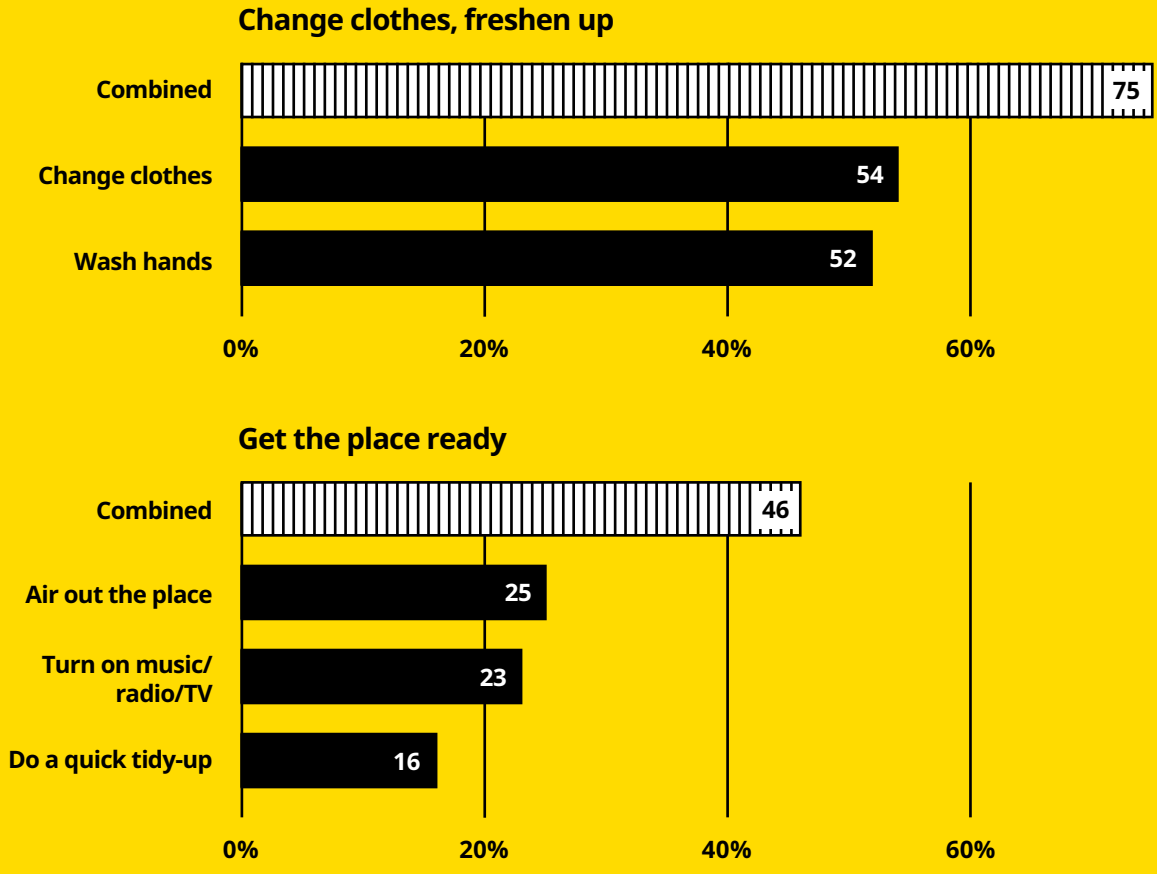
Three quarters change their clothes or wash their hands when they arrive home. These small rituals help symbolise their departure from the outside world. Almost half of respondents (46%) also settle into being at home by bringing the space around them to life, whether by briefly airing it out, tidying up or putting on music or the TV (Fig. 2).

As Fig. 1 shows, only half of respondents lock the door when they get home. The front door is particularly likely to remain on the latch in family households, where inhabitants are rarely likely to be alone and people come and go all the time. Less than half take the time to lock the door behind them. For people who live alone, the opposite tends to be true. Two thirds lock the door as soon as they step across their threshold (Fig. 3). This suggests that simply having family around can provide a sense of security in itself.

Fig. 2

Activities on returning home – combined

"What do you usually do right after you come home?"
(Multiple answers allowed. "Combined": proportion of people who selected at least one of the answers.)



Where people come and go, a sense of security seems to arise naturally.

Differences between urban and rural areas are particularly apparent when it comes to washing hands after arriving home. City dwellers seem especially keen to wash away the traces of the outside world, with three quarters washing their hands as soon as they get home – this is far more common than in rural areas. When it comes to changing clothes, however, there is no obvious urban-rural divide. Around half of people in Switzerland say they change their clothes when they get home, with the figure ranging from 45% to 60% depending on where they live. This practice is most common in suburban areas (Fig. 4).

Fig. 3

Activities on returning home – by household type

"What do you usually do right after you come home?"

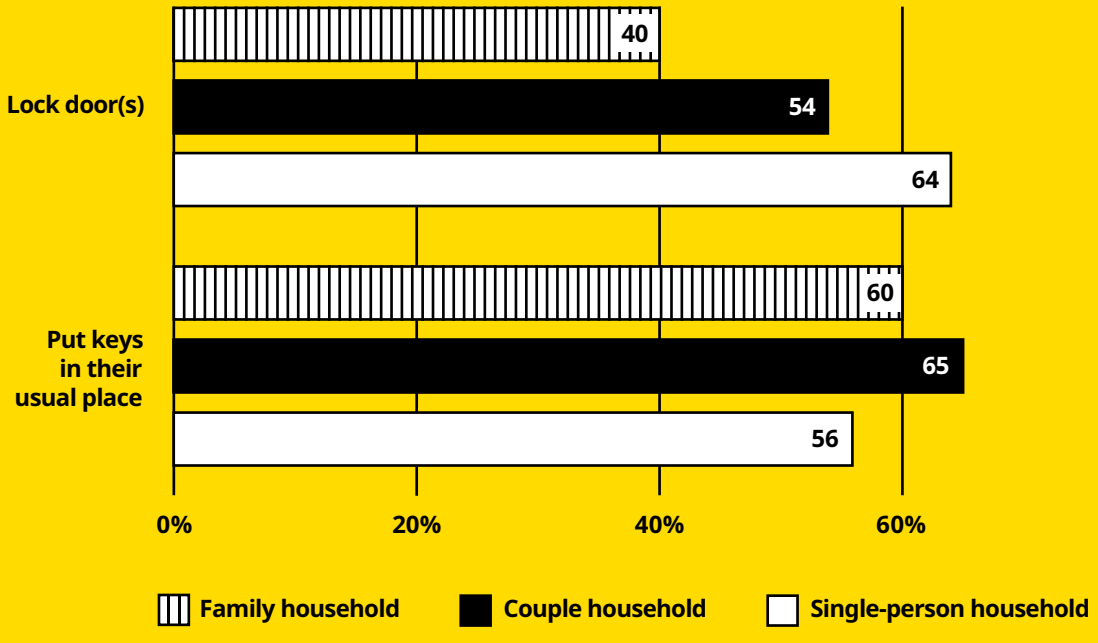
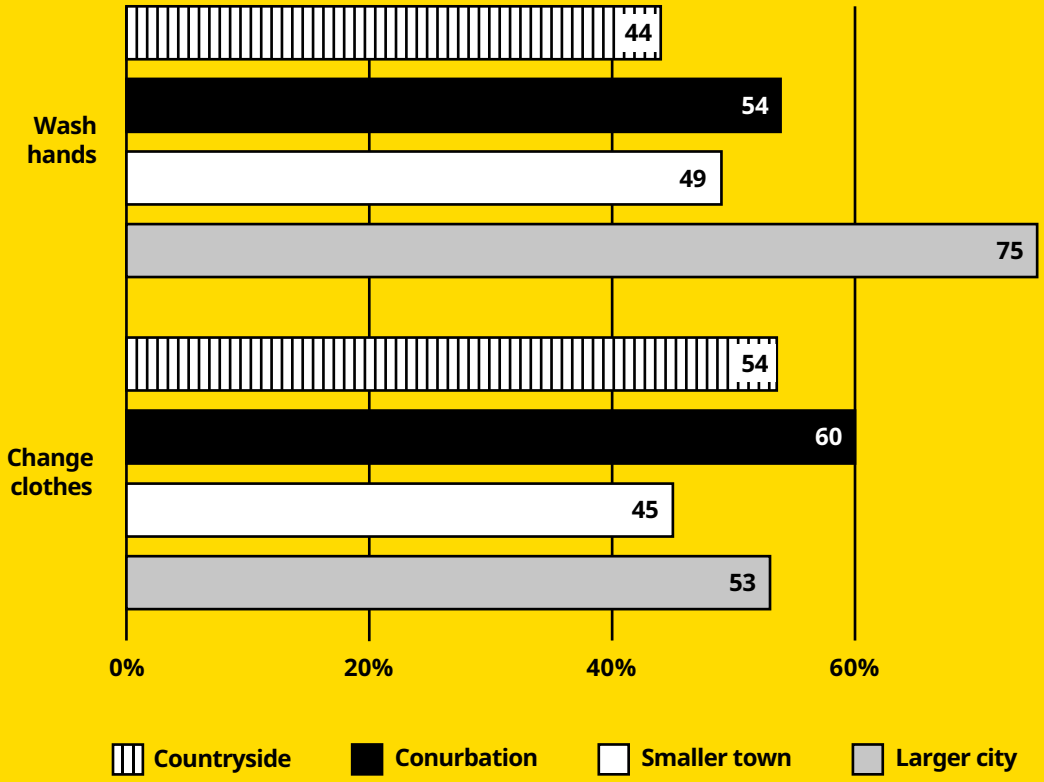


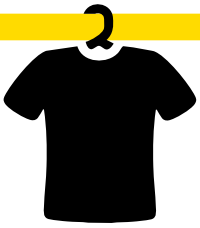
Fig. 4

Activities on returning home – by type of residential area

"What do you usually do right after you come home?"



City dwellers seem particularly keen to wash away the traces of the outside world when they get home.



By far the most common reason for changing clothes is comfort and convenience (89%). Changing clothes therefore becomes another way of shifting from public to private life, with what people wear reflecting that transition. Outside the home, clothing may serve a practical purpose or influence how we present ourselves to others. At home, comfort takes priority. The fact that changing clothes is most common in suburban areas suggests that the distinction between what people wear publicly and what they wear at home is particularly pronounced there. Hygiene is a much less common reason for changing clothes after arriving home, cited by only one in three people. When it comes to hygiene, however, the urban-rural divide seen with hand-washing reappears. While only 23% in rural areas change out of the clothes they have worn outside for hygiene reasons, the figure rises to 44% in large cities. People in larger cities spend more time in busy public spaces and use public transport more often than those in less urban areas. This may explain why they are also more likely to wash their hands and change their clothes when they get home (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5

Reasons for changing clothes
"Why do you change your clothes after returning home?"
(Only respondents who change clothes after returning home)

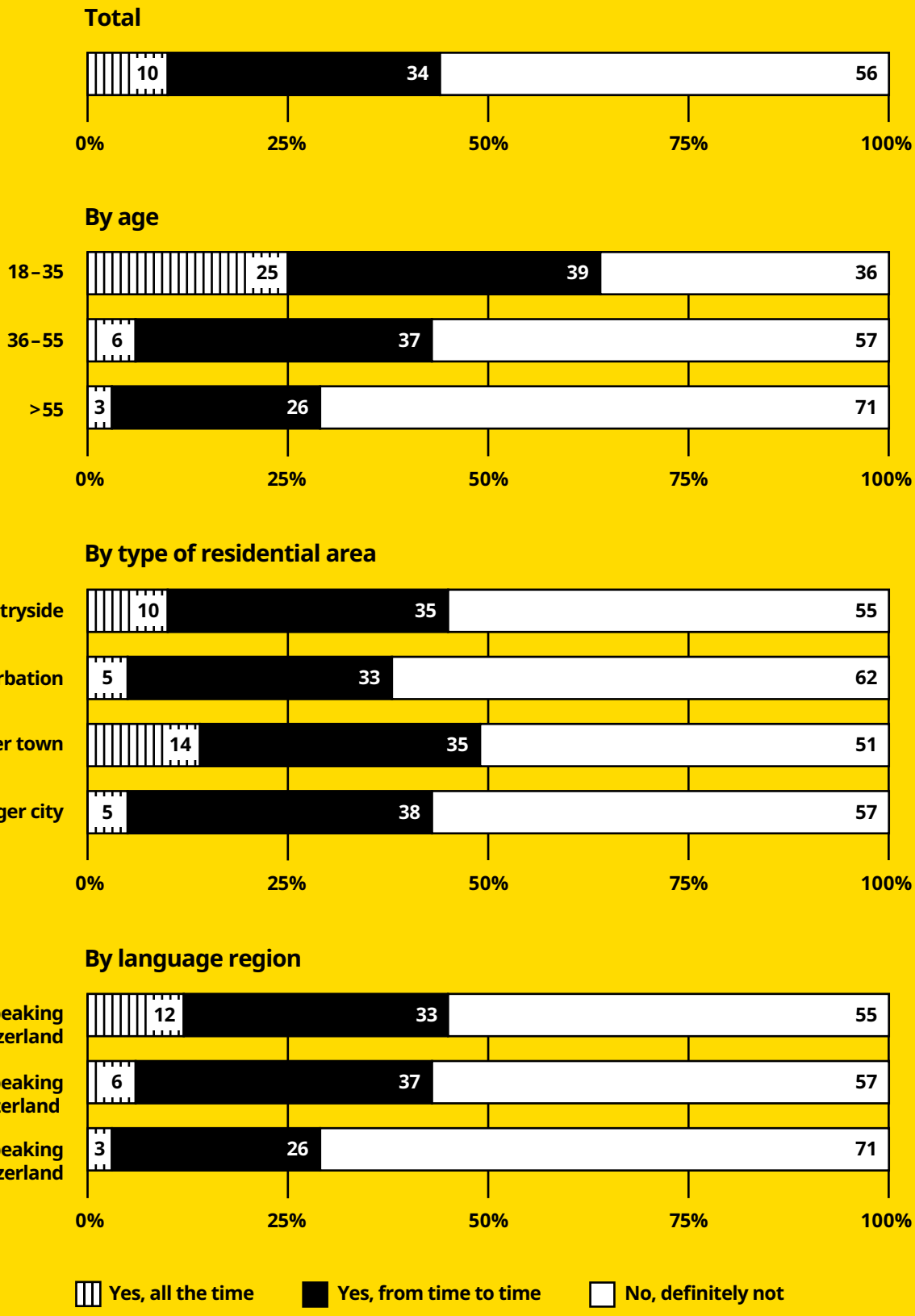
	Countryside	Conurbation	Smaller town	Larger city
Comfort and convenience	88	90	89	87
For hygiene reasons	23	30	27	44
To switch off and unwind	34	20	26	24

For many, the decision to change clothes comes not at the front door, but at the edge of the bed. Only one in ten people regularly lie on their own bed in clothes they have worn outside the home, while for 60% this is considered absolutely off-limits. Meanwhile, one third are less strict about this and do so at least occasionally. There are particularly striking differences between age groups. A quarter of younger respondents regularly sit on their bed in clothes they have worn outside, compared with fewer than 5% of older respondents (Fig. 6). So when it comes to changing clothes, the bed represents a very different boundary depending on age.

Fig. 6

Outdoor clothes in bed

"Do you ever sit or lie on your bed while still wearing your everyday or outdoor clothes?"



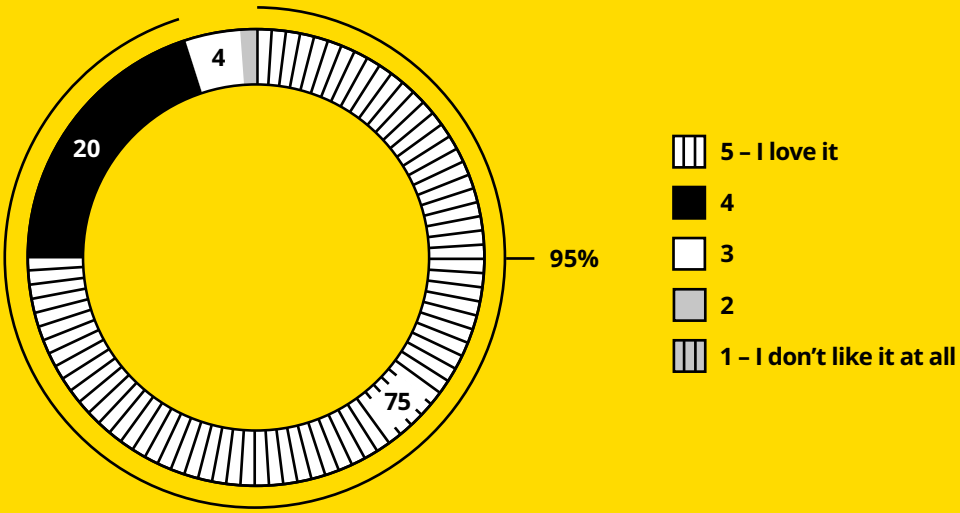
2.2 Feeling at home

Coming home marks a conscious shift for people in Switzerland, as they settle into a space where they can make themselves comfortable. Overall, 95% of the population enjoy being at home, while almost no one says they dislike it (Fig. 7).

How tidy a home is has a direct impact on well-being. For three quarters of respondents, the level of tidiness or untidiness at home has a strong influence on how they feel, and for almost a third the influence is very strong (Fig. 8).

Fig. 7

Feeling at home
"How much do you like being at home?"



How tidy the home is has a direct impact on well-being.

Fig. 8

Well-being and tidiness

"How does the level of tidiness or untidiness in your home affect your well-being?"

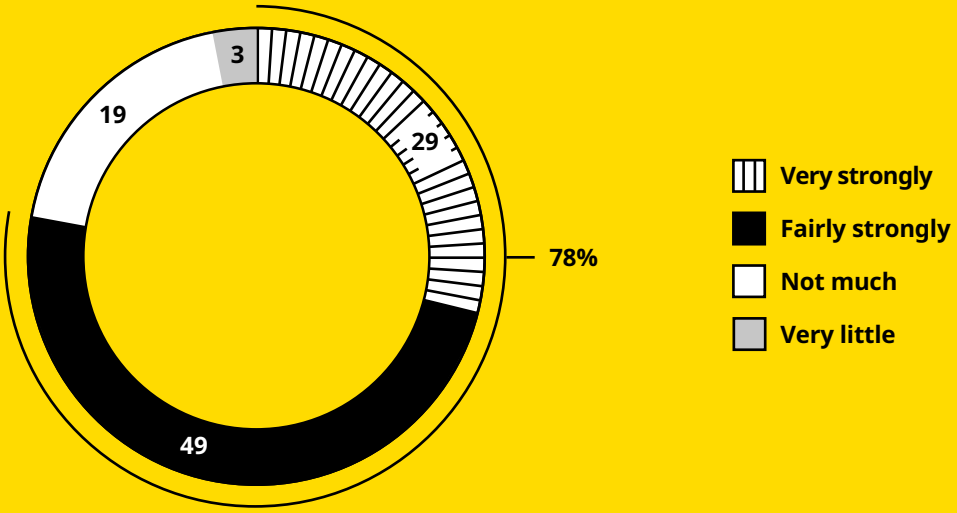
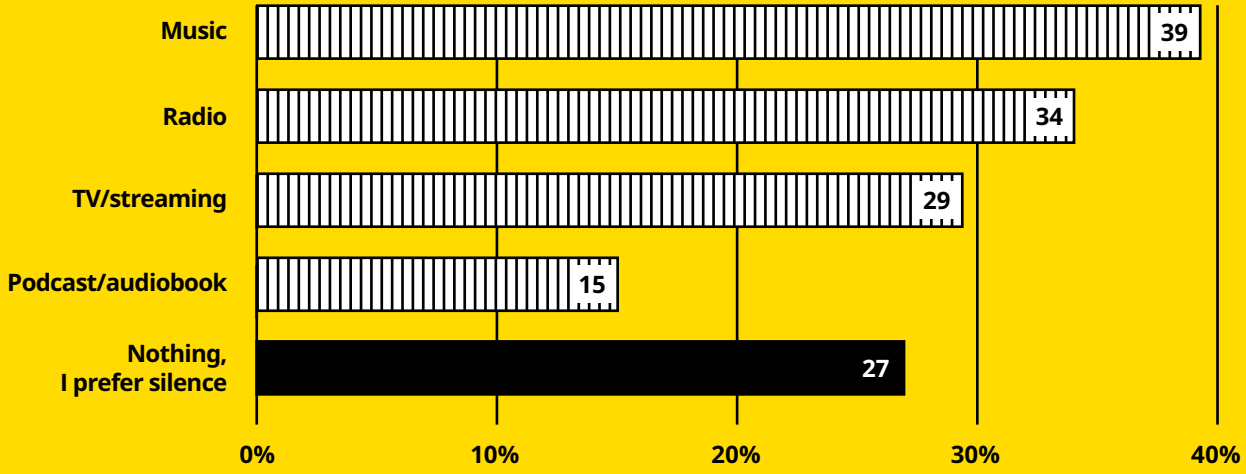


Fig. 9

Background sound at home

"What do you often have playing in the background at home?"



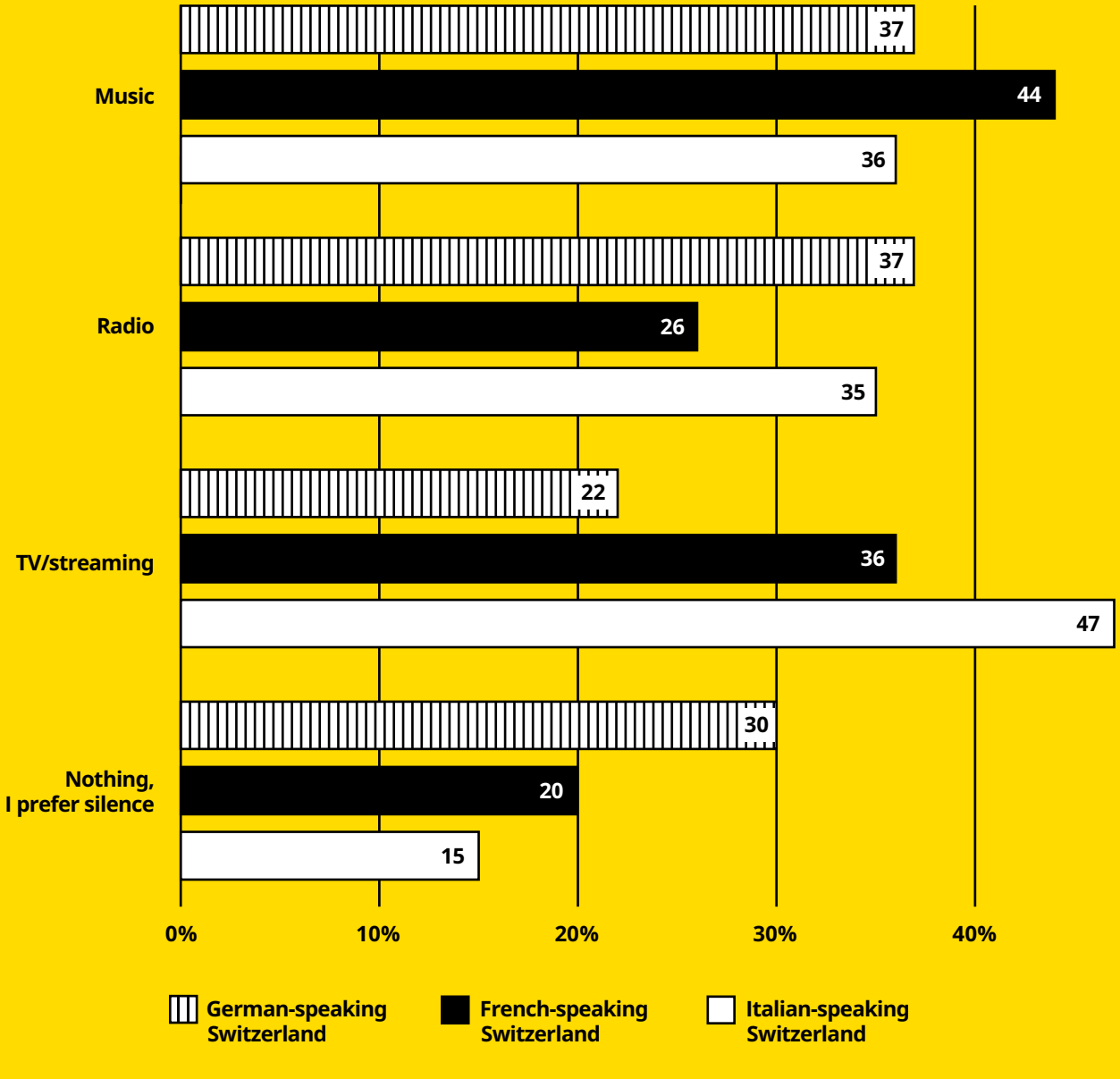
But a comfortable atmosphere depends on more than tidiness. The sounds around us matter, too. As Fig. 9 shows, the preferences here vary. Interestingly, only just over a quarter (27%) prefer complete silence. Most have something playing in the background: almost 40% listen to music, while another third listen to the radio. Having the TV on is slightly less common (29%), while bringing up the rear are those who listen to a podcast or an audiobook (15%).

There is also a difference between language regions. In Italian-speaking Switzerland, having the TV on in the background appears to be part of life at home for almost half of respondents (47%). In German-speaking Switzerland, radio and music are the most popular choices, although silence has its fans, too. Around 30% say they enjoy the peace and quiet that comes from being within their own four walls (Fig. 10).

Fig. 10

Background sound at home – by language region

"What do you often have playing in the background at home?"

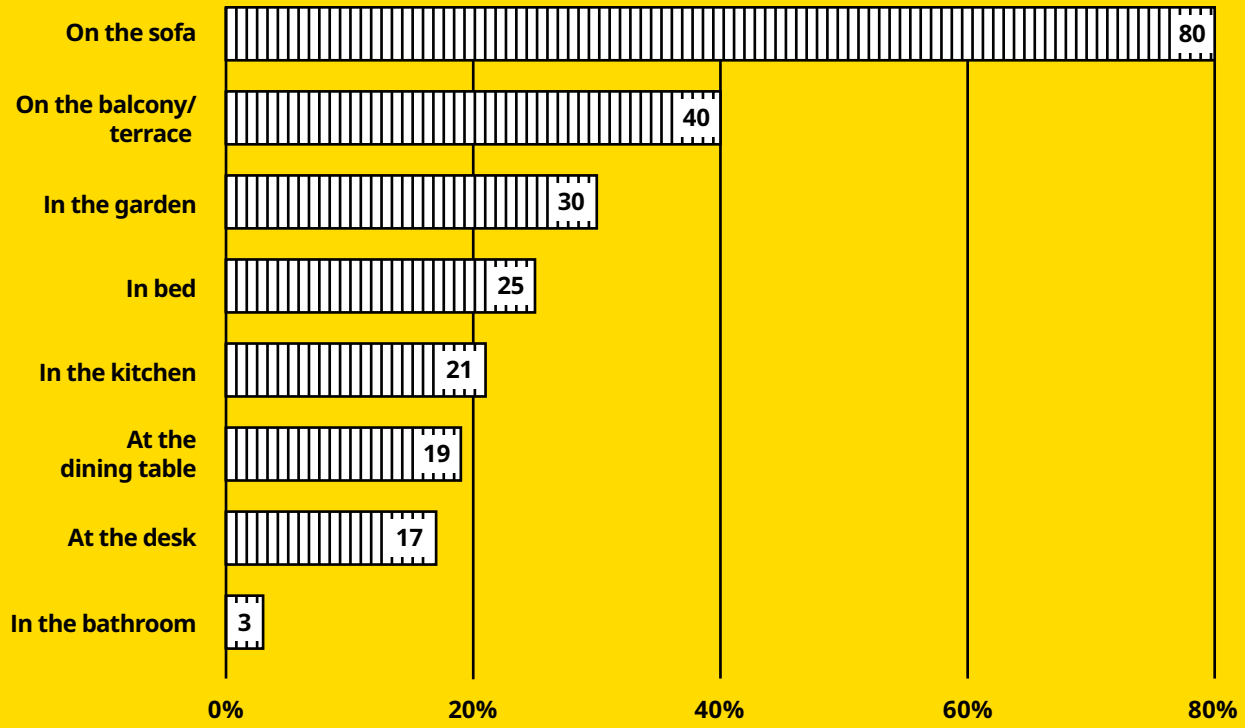


If there's one place that captures the comfort of home more than any other, it's the sofa. For four out of five respondents, this is where they most like to relax and spend their downtime (Fig. 11). By comparison, only a quarter name the bed as their favourite place to unwind.

Fig. 11

Favourite places to relax

"Where do you spend most of your time when you just want to relax at home?"

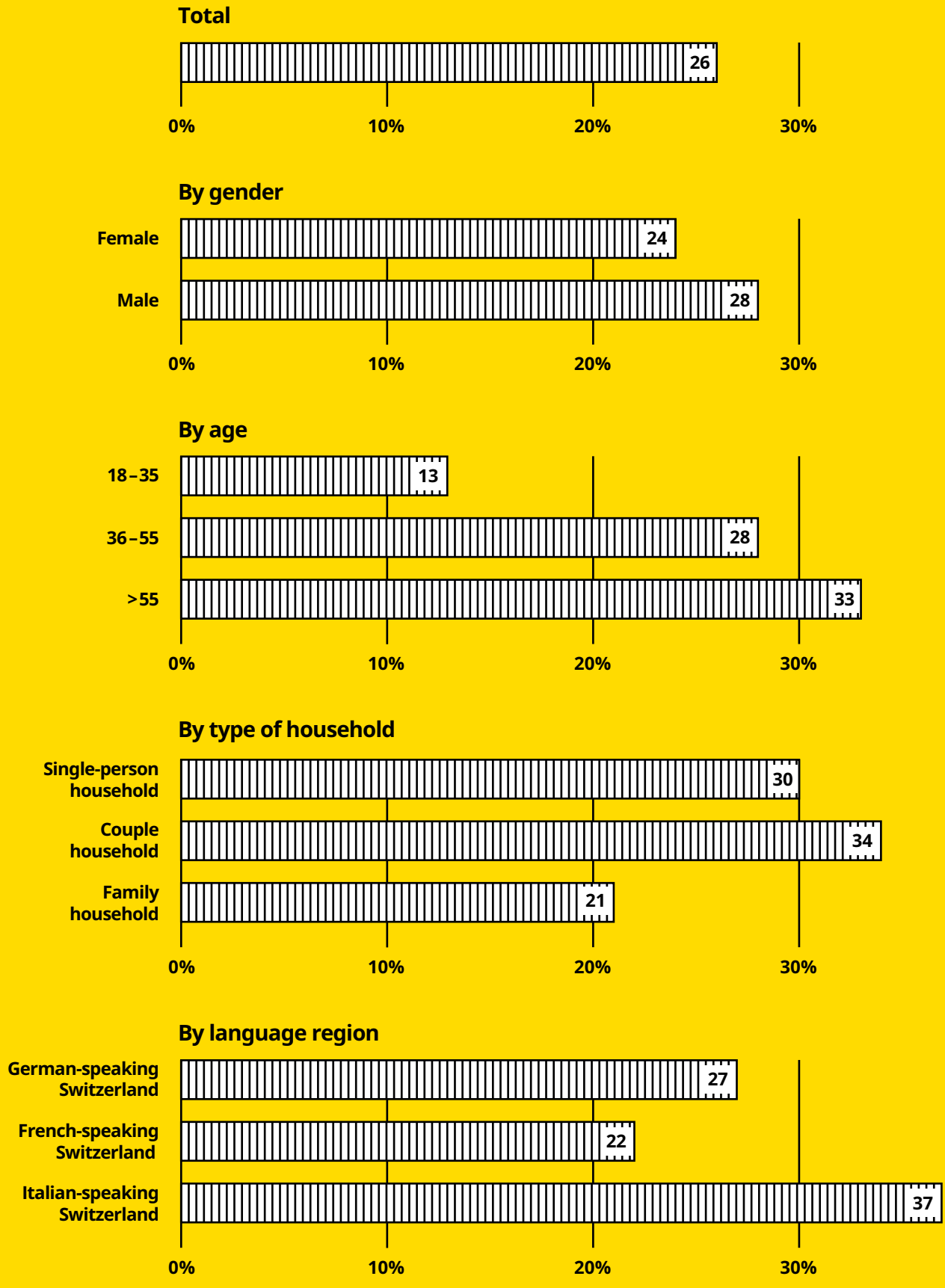


This suggests that people in Switzerland make a clear distinction between relaxing and sleeping. Every now and then, though, the line between the two becomes blurred. Around a quarter know the feeling: you lie down on the sofa for a quick rest, only to wake up three hours later. As Fig. 12 shows, it is particularly middle-aged and older adults not living in a family household who unintentionally fall asleep on the sofa at least once a week. Italian-speaking Switzerland also leads the way when it comes to unplanned naps. It is everyday moments like these that show just how easy people in Switzerland find it to switch off at home. When you can relax enough to lose track of time, home has truly become a place to unwind.

Fig. 12

Unintentionally falling asleep on the sofa

"How often do you fall asleep on the sofa when you didn't intend to?" The figure shows the proportion of respondents who unintentionally fall asleep on the sofa at least once a week.



2.3 One last check

Just like coming home, leaving the house marks a transition between two worlds. Two habits stand out in particular: almost everyone in Switzerland (93%) locks the door when they go out, while the vast majority (85%) switch off all the lights before leaving. Checking the weather before heading out (36%) and making one final check around the home (30%) are far less common. During that final check, almost one in five specifically makes sure the cooker is switched off. In many ways, leaving home is the reverse of the routine when people arrive. On returning home, they bring their living space to life; before leaving, they deliberately shut things down.

Fig. 13

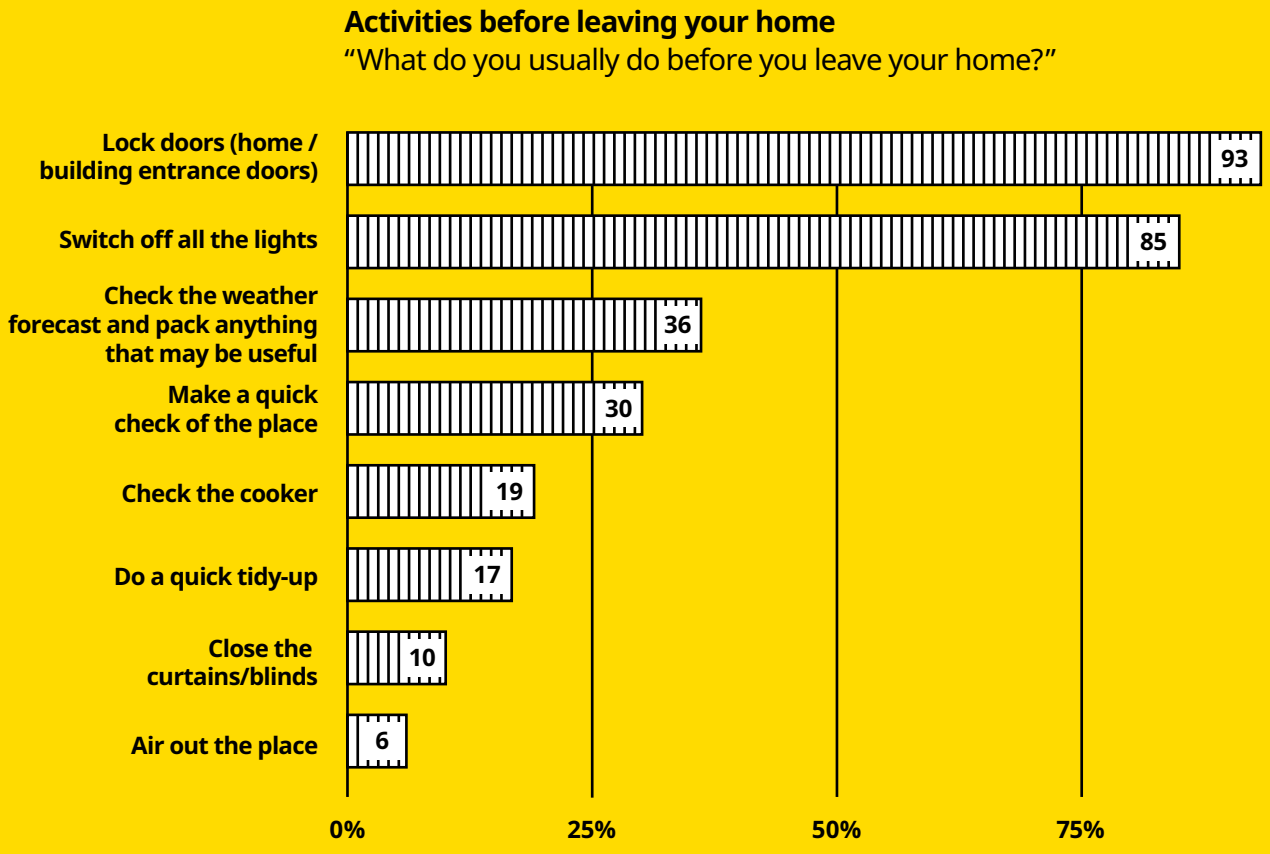


Fig. 14

Checking the weather forecast before leaving – by type of residential area
"What do you usually do before you leave your home?" –
Answer: "Check the weather forecast and pack anything that may be useful"

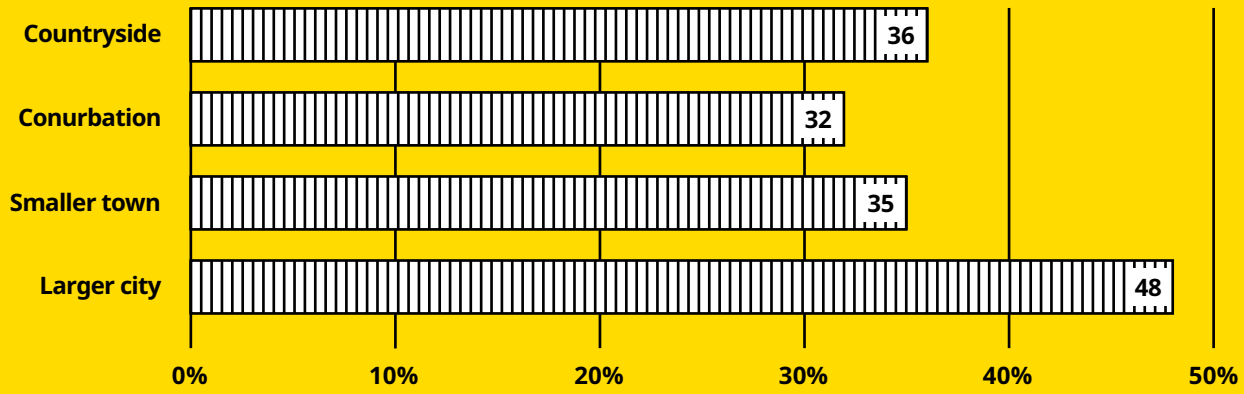
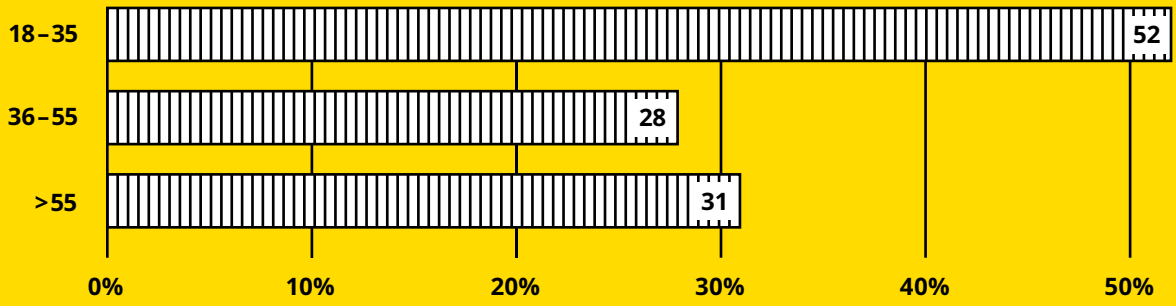


Fig. 15

Check weather forecast before leaving – by age
"What do you usually do before you leave your home?" –
Answer: "Check the weather forecast and pack anything that may be useful"

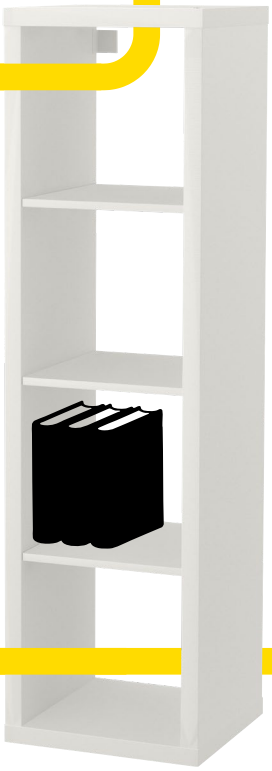


Clear differences emerge when it comes to checking the weather depending on where people live. Almost half of those in larger cities (48%) check the forecast before heading out, compared with around a third in other types of residential area (Fig. 14). One possible explanation is that people in large cities are more likely to travel on foot, by bike or by public transport, leaving them more exposed to the weather than those who mainly travel by car.

The differences are not limited to where people live; age also plays a role. More than half of younger respondents check a weather app before leaving the house, compared with around 30% among older respondents. This suggests that digital natives are more accustomed to quickly checking the weather on their phone than older generations. At least among younger people, checking the phone seems to have replaced looking out of the window.

3

A place for everything



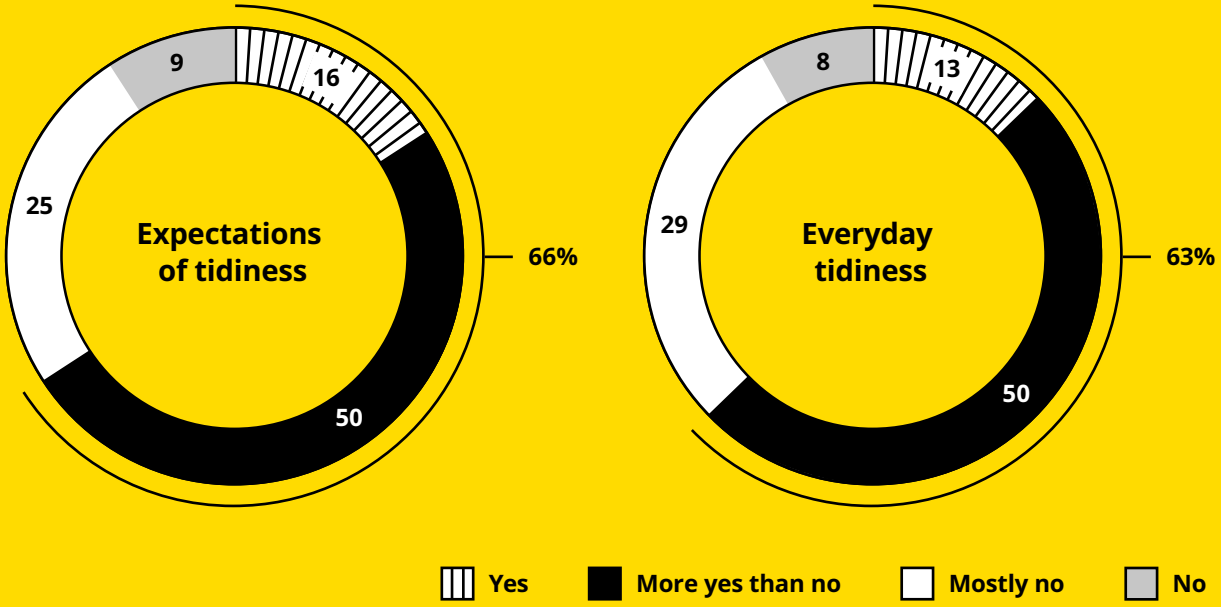
In Switzerland, tidiness is more than an aspiration. It plays an important part in how people feel at home. From the living room to the food cupboard, almost everything has its own place. Yet even the tidiest homes have corners where things pile up and moments when keeping everything in order becomes a challenge. This chapter explores how tidying contributes to well-being, which foods people always make sure to have in stock and how even recycling and waste form part of the way they keep their homes organised.

3.1 Tidying up to feel good

Tidiness plays a central role in well-being. Almost two thirds of respondents only feel comfortable at home when everything is tidy and nothing is left lying around. And for almost as many, that is how their homes actually look from day to day (Fig. 16). There is little difference between expectation and reality. In Switzerland, a tidy home is not an unattainable ideal but part of everyday life.

Fig. 16

Expectations of tidiness versus everyday reality
Expectations: "Do you only feel comfortable at home when everything is very tidy and there is nothing lying around?"
Everyday reality: "And what is your home usually like day to day? Is everything very tidy, with nothing lying around?"



Six out of ten respondents do a thorough tidy-up at least once a week. Half also frequently take a more improvised approach, quickly tidying things away without following a particular system (Fig. 17). Both are part of everyday life. This quick-fix approach is not necessarily a sign of carelessness, but often a practical complement to more systematic tidying.

In Switzerland, tidiness is not seen as an unattainable ideal, but as a natural part of everyday life.

Fig. 17

Systematic and quick-fix tidying

Systematic: "How often do you systematically tidy up at home?"
Quick-fix: "How often do you quickly put things out of sight instead of systematically tidying up (e.g. putting everything in the bedroom or utility room)?"
The figure shows the proportion of respondents who tidy up in each of these ways at least once a week.

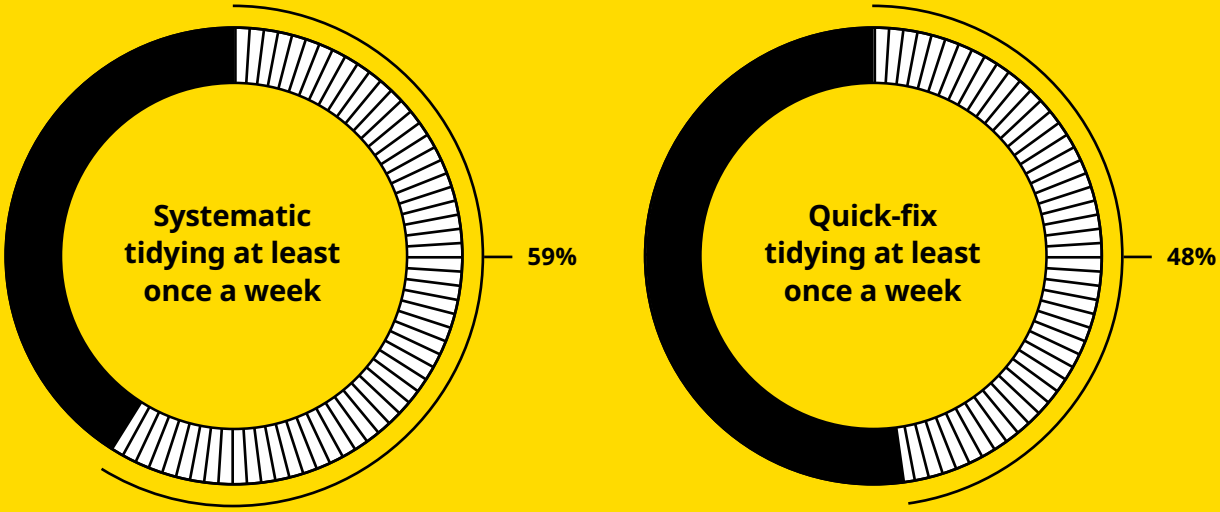
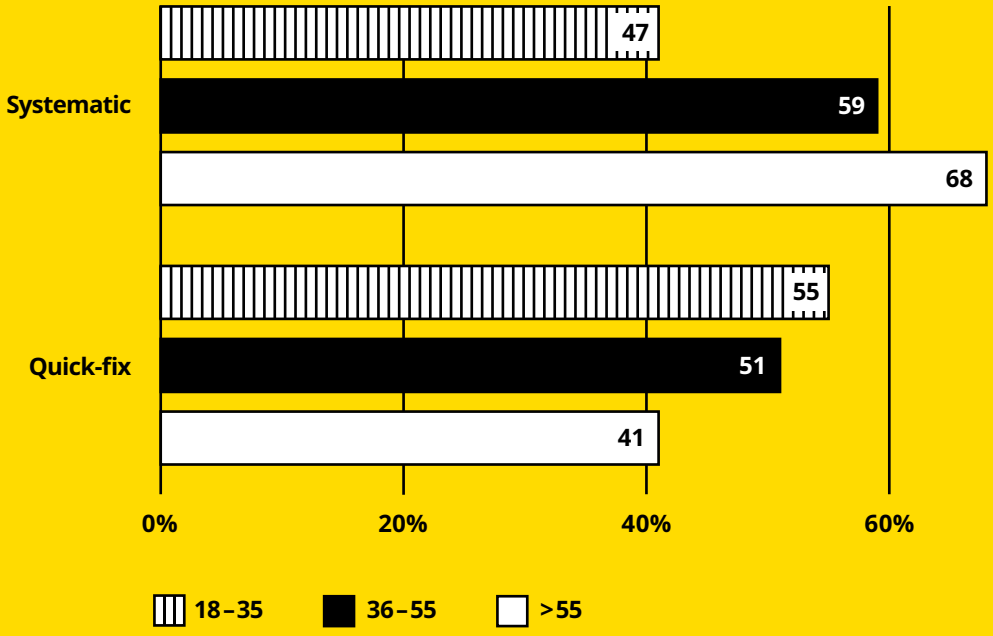


Fig. 18

Tidying – by age

"How often do you quickly put things out of sight instead of tidying up systematically?" and "How often do you systematically tidy up at home?"
The figure shows the proportion of respondents who tidy up in each of these ways at least once a week.



These habits shift with age. Among 18- to 35-year-old respondents, the quick-fix approach is more common. More than half opt for a speedy solution at least once a week; meanwhile, the systematic approach is less common. Among those over 55, the picture is reversed: more than two thirds tidy systematically every week, while only around four in ten do it on an impromptu basis (Fig. 18). Despite these insights, the jury is still out on whether people change the way they tidy as they get older or whether we are simply seeing two generations with fundamentally different habits. However, one thing is certain: younger people tend to restore order quickly, while older people appear more likely to take the time to do a thorough job.

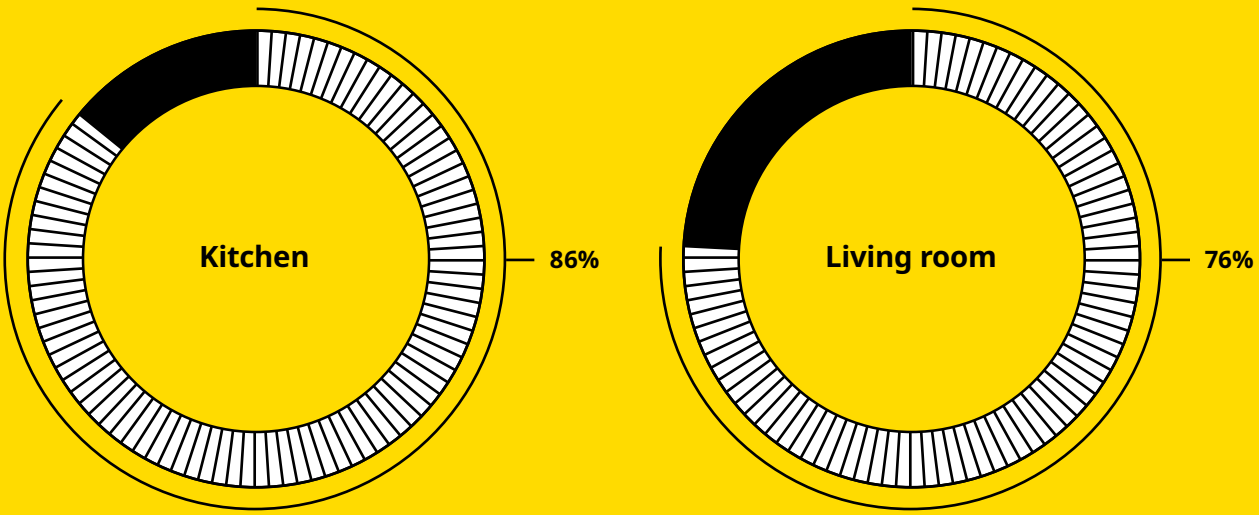
3.2 Everything has its place

Where are Swiss homes at their tidiest? The kitchen, a space used for cooking and other daily tasks, is where the desire for order is particularly apparent: 86% of respondents say that almost everything has a specific place here, compared with 76% for the living room (Fig. 19). This suggests that keeping things organised is simply part of everyday life in the rooms people use most.

Fig. 19

A designated place for everything

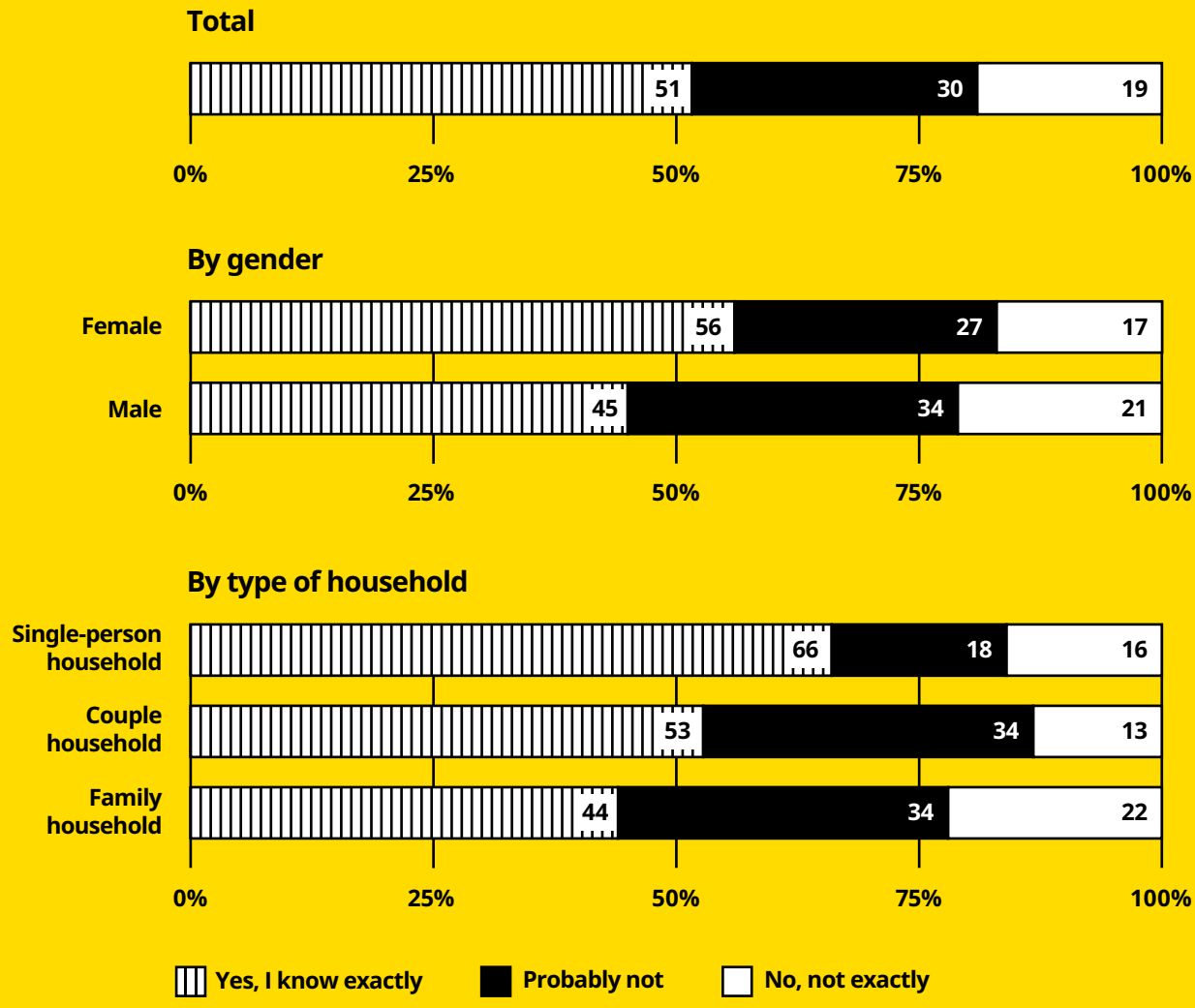
"Which of the following statements apply to [your kitchen / living room]?" The figure shows responses in the category "Almost everything has its own designated place".



Yet even a tidy kitchen has one area where it can be easy to lose track of things: the food cupboard. Only around half of respondents know exactly what foods they currently have at home. The other half are less sure (Fig. 20). There is a difference between men and women here. More than half of women know exactly what is in the food cupboard, compared with fewer than half of men.

Fig. 20

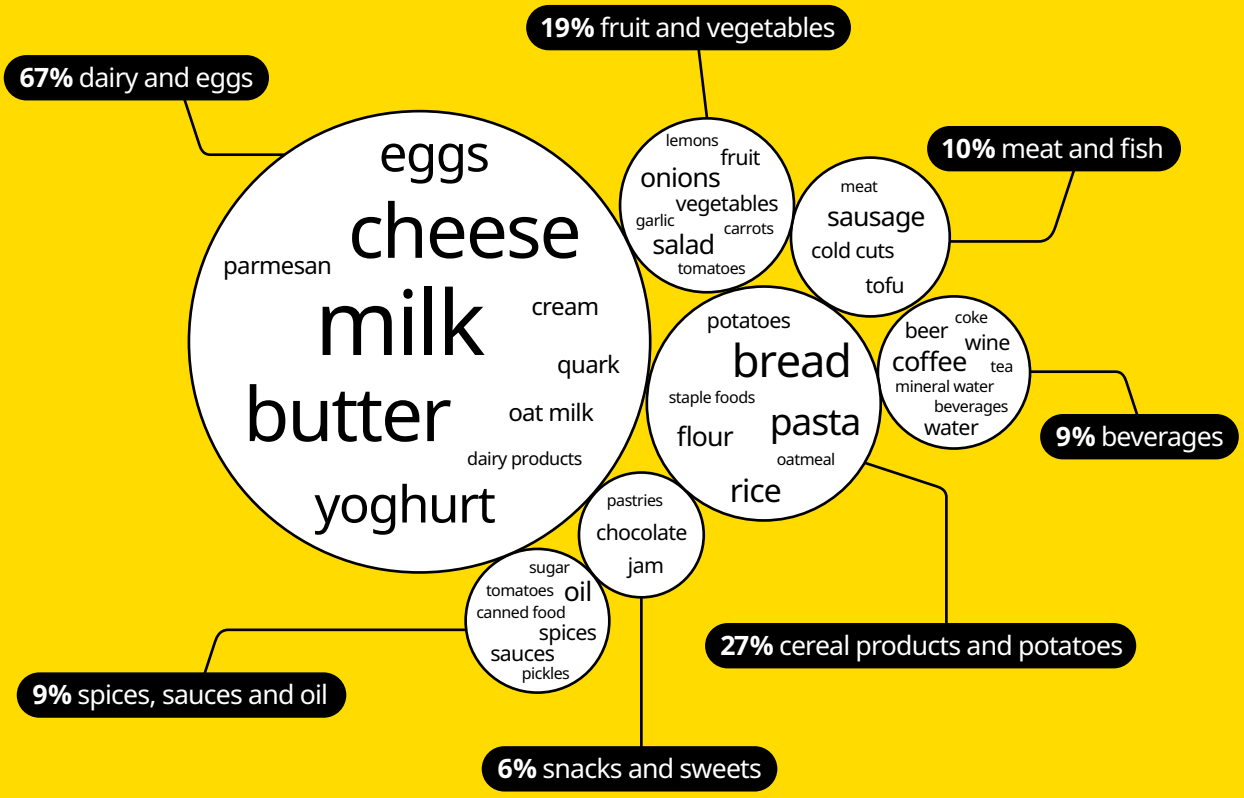
Knowing what food is in the home – by gender and household type
"Do you know exactly what food you currently have in your cupboards?"



Differences are even more pronounced between household types. Two thirds of people living alone know exactly what they have in stock, compared with fewer than half of those in family households (Fig. 20). As a household grows, so does both food consumption and the challenge of managing supplies. The more people share a home, the harder it becomes to keep track of what is already there.

Fig. 21

Food that is always in the home
"What food do you always make sure you have in your fridge or cupboards?" Open-ended responses grouped into categories, limited to three responses per person.



So what can no well-stocked Swiss food cupboard or fridge be without? Dairy products such as milk, butter and cheese are mentioned most often. Despite being on the perishable side, these products are important enough to respondents to be replenished regularly. This is followed by other staple foods such as bread, pasta and rice. Beverages, spices, meat and sweets are cited less often. While some products form part of the everyday essentials, others are more likely to be bought as and when they are needed or desired (Fig. 21).

Fig. 22

Where recyclable waste is stored

"Where do you collect most of your recyclable waste?" – by type of housing

	Home ownership	Condominium	Rental apartment
In the kitchen	21	40	47
In the basement/attic	38	19	18
On the balcony/terrace	9	34	23
In the utility/storage room	23	14	14
In the garage	26	3	2
I usually take it out straight away	4	4	6
I generally don't separate my waste	1	1	3

Where there is shopping, there is waste. Switzerland is one of the world's leading recycling countries, with particularly high recycling rates for glass, aluminium cans and PET bottles.[1] Waste separation is almost universal in Switzerland, regardless of the type of home people live in. Where this recyclable waste is collected within the home, however, varies considerably (Fig. 22). People who own their own house often keep recyclable waste outside the main living area, namely in the basement or attic. This keeps it away from the rooms they use day in, day out. In apartment buildings, however, the basement may be several floors away, making it impractical for collecting recyclables. For people living in rented or owner-occupied flats, the kitchen is therefore the most common choice. The findings are clear: almost all households in Switzerland are committed to separating their waste, but the layout of the home shapes how they manage it in practice.

1 https://www.aboutswitzerland.eda.admin.ch/en/nature-recycling

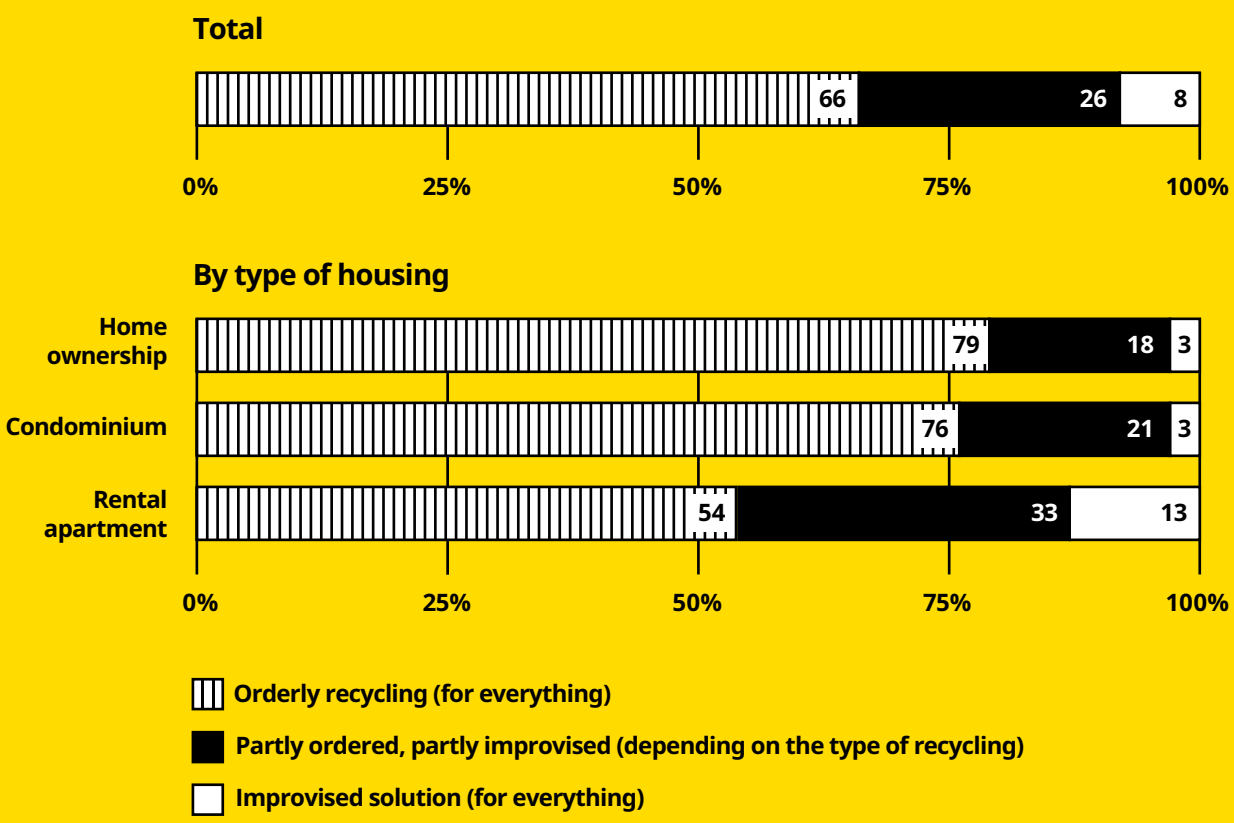
The layout of the home influences where recyclable waste is collected in everyday life.

Two thirds of respondents have an organised system for sorting all their recyclables (Fig. 23). Instead of ending up in a random bag behind the kitchen door, glass, aluminium and PET each have a container of their own. This is particularly common among people living in houses or owner-occupied apartments, with more than three quarters of both groups having a structured recycling system. In rental apartments, too, more than half have an organised solution for all their recyclables. A third improvise from time to time, while 13% have no system at all. So even when it comes to recycling, the same principle applies: in Swiss homes, everything has its right place.

Fig. 23

Recycling system

"How do you collect your recyclable waste?" – by type of housing



4

Hidden corners

For people in Switzerland, tidiness is a matter of principle. Yet there are still places and things that get left for another day. Look closely and you'll find them in every home: the overflowing junk drawer, the chair piled with clothes or the basement that has been waiting years for a clear-out.

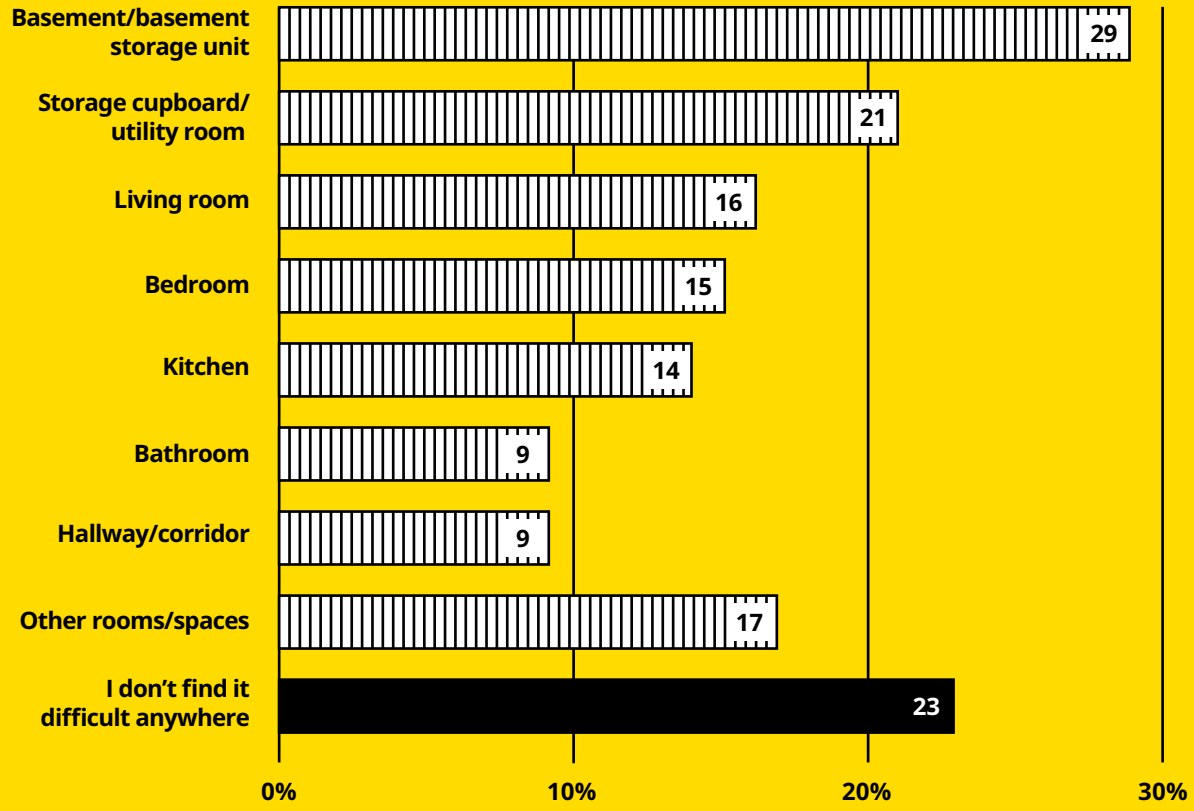
4.1 Where the clutter hides

Almost every household has rooms where keeping things reasonably tidy can be a challenge. These are usually not the spaces where everyday life happens, but those that are tucked away out of sight. The basement presents the biggest challenge. More than a quarter of respondents find it particularly difficult to keep things tidy (Fig. 24), while around a fifth say the same of their storage cupboard or utility room. The living room, bedroom and kitchen, by contrast, are each a challenge for only around 15%. The message is clear: clutter tends to gather where other people won't see it.

Fig. 24

Areas that are difficult to keep tidy

"In which rooms or areas do you find it particularly difficult to keep reasonably tidy?"



Chaos tends to gather where not everyone can see it.

Fig. 25

Putting off tidying up

"What kinds of things often make you think, 'I'll clean it up later'?"

	Total	18–35	36–55	>55
Documents/post	52	69	51	42
Digital/files (e.g. photos, music, emails)	43	53	42	37
Worn clothing	24	37	21	19
Suitcase/travel bag (after a holiday)	18	33	13	10
Used dishes	11	20	10	7
Sports/leisure equipment	11	15	14	5
Shopping	5	7	5	4
None	19	5	18	29

And it isn't only certain rooms that attract clutter. Some things are particularly prone to piling up, too (Fig. 25). For example, documents and post tend to accumulate for around half of respondents. The same is true in the digital realm, where files, photos and emails are also frequently left unsorted. It is often the things that require a response (rather than to simply be put away) that get left for later. By contrast, dirty dishes and shopping are usually dealt with straight away. Some respondents, however, rarely put things off. Almost a third of people over the age of 55 say they prefer not to put anything off until later. The picture is very different among younger respondents: almost seven in ten 18- to 35-year-old respondents regularly put off dealing with documents and post.

Worn clothes don't always get put away straight away either, though this isn't necessarily down to procrastination. Clothes that might be worn again are deliberately set aside instead of going straight into the laundry or back into the wardrobe. The "clothes chair" tends to be where such items end up. More than half of respondents put worn items of clothing on a chair or armchair (Fig. 26), while a quarter uses a clothes ladder. Only one in ten people puts their clothes directly back into the wardrobe. Those with a clothes chair have an average of three to four items on it – around three for men and four for women (Fig. 27). Once again, even things that are not put away properly in Swiss homes have a designated place.

Fig. 26

Where worn clothes end up

"Where do you put clothes that you have already worn but might want to wear again?"

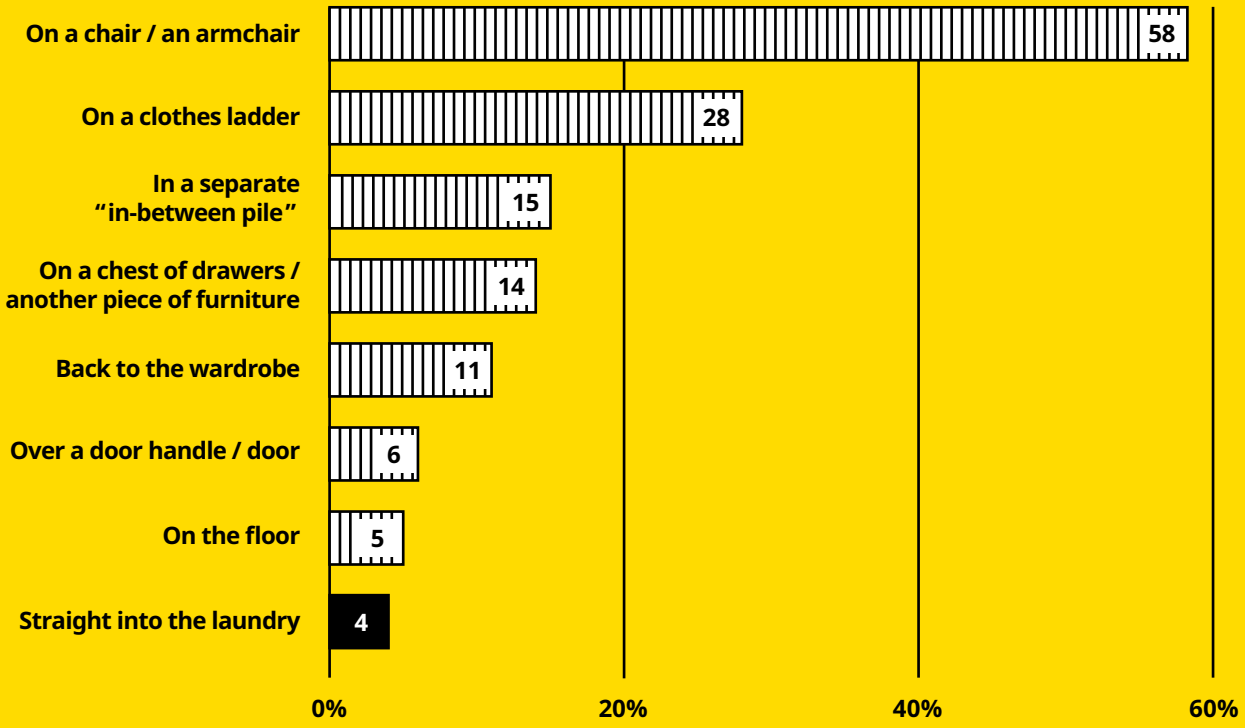
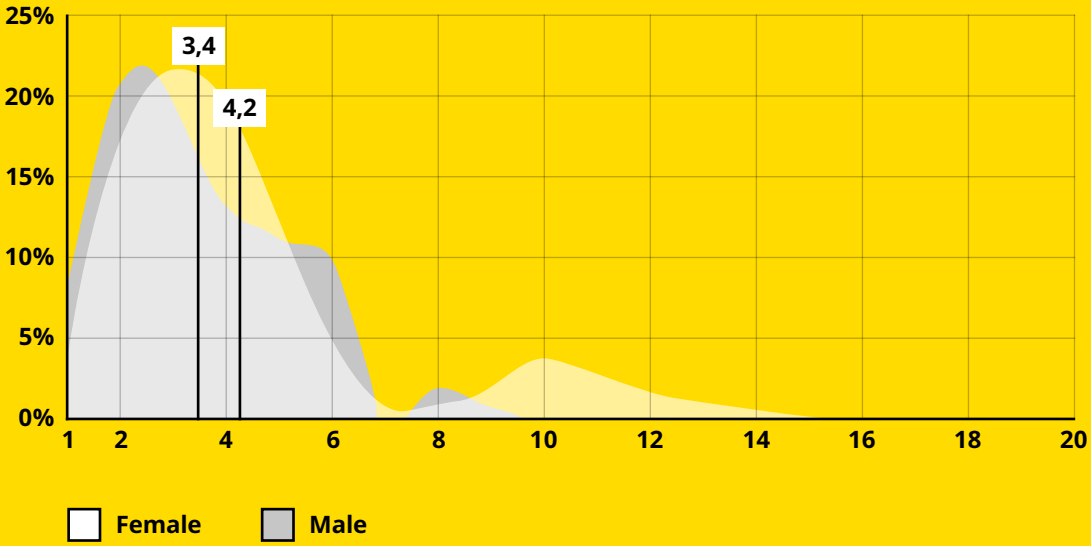


Fig. 27

Number of items of clothing waiting to be worn again

"How many items of clothing are usually on the 'clothes chair'?"

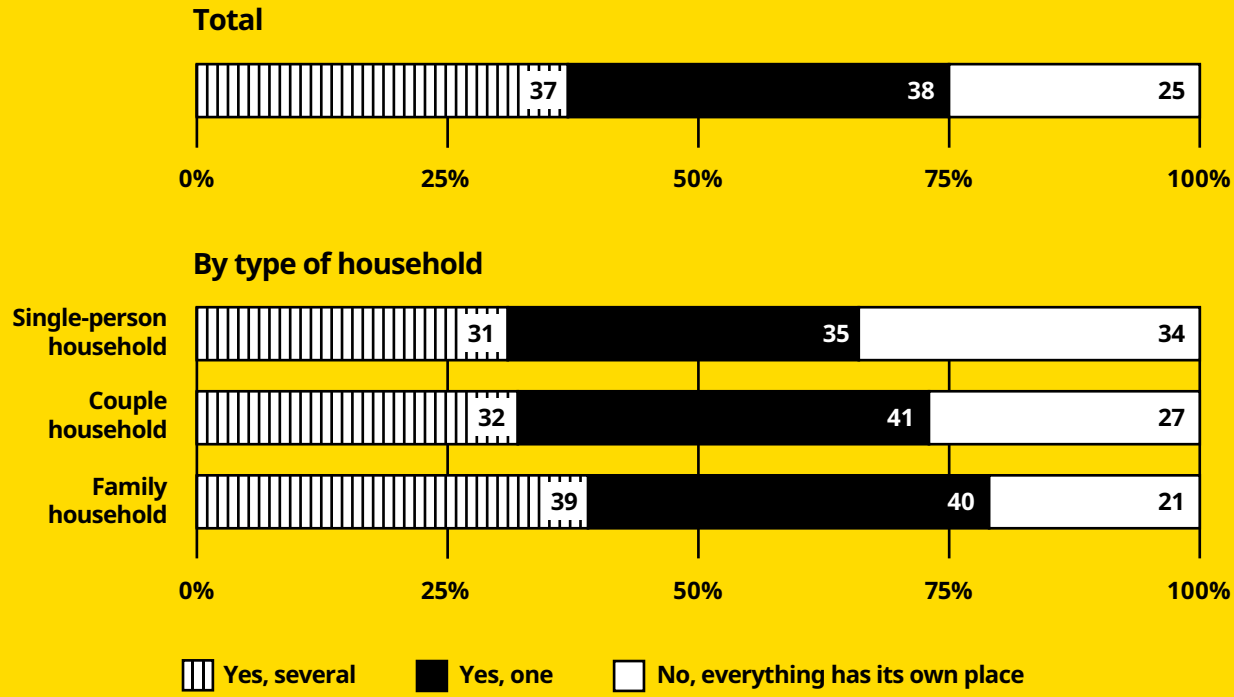


Alongside the clothes chair, many homes have a special spot for things that don't fit anywhere else: the junk drawer. Three quarters of respondents have one – it serves as a home for all the odds and ends that don't quite belong anywhere else (Fig. 28). More than a third of respondents even have multiple junk drawers, some of which become so full that closing them again can be a challenge in itself. These are particularly common in family households. The message is clear: the more people share a home, the more likely it is that a few things will escape the usual order.

Fig. 28

Junk drawer

"Do you have a 'junk drawer' for bits and pieces such as batteries, cables, etc.?"



The junk drawer is not a sentimental archive, but a practical tool.

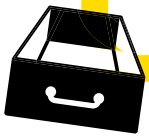
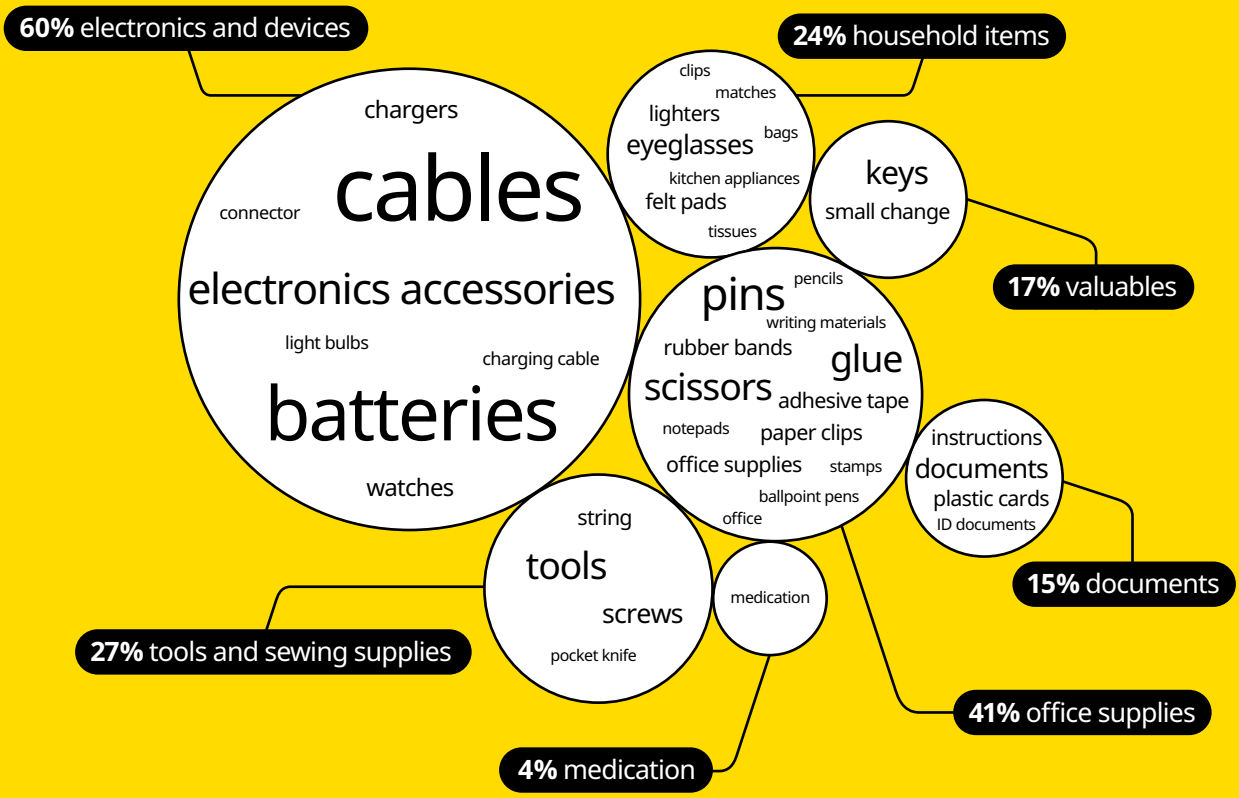


Fig. 29

Junk drawer – contents
"What is in your junk drawer?"
Open-ended responses grouped into categories,
limited to three responses per person.



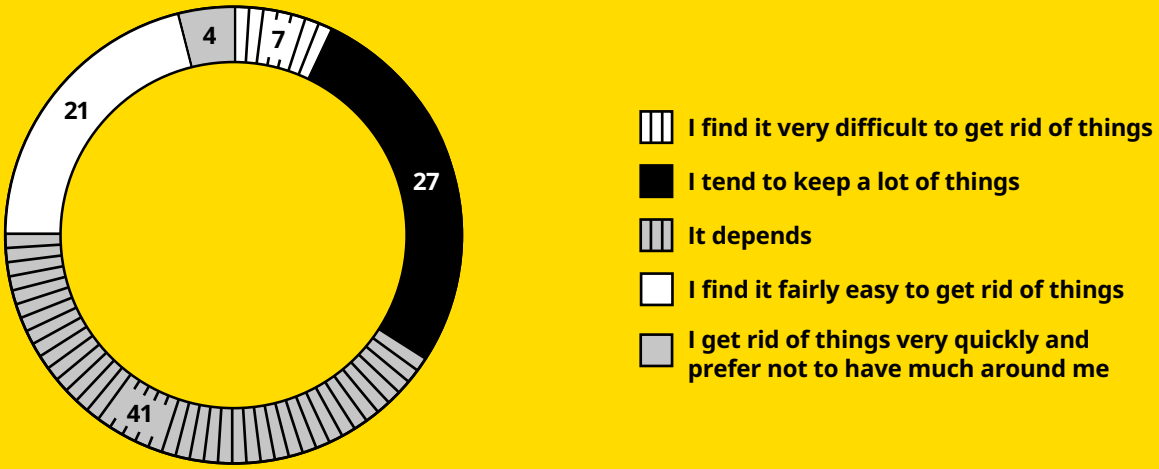
So what ends up in these drawers? Batteries and cables lead the list, followed by stationery, small change and keys. You won't find keepsakes here, though: the junk drawer is very much a practical solution to everyday clutter, not an archive for memories. In short, it is a clearly defined space where even people in Switzerland allow themselves a little disorder and clutter. Whether any of the things kept there will ever actually come in useful again is another question (Fig. 29).

4.2 Dusty treasures

People in Switzerland do not part with their possessions lightly. Just over a third say they tend to keep a lot of things, while only a quarter find it easy to let things go (Fig. 30).

Fig. 30

Keeping vs throwing away
"What best describes you?"

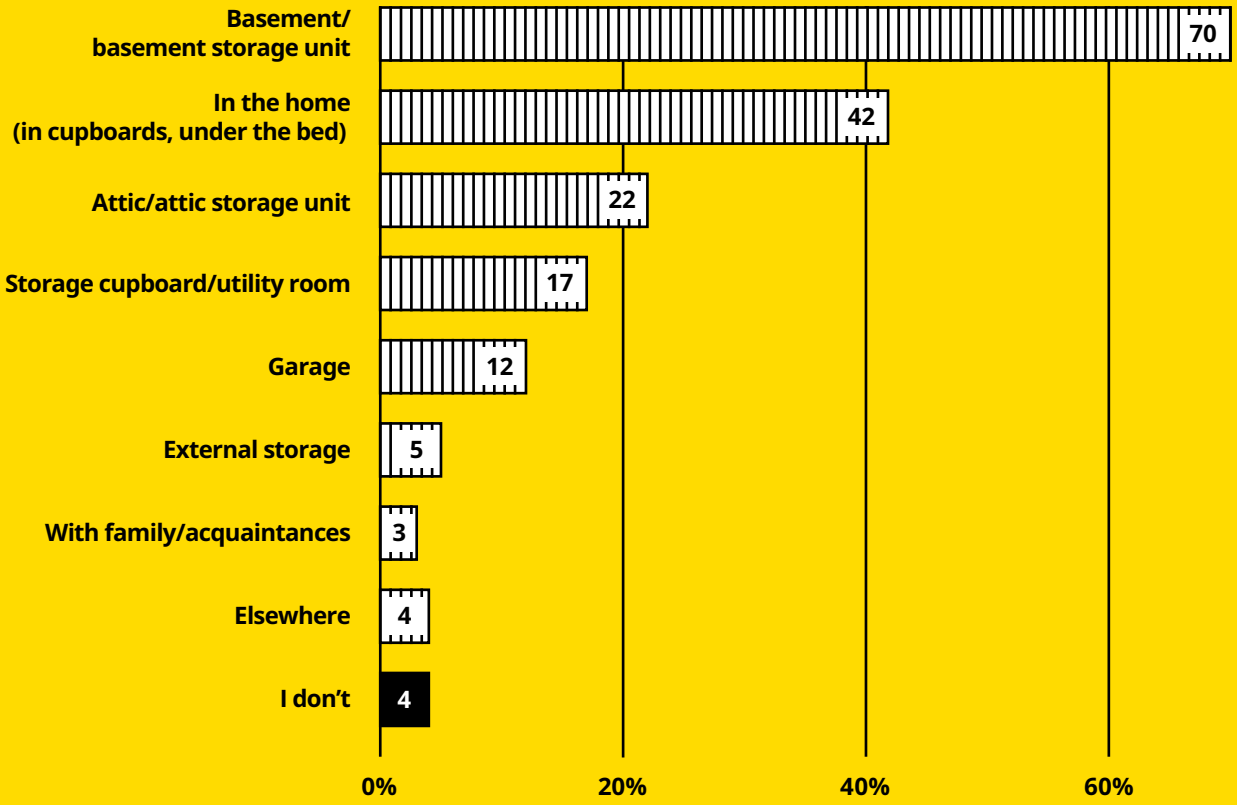


What is hard to let go of moves out of sight and into hiding.

Fig. 31

Where rarely used items are stored

"Where do you store things that you rarely or never use?"



This isn't to say respondents hoard items indiscriminately. Items that are rarely used tend to disappear into the storage room or basement (Fig. 31). It is hardly surprising, then, that more than half of respondents say their basement contains things they rarely or never use. Almost as many say the same of their wardrobe: behind closed doors, right in the middle of the bedroom, lies something of a second basement (Fig. 32).

Seasonal items, empty packaging kept just in case, photo albums with little practical use but with great sentimental value: all these things are tucked away so the visible parts of the home can remain comfortable and uncluttered (Fig. 33).

Fig. 32

Where rarely used items are kept

"Which of the following statements apply to [your basement/attic / wardrobe / kitchen / living room]?" The figure shows responses in the category "There are things I rarely or never use".

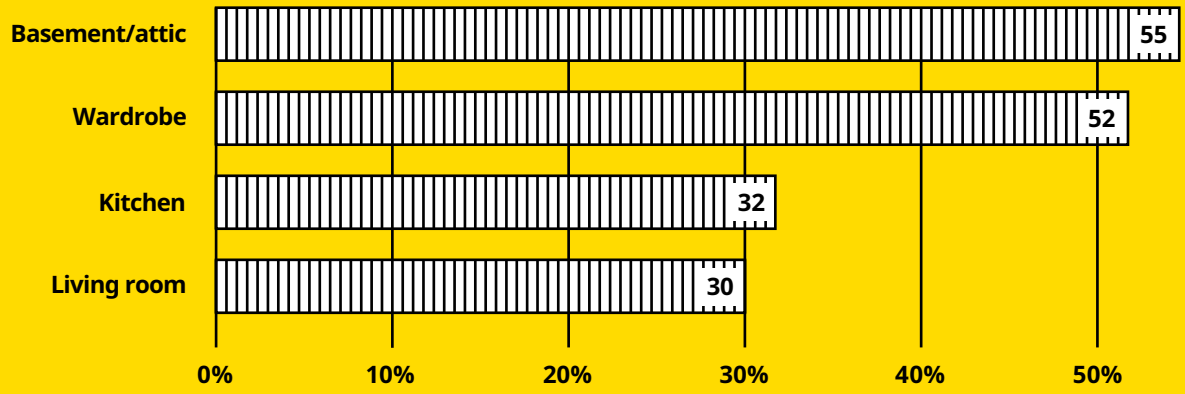
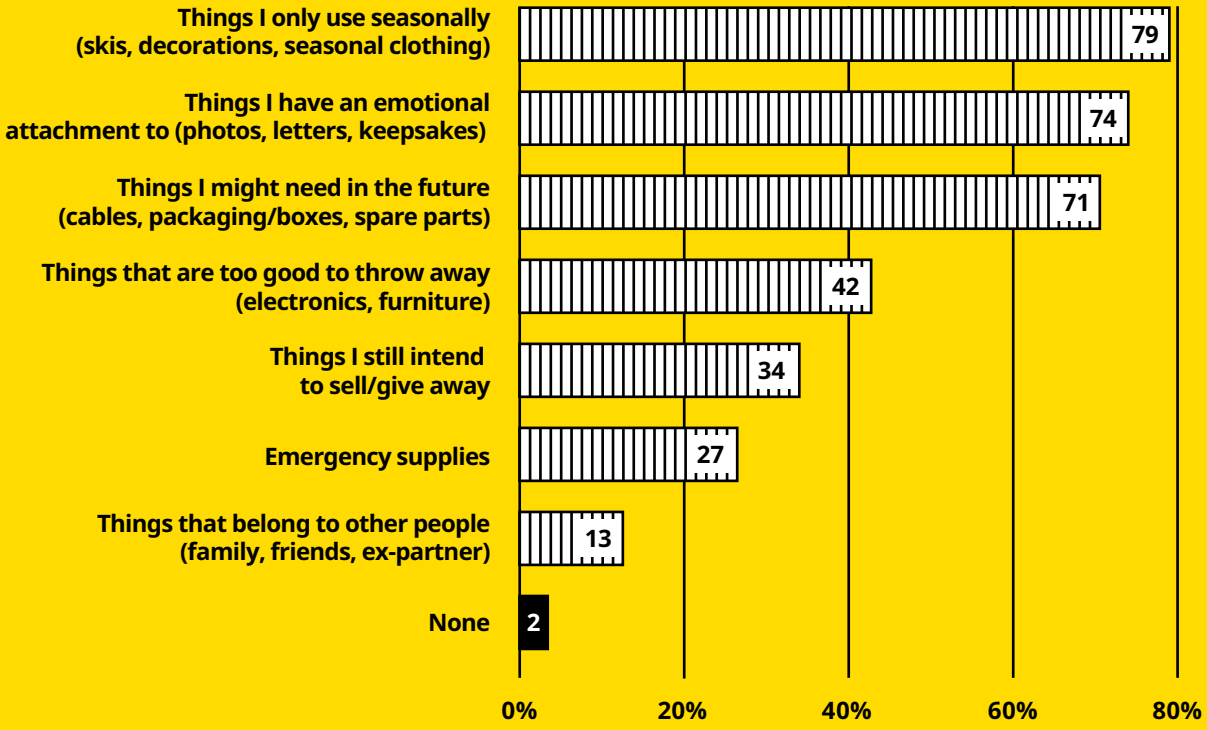


Fig. 33

Types of rarely used items in storage

"Which of the following things do you have in storage that you rarely use?"



Family households store a particularly wide range of things (Fig. 34). Seasonal items end up in storage for almost nine out of ten families. Items with sentimental value are also more likely to be kept in households with children than in single-person households. Every new family member, it seems, adds a little more to the household archive.

Fig. 34

Types of rarely used items in storage – by household type

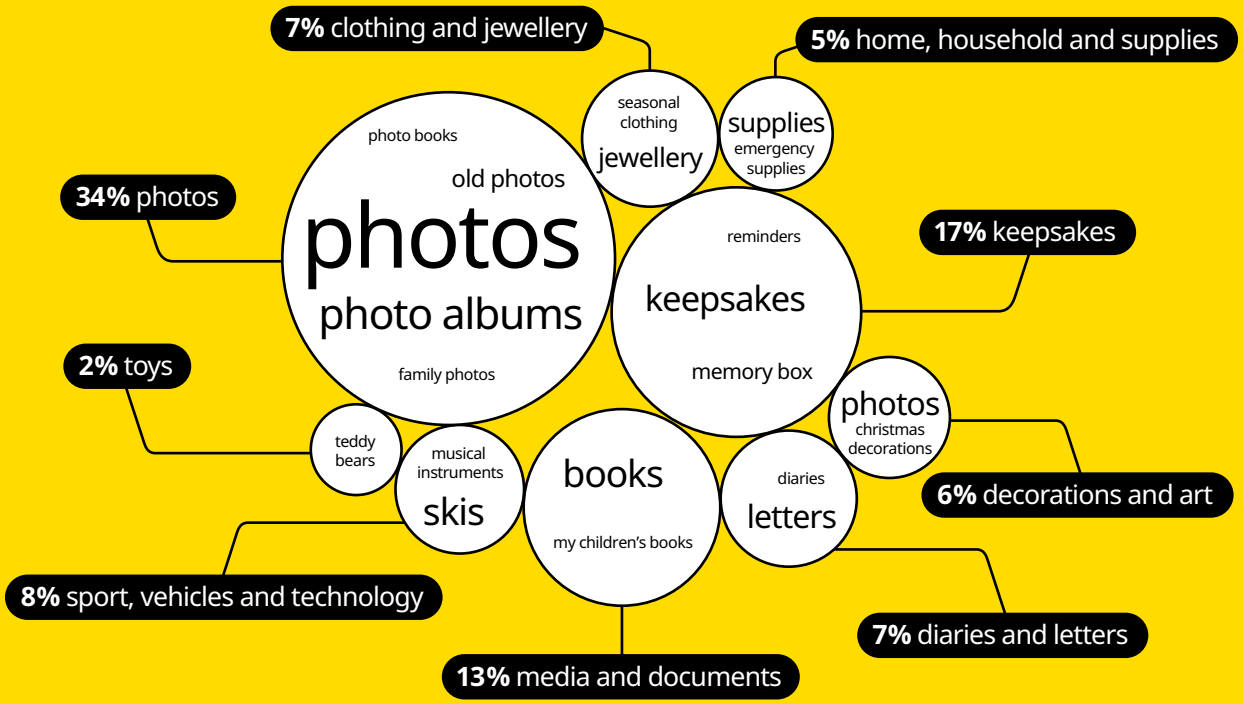
"Which of the following things do you have in storage that you rarely use?"

	Single-person household	Couple household	Family household
Things I only use seasonally	63	77	87
Things I am emotionally attached to	67	73	77
Things I might need in the future	71	64	74
Things that are too good to throw away	33	39	44
Things I still intend to sell/give away	21	27	42
Emergency supplies	25	27	24
Things that belong to other people	13	12	8

Yet for all the practical thinking that goes into what people in Switzerland choose to keep, sentiment still has its place. When asked about the most important personal items they have stashed away, respondents most often mention photos and mementos (Fig. 35). For most people in Switzerland, an object takes on particular importance when there is a personal story attached to it. A piece of jewellery, an item of clothing or a painting can serve the same purpose when it evokes memories of a person, an event or a personal passion. The line between a keepsake and something that is still in use can also be blurred. The same piece of jewellery, for example, can be both an heirloom and a favourite item worn every day.

Fig. 35

Items with particular personal significance
"Of the things you have in storage, is there one item that is particularly important to you personally?"
Open-ended responses grouped into categories, limited to one response per person.



Keepsakes themselves can preserve different kinds of memories: of people we love on the one hand and of personal events and experiences on the other. The two often overlap, but respondents' answers provide revealing examples of both.

Memories of loved ones

- My children's name tags from when they were born
- A watch my parents gave me for my 20th birthday
- A nativity scene handmade by my late brother
- Love letters from past relationships

Memories of personal events and experiences

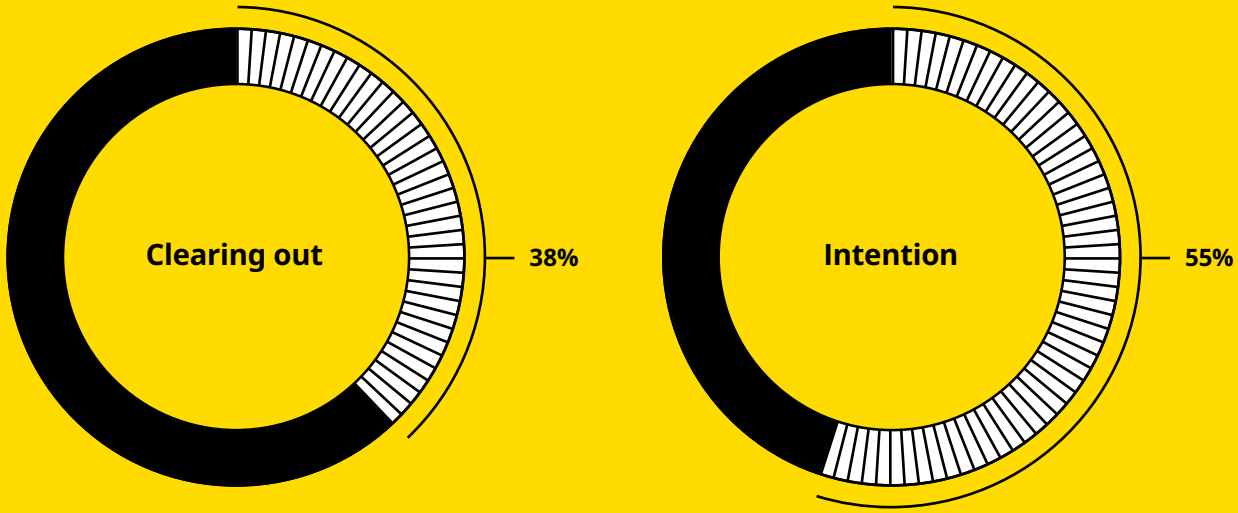
- An old train set from my childhood
- An old teddy bear from my early years
- Mementos from my travels
- The first item of clothing I bought with my first wage

Whether as a keepsake of a person or the memory of an experience: Swiss households make sure to hold on to such items, but rarely bring them out for all to see.

What goes into the basement usually stays in the basement. More than half of respondents intend to clear out their basement or attic at least once a year. Fewer than four in ten actually do so (Fig. 36).

Fig. 36

Clearing the basement or attic once a year: intention versus reality
Clearing out: "How often do you clear out your basement or attic and clear out everything you no longer need?"
Intention: "And how often do you intend to clear out your basement or attic?"
The figure shows the proportion of respondents who clear out their basement or attic, or intend to do so, at least once a year.

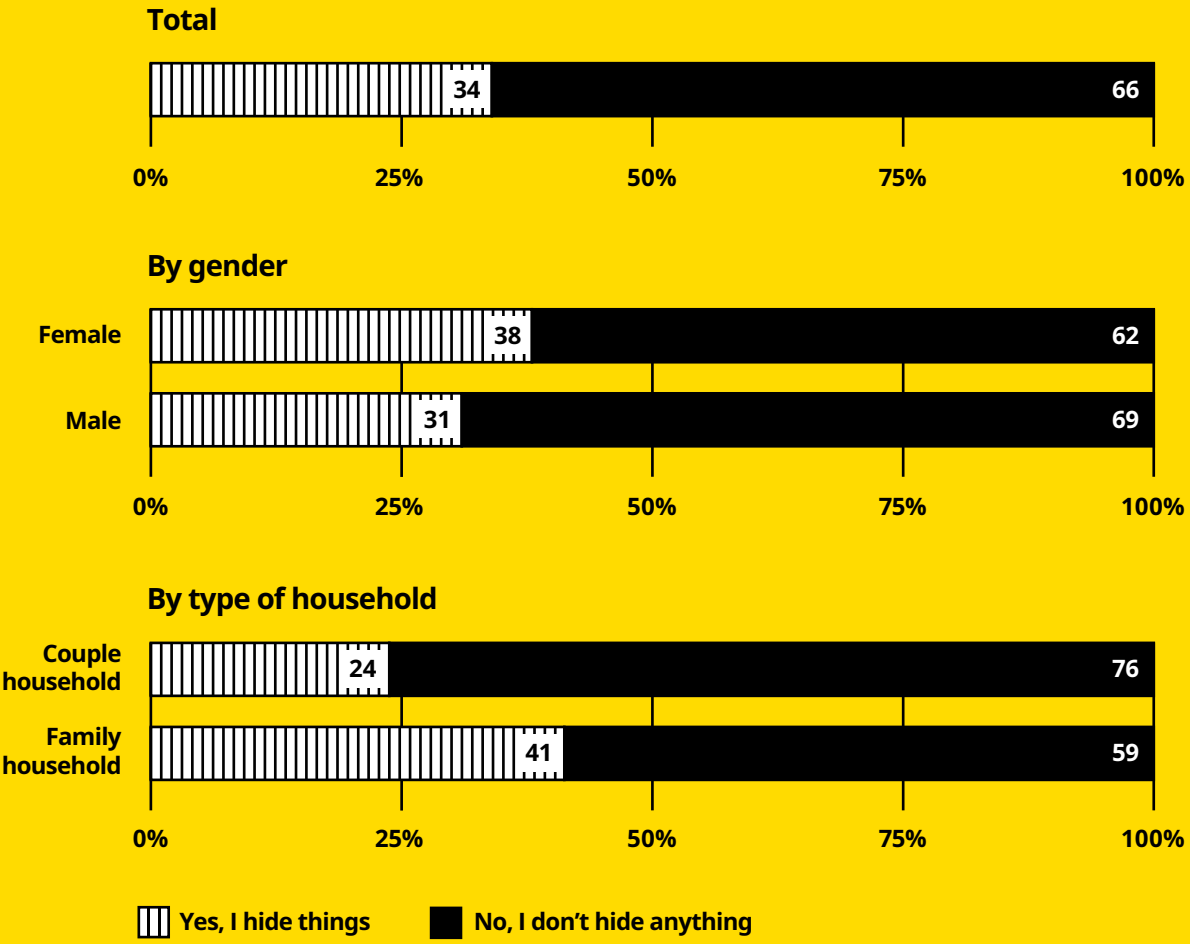


4.3 Things we keep hidden

Not everything that gets put away is stored for the sake of tidiness. Some things are deliberately hidden away from prying eyes. A third of respondents who live with others say they hide certain possessions from the people they live with (Fig. 37). In family households, this figure rises to more than four in ten. So while home is a shared space, it also has its areas of privacy.

Fig. 37

Hiding things from other people
"Are there things in your home that you hide from other people?"

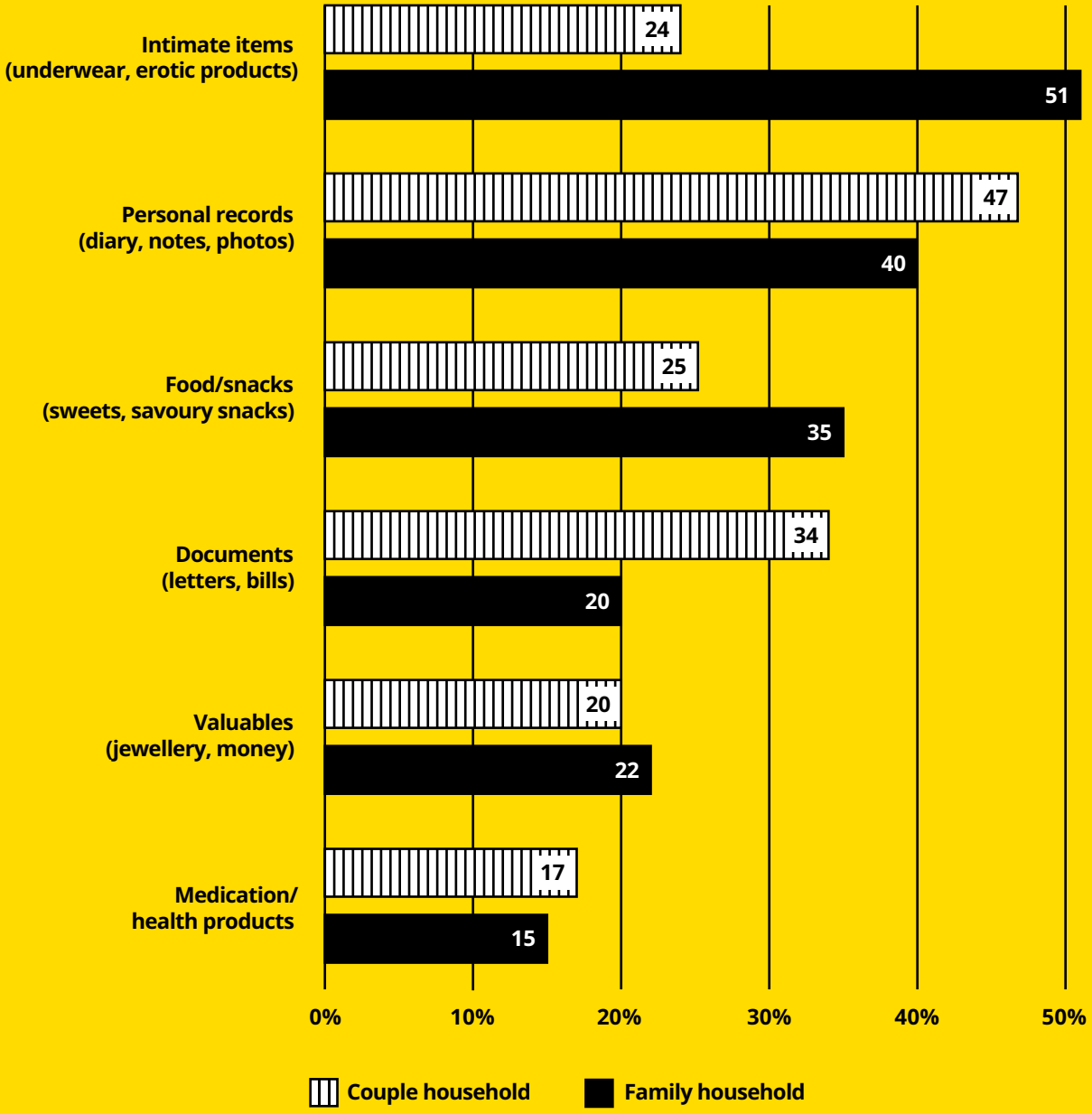


What people choose to hide also says a lot about living together. In couple households, personal records and documents are the things most often kept private. In family households, intimate items top the list, presumably because parents want to keep them away from their children (Fig. 38). The message is clear: the front door isn't the only boundary between what is public and what is private. Sometimes that boundary is simply an unassuming drawer in a chest of drawers.

Fig. 38

Things hidden away from other people

"Are there things in your home that you hide from other people?" – only respondents who did not answer "No, I don't hide anything"



5

Living together, staying organised

For many people in Switzerland, tidiness and cleanliness are as much a part of a good home as the keys to the front door. But everyone has their own wishes and needs. When several people live under the same roof, keeping things tidy becomes a matter of negotiation – and sometimes other measures are taken when those negotiations go nowhere.

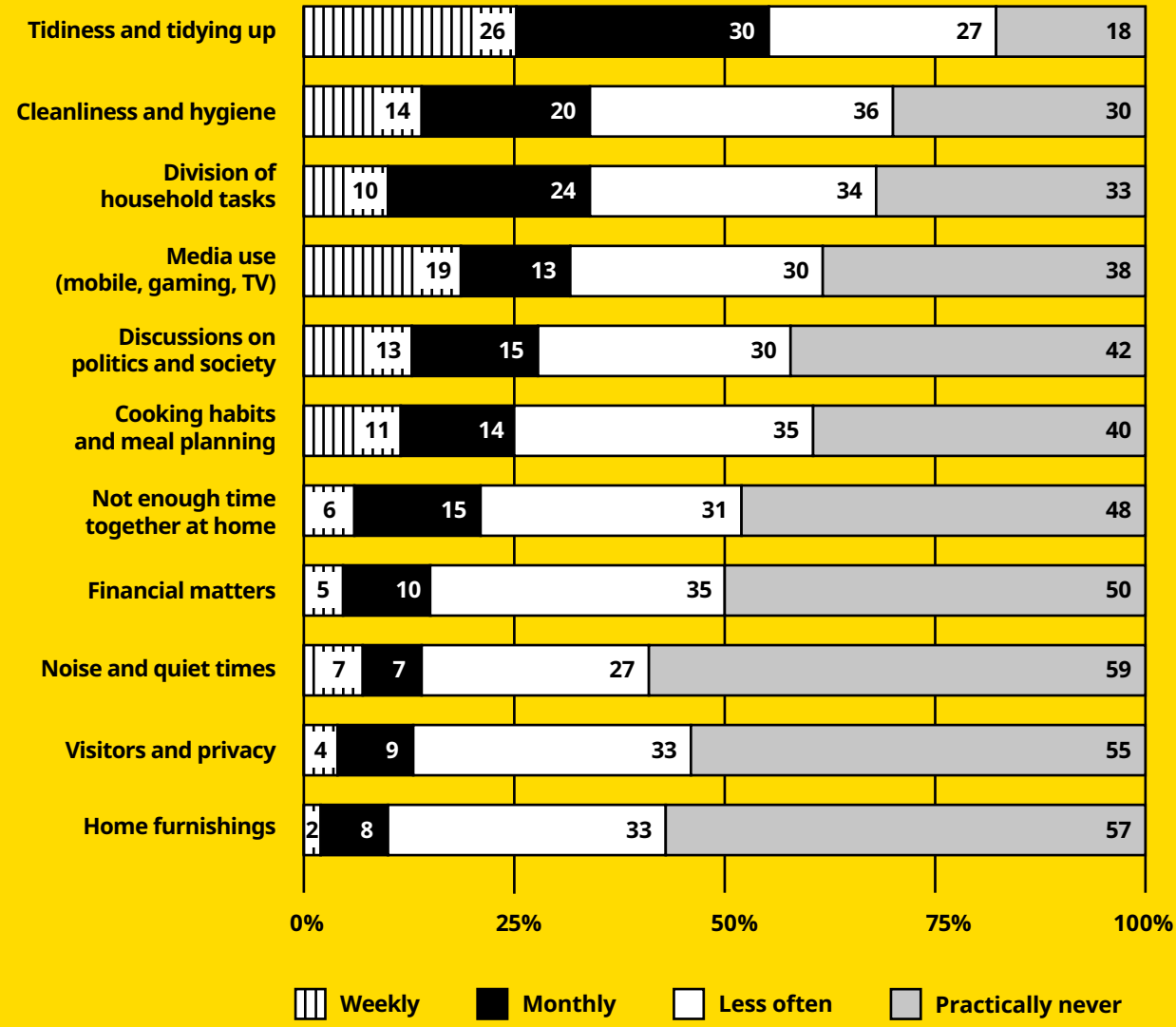
5.1 Everyone has their own idea of tidy

Switzerland's reputation for tidiness is more than just a cliché. So it is perhaps no surprise that this is also such a frequent source of conflict. Tidiness, or the lack of it, is by far the biggest cause of disagreement in Swiss households. Half of respondents experience tension over it at least once a month, while a quarter have to deal with this stress at least once a week (Fig. 39). The message is clear: the more importance people place on tidiness, the more likely they are to be bothered when others don't share the same standards.

Fig. 39

Sources of tension at home

"What issues sometimes cause tension at home?"



Tidiness – or the lack of it – is by far the biggest source of conflict.

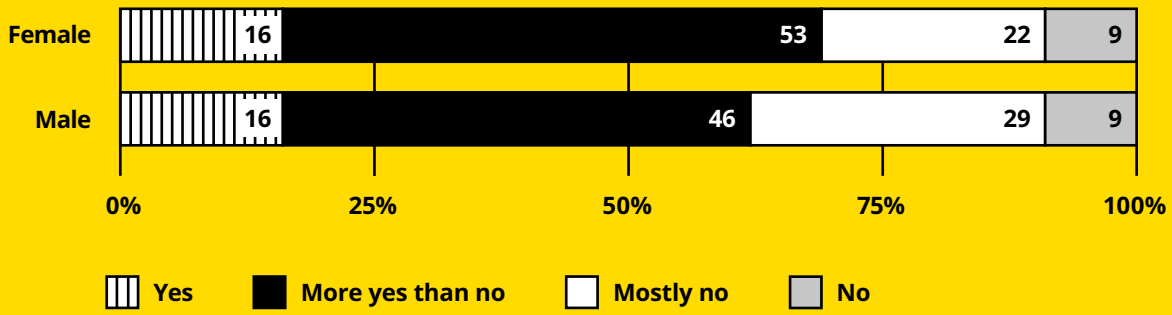
There are also differences between men and women in how untidiness affects their well-being. Whether or not the home is tidy has a greater impact on women than on men. More women than men say they only feel comfortable at home when everything is neatly put away and nothing is left lying around (Fig. 40). It seems that our tolerance towards untidiness is not simply a matter of personality, but also differs by gender.

Women who live alone are more likely to meet their own standards of tidiness, with little difference between how tidy they want their home to be and how tidy it actually is. The picture is somewhat different for women who live with a male partner. Their homes are less likely to be perfectly tidy from day to day than those of women who live alone (59% vs 67%). This cannot be attributed to their partner alone, particularly when children live in the same household. But the difference is striking: men appear to make fewer compromises on their own standards of tidiness when they move in with a woman. Their shared home is just as tidy as when they lived alone (Fig. 41). Moving in together means adapting, just not in equal measure.

Fig. 40

Expectations of tidiness – by gender

"Do you only feel comfortable at home when everything is very tidy and there is nothing lying around?"

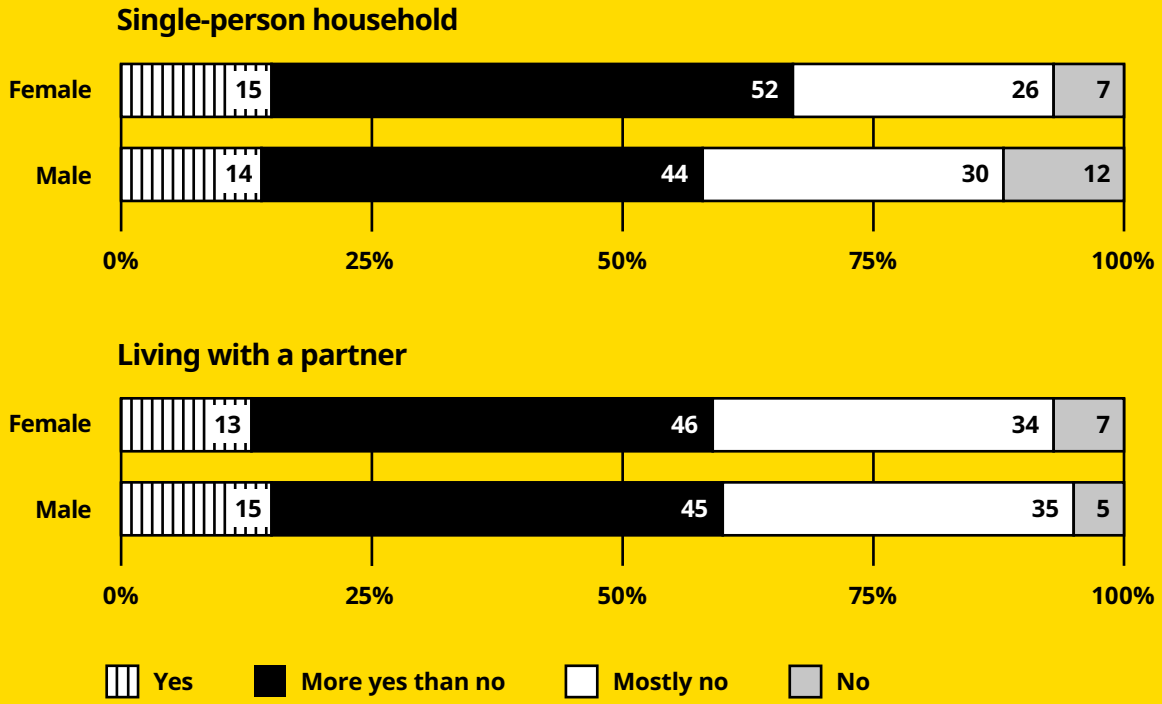


Men and women who live together have similar perceptions of how tidy their home is (Fig. 41). Where their views diverge is on who does the tidying. Two thirds of men believe they share the work equally. Most women see things differently. In their view, they are the ones doing most of it (Fig. 42). This may help explain why women find keeping a shared home tidy more frustrating.

Fig. 41

Everyday tidiness – by gender

"And what is your home usually like day to day? Is everything very tidy, with nothing lying around?"



Moving in together means adapting, but not necessarily to the same extent.

Fig. 42

Division of tidying up – among male-female couples living together

"Who does the following household tasks in your home?" – responses for "tidying up"

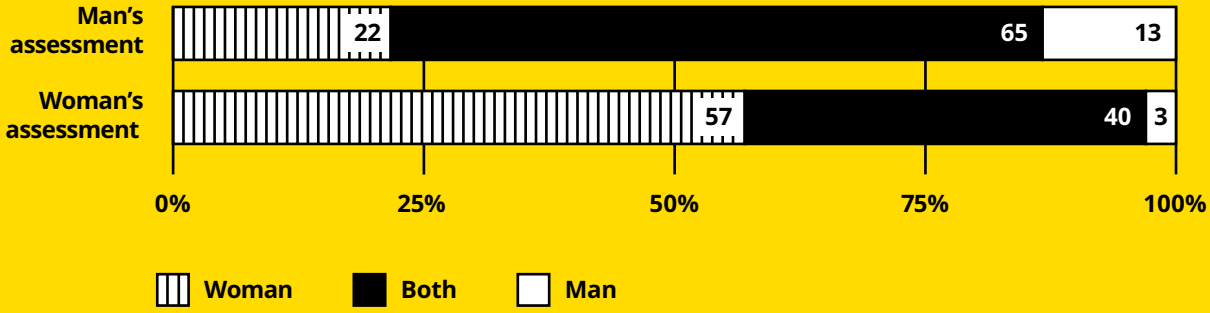
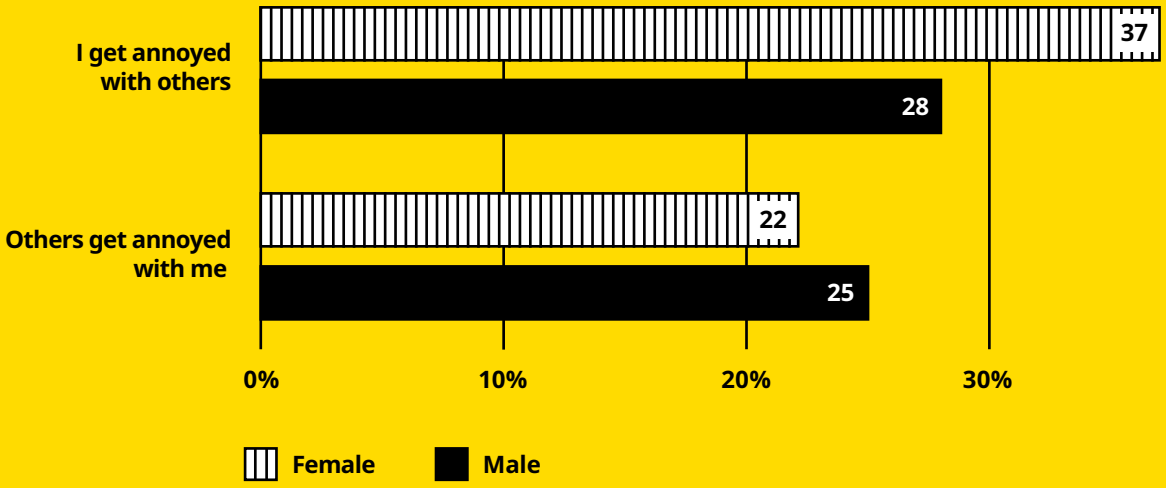


Fig. 43

Being bothered by other household members' tidiness (at least weekly) – by gender

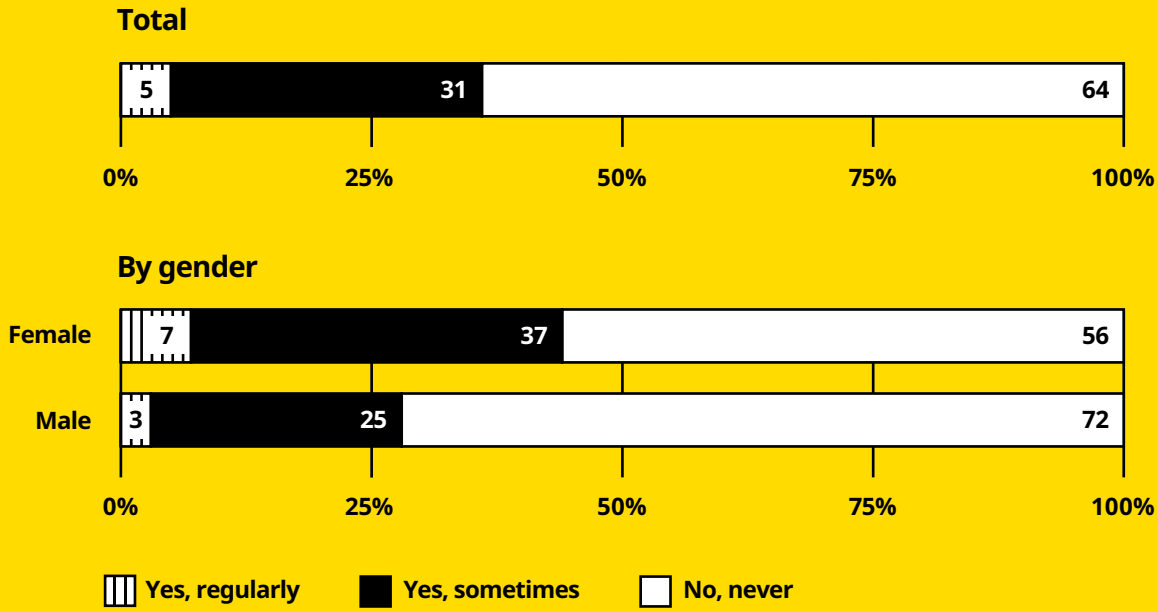
"How often are you bothered by how tidy or untidy other members of your household are?" and "And how often do you think other members of your household are bothered by how tidy or untidy you are?"



And the difference in perception has tangible consequences. Women are more likely to be bothered by other household members' untidiness than vice versa (Fig. 43), and are also more likely to have secretly thrown away other people's belongings because their owners were unwilling to part with them (Fig. 44). What looks from the outside like a harmonious approach to keeping things tidy may sometimes owe more to someone quietly taking matters into their own hands.

Fig. 44

Secretly getting rid of things – by gender
"Have you ever secretly thrown away or removed things belonging to other members of your household because they didn't want to part with them?"



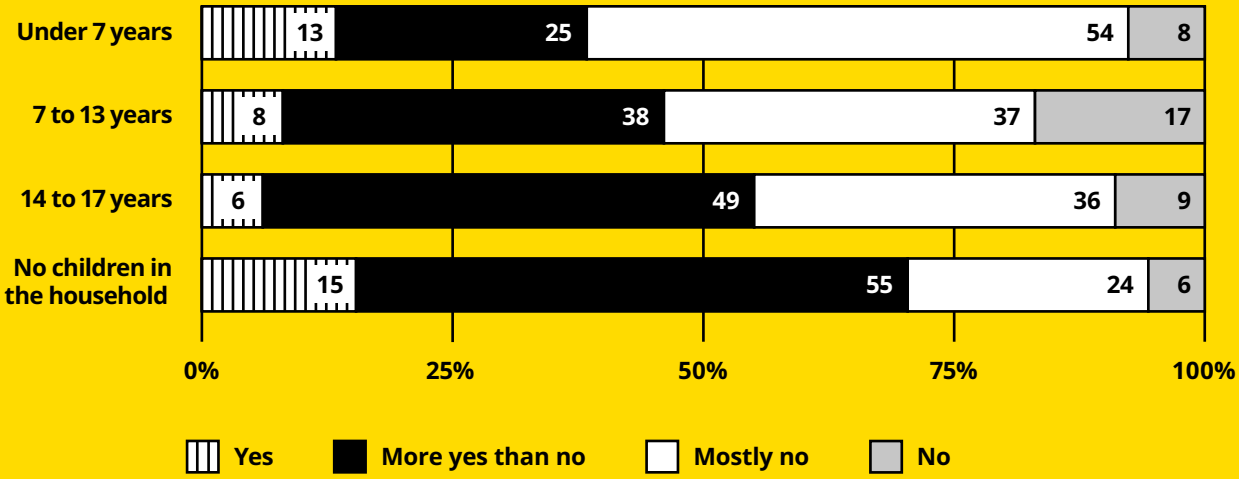
What looks like consensus may sometimes be the result of quiet initiative.

5.2 When toys take over

The Swiss ideal of a tidy home isn't always easy to live up to, especially for young parents. Almost two thirds of respondents with children under seven say their homes are often untidy (Fig. 45). As the children get older, however, order gradually returns. By the time the oldest children are between 14 and 17, most households look fairly tidy again – much like households without children. With children around, taking neatness for granted flies out the window. Despite all attempts to negotiate who does what, things can quickly get out of hand and only gradually settle down again as the years pass.

Fig. 45

Everyday tidiness – by age of oldest child
"And what is your home usually like day to day? Is everything very tidy, with nothing lying around?"

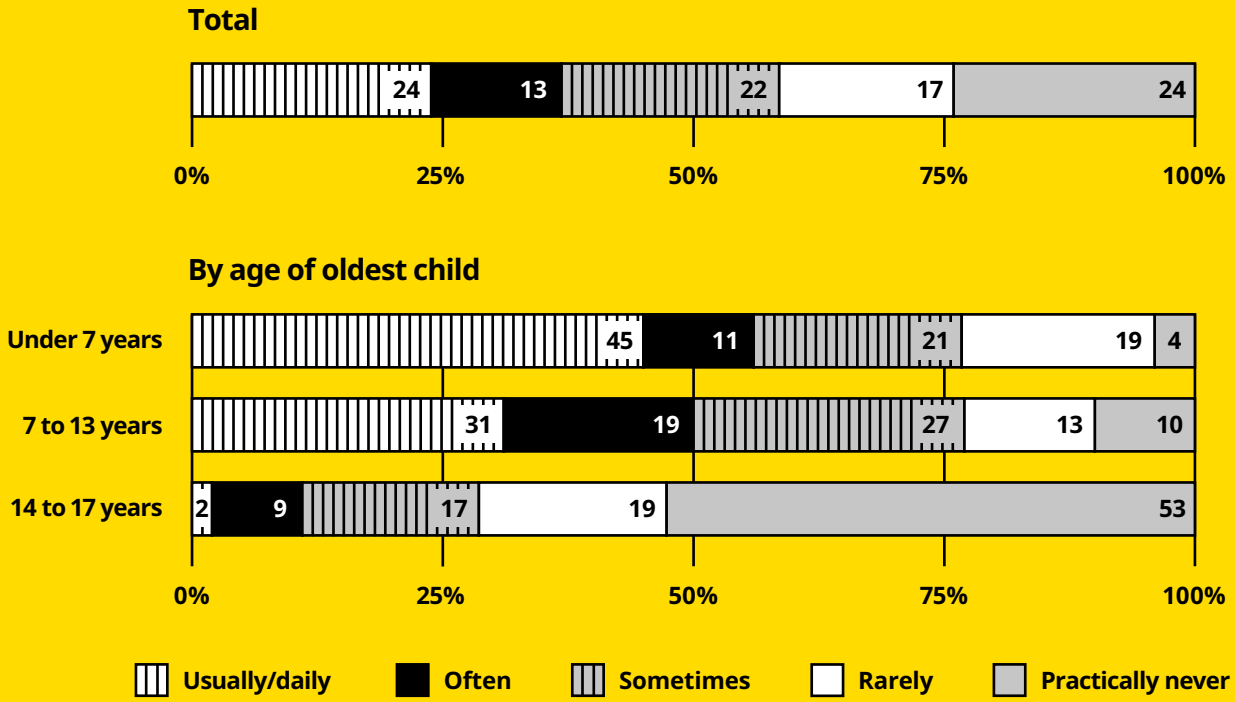


Toys are a unique source of clutter. In households with children under seven, toys are often scattered throughout the home (Fig. 46). Many parents remain fairly tolerant of this, although toys left lying around are the source of weekly discussions in half of these households – even this early on in the children's lives. These discussions become even more common among families with children aged seven to thirteen: three quarters of parents with children in this age group raise the issue of toys lying around every week (Fig. 47). Although children at this age are much more likely to tidy up after themselves than younger children, their parents still do most of the work (Fig. 48). And because children this age are generally capable of tidying up themselves, expectations rise, which is precisely why it becomes such a frequent source of discussion when they don't.

Fig. 46

Toys left lying around – by age of oldest child

"How often are toys left lying around throughout your home?"



So who ends up putting the toys away matters more than it might seem. In Switzerland, a tidy home is something people work out together, day after day – and it often starts with children's toys.

Fig. 47

Discussions about toys – by age of oldest child

"How often do you have discussions at home about toys being left lying around?"

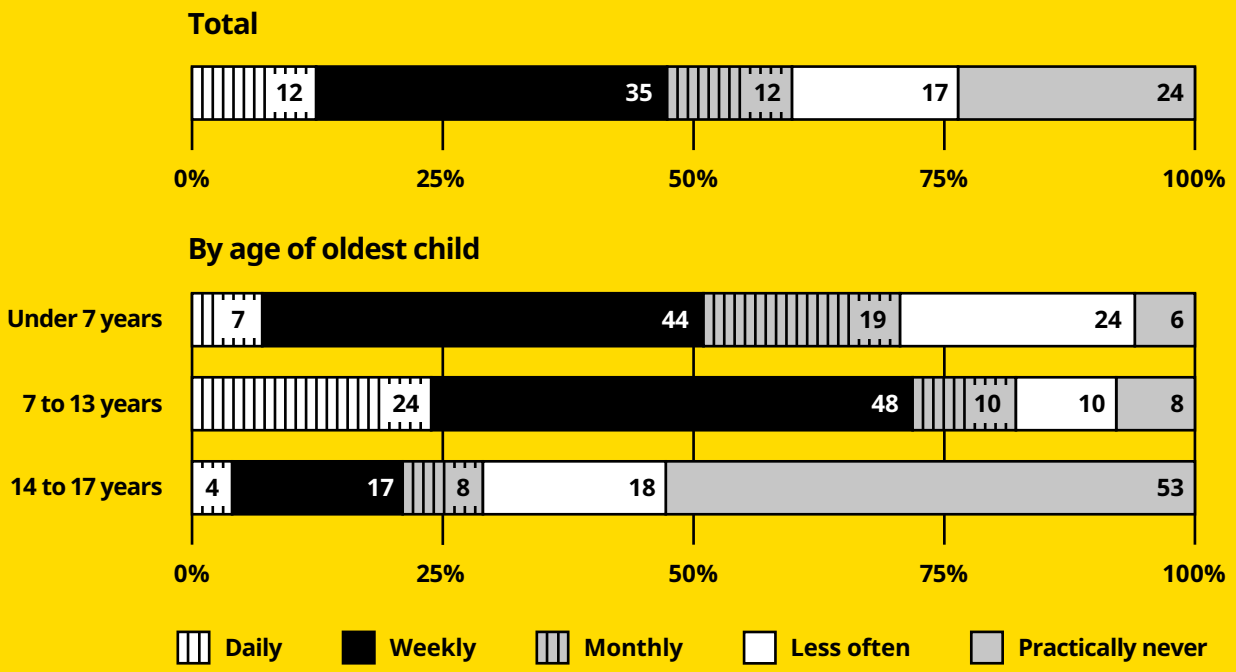
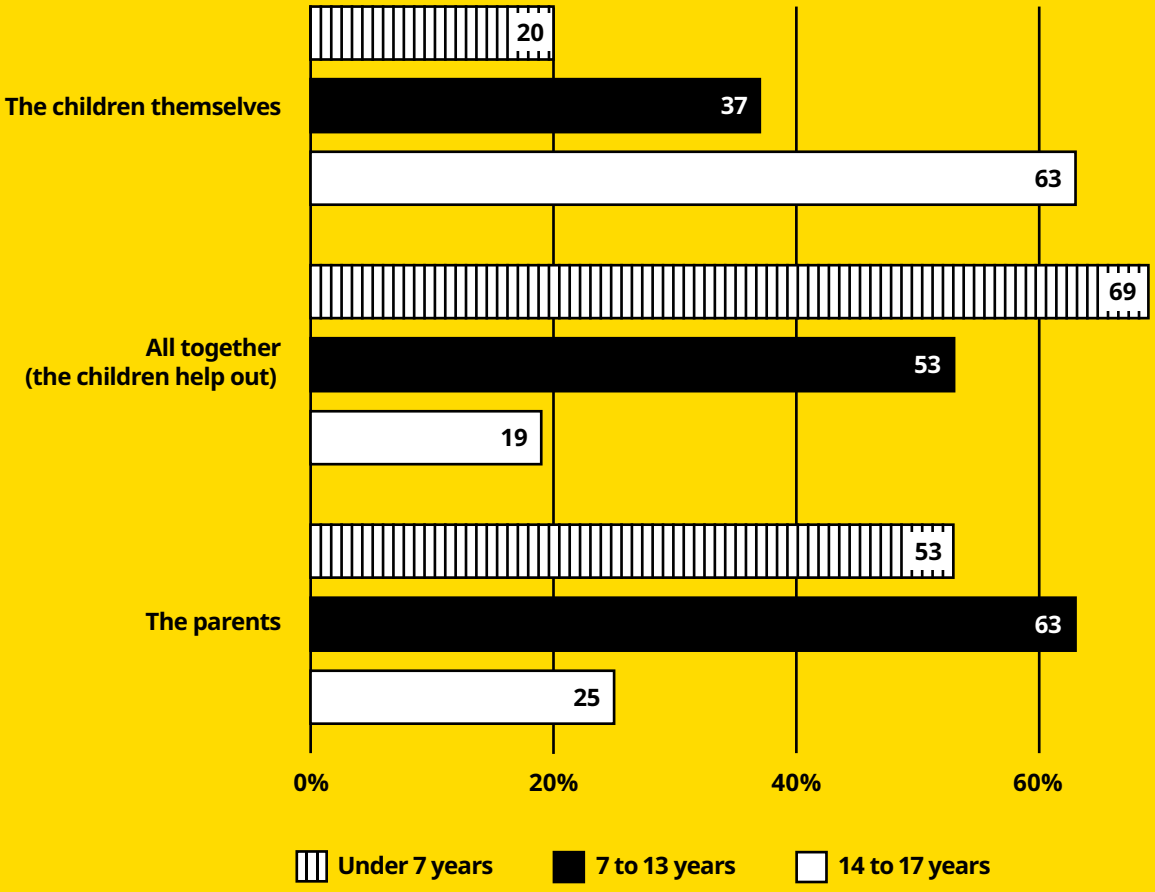


Fig. 48

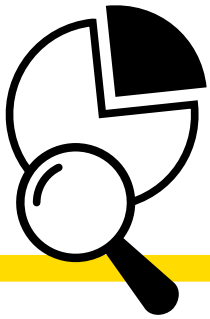
Tidying up toys – by age of oldest child

"Who usually tidies up the toys?"



6

Data collection and method



This data was collected between 13 and 30 April 2026. The survey population consisted of the linguistically integrated resident population of Switzerland. The survey was conducted via Sotomo's online panel and the IKEA Family newsletter. After the data had been cleaned and checked, the information from 2,410 people was available for the evaluation. Survey participants were invited to take part with due consideration given to the distribution of key socio-demographic characteristics within the population. Participation was voluntary (opt-in). Any differences between the composition of the sample and that of the population were subsequently adjusted using statistical weighting. The weighted sample is representative of Switzerland's resident population in terms of key sociodemographic characteristics. The following characteristics were taken into account in the weighting: gender, age, education, household size and language region. This approach ensures a high level of representativeness of the target group. For this total sample, the 95% confidence interval (for a 50% proportion) is +/– 2.0 percentage points.

Note on population groups: The sample comprises the linguistically integrated resident population of Switzerland across all genders and relationship forms. People of other genders or outside male-female relationships are included in the sample, but are not shown separately due to the small number of cases.