

Organizing the Closet

I'm often asked how I can make the clothes closet better organized, especially for working moms. The first thing to do is to purge what you don't wear. If you haven't worn it for a year or more, then you're tired of it OR you no longer like it. Either way, those clothes just take up space. Donate them to someone who can use it.

After you've purged, it really isn't hard to organize your closet.

When is it that you're in a hurry?

When you're getting dressed.

And when is it that you have more time to handle your clothes?

When you hang them up.

So how can you be better organized in the clothes closet?

Just put Like with Like when you hang them up.

You probably already keep some of those things together. One section might be for pants, one for blouses or shirts, one for dresses and skirts.

The first sort is by type. Let's start with **dresses**. They need long hanging space. So they should be the first thing that goes in the long hanging area. Next might be **skirts**. You can save space by putting them on the five- or six-tiered hangers instead of hanging them individually. If you have seasons (in Arizona our two seasons are hot and hotter), then make each rack by season. Choose one rack for fall and winter (or separate racks) and one for spring/summer (or two more racks.) So you should have two to four racks of 5-6 skirts each. (Note: Some of my clients like their suit skirts on a suit rack than keeping them with the jacket.)

There are several options for **slacks or pants**. When pants hang straight down in one line, you prevent extra creases. And, if you hang pants by their bottoms instead of their waists, you will save more space. If the slacks hang straight down, put them in the long hanging area. If you want to leave them folded over, like you get them from the cleaners, they may fit in a double rod section (see below.)

Suit pants are often kept with their jackets, especially if they are never worn separately. So they can either be in the long hanging area or with the jacket in a double rod section for short clothes.

If you only have long hanging sections, try to change one section into two hanging rods. For married couples, the taller person gets the top rod for his/her shirts and the shorter person gets the lower rod for his/her **shirts**. If you have a very large closet, you might each have your own double rods. Then you may choose to put shirts on top and folded slacks on the bottom rod.

There are several other sub-sorts you can do:

First, by **season** so that lightweight and heavy weight clothes are separate.

A second subsort could be “**dress clothes**” separated from **casual clothes**.

These might be in a different place, even a different closet, or just in front of or behind the other. Evening dresses or off-season clothes can be placed in another closet if space is available. It is not a good idea to store clothes in luggage because then the luggage is not available when you want to take a trip.

All clothes should be sorted by **style, i.e.**, tank tops, sleeveless, short-sleeve and long-sleeve tops.

The next sort is by **color** within each type or style. Start with the lightest color, whether it is white or cream, and move to the darkest – black. Dark brown or navy blue may be too close in color next to black, so separate them by something else. One option is to put red or grey between them, but in any case the black is always last. Another option is to put your multi-colored tops (something you wear with several different colors) between navy blue and black.

Some people like to hang **T-shirts**, and others prefer to fold them on shelves or in dresser drawers. **Sweaters** tend to acquire hanger marks, so it is best to fold those in a drawer or stack them on a shelf. If shelf and drawer space is a commodity, then buy an under-the-bed storage container or a separate chest for the foot of the bed.

There are more **shoe** containers than you can imagine. Some people like the over the door racks or pockets. Others prefer floor shelves. Others like to keep them in their original boxes on an upper shelf in the closet. (Add a picture on the outside if you do this.) Others like clear boxes so they can see the shoes inside of them. Whatever you do, organize them by type—sandals, sports shoes, casual, and dress shoes. Toss the ones you don't wear, and just save the ones you do. (If some shoes hurt your feet, donate them to someone who can use them.)

Many closets have limited lighting. You can add electricity, or you can purchase a light bulb that operates on a battery to add more sight to your closet.

Happy closet organizing!

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