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Are you a closet slob? Here's how to clean up your act

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How many times have you gone to your closet and proclaimed "I have nothing to wear!" Could it be true or could it be that you really don't know what's in your closet? A little thinning out and organization may solve this dilemma.

With the change in seasons upon us, it's the perfect opportunity to assess your closet situation, as I did recently with some clients.

I'll call them "Nancy and Rob" and walk you through the closet makeover and organization process to give you some quick and simple ideas on how to eliminate the chaos in your closet.

The day I arrived, I was pleasantly surprised that their closet was not jampacked.

The closet configuration was standard: one hanging rod and one shelf. Definitely not my idea of how to maximize space. Although we could have made do with the existing setup, we decided that a new closet organization system would be the best course.

Before we could decide how the closet would be designed and organized, it was important to discuss Nancy's closet needs. She told me there were many things in the closet that did not need to have a "home" there, such as the kitty litter, gifts and fancy hats that were "memorabilia" and not worn regularly.

She also indicated there were a lot of clothes spread throughout the house that she'd like to have in this closet, such as Rob's short-sleeve shirts and his bike clothes.



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With its standard configuration -- one hanging rod and one shelf -- this master closet fails to maximize space.

Nancy had completed one of the most difficult and time-consuming steps of the organization process before I arrived. She had sorted her clothes and eliminated many that she no longer wore, were out-of-style, were not her color, or no longer made her feel good when she wore them.

At this point we needed to group "like" items together so we could begin to see the quantities of clothing for which we needed to design a space. We looked at the following:

- The number of "long-hanging" items, such as skirts, dresses and pants.
- The number of "short-hanging" items, such as shirts and blouses.
- The number of shoes and boots.

We also looked at the amount of summer clothes as well as the purses and hats that needed to be stored on Nancy's side of the closet.

By knowing the number of inches needed for each of the different types of "hanging" items, as well as the number of shoes and the amount of clothing that needed to be in drawers, we had a good basis for starting the initial closet redesign.



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After shelves, drawers and clothing rods are installed, everything that needs to live in the closet has a home there.

Rob got off easy -- he wasn't home that day for all of the fun -- so we took the liberty of setting up his side of the closet so that the clothes and shoes he wears most often are the most accessible. We also measured his clothing and counted pairs of shoes, since we needed to decide what we would store in drawers.

After all, if you are going to invest the time and the money for a closet system, you want to ensure you are making the most of the space available.

At this point, we called on one of the closet vendors I work with -- Organized Spaces -- and a representative came over. He looked at the sketch I had drawn, took his own measurements, and within 30 minutes had a 3-D computer drawing to look at. After a couple of tweaks, we had the space redesigned.

Organized Spaces returned the following day to install the new closet system. Then, with the plan that Nancy and I had sketched out for her clothes and Rob's, she knew exactly where to place them.

From the "after" pictures, you can see how everything that needs to live in the closet has a home in the closet. On Rob's side, there is a double-hang area for his shirts and pants, which better utilizes the space in the closet. His shoes and sweaters are on easy-to-reach shelves and his bike gear is in the drawers. He even has extra shelf space above his sweaters.

On Nancy's side, she has four shelves for her shoes. We knew this would be enough because we counted the number of pairs she usually wears.

We also gave Nancy two shelves to hold her purses and hats as well as a shelf for her summer shorts and tank tops. Nancy placed her purses in baskets, which helps to contain them and gives the closet a cleaner look.

The bill for the makeover was \$1,650: \$1,250 for Organized Spaces and \$400 for my services.

It's amazing how redesigning the space created additional space to bring more clothes into the closet. Although we eliminated a few things, we added more than we removed.

And in the end, we even had an empty shelf on the top!

Tips for closet organization

- 1.** About 80 percent of the clutter in your home is a result of disorganization, not lack of space.
- 2.** If it doesn't make you look good or feel good -- let it go, because it's just taking up space. You will always find something else.
- 3.** Unsure of the last time you wore that blouse or those pants? Place all clothing on hangers in the opposite direction of how you normally hang items. After you wear the item, put it back on the hanger in your "normal" direction. After six months, you'll be able to assess what you have not worn.
- 4.** If you don't have drawers in your closet, use baskets or plastic bins to help contain items such as hats, T-shirts, scarves, purses, etc. -- anything you would rather not see just lying on an open shelf.
- 5.** If you are going to install a new closet system, first decide whether you want pants to be hung at full-length, folded at half-length or folded and placed on a shelf. This can make a big difference in how you design the space.

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Drawers on Rob's side of the closet now give him space for his bike gear.