



# URGE TO PURGE

## CLOSETS | Author gives you the tools to de-clutter your clothing storage

BY SUSANNA HOMAN

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It is a shameful thing, having an overstuffed closet. When I confess that I can't even walk into my own walk-in closet anymore, *Shop Your Closet* author Melanie Charlton Fascitelli frowns.

"You're a pack rat," she says disapprovingly. "There's a psychology to this. Ask yourself: Why are you holding onto all this stuff?"

I could go on about my sentimentality (the fuchsia lace bustier that reminds me of that night I went to the Grammys six years ago) or my thrifty side (I paid \$200 for that purple silk wrap top; it may be totally unflattering, but I'm keeping it!). But there's really no excuse for some of those terrible outfits squeezing the good ones into misshapen heaps. It's time for an intervention.

Thankfully, today it's not my turn to be de-cluttered. We're putting the book's tips to the test in the Lincoln Park home of Maggie Meiners, director of Chrome Gallery. She has two young children and a thriving business as an art gallery director and fine art photographer. She's got fantastic clothes but, like so many urban dwellers, she's confined to two smallish reach-in closets in her master bedroom.

"I'm the kind of person who never has anything to wear, yet has a lot of clothes," says Meiners, adding that she keeps things well after she's stopped wearing them. "There's always that thought: Is this going to be cool again in 10 years?"

Fascitelli is the founder of a New York based, high-end closet design company, Clos-ette. Her clients typically spend between \$15,000 and \$25,000 on bespoke cabinetry, and she sells closet accessories (hangers are \$12-\$30) on [clos-ette.com](http://clos-ette.com). She says everyone — even her celebrity clients such as Liv Tyler and Julianna Margulies — struggles with getting dressed.

"They get hordes of free stuff, and they have to give a lot of it away," says Fascitelli. "They're also circulating through microseasons." Translation: Because they're often photographed, stars don't keep things in their closet more than a few weeks. Fascitelli helps them decide when it's time to move something to the discard pile.



Melanie Charlton Fascitelli, founder of Clos-ette, shows how she rearranged and organized the closet of Lincoln Park homeowner Maggie Meiners. | RICHARD A. CHAPMAN-SUN-TIMES

***"It's hard to see what you have when it's jumbled. I would argue that the less clothes you have, the more creative you are about your dressing."***

MELANIE CHARLTON FASCITELLI  
Founder of Clos-ette



That leads us to step one: Purge. Take everything out of your closet and create three piles: Throw Away (damaged items), Give Away (nice, but not for you) and Keep. To ensure your keep pile isn't full of past mistakes, enlist the help of your most straightforward friend. Your best clothes are the ones people compliment you on the most, she says.

In Meiners' closet, that meant saying goodbye to a pile of T-shirts and several pairs of shoes.

Next, put your clothes back into the closet, but this time use logic behind the organization. Look at your lifestyle (stay-at-home moms have different needs than working women) and put the things you use most front-and-center. Fascitelli put Meiners' everyday handbags and flats on the closet's limited shelf space. Evening bags were stowed above the closet.

She also advises tossing out wire hangers from the dry cleaner and replacing them with matching plastic or wooden hangers. You should have enough room to hang items at least one inch apart to keep them from becoming wrinkled. In addition — here she takes her cues from the way boutiques merchandise their clothes — organize everything by color and length to make your favorites easier to find.

"It's hard to see what you have when it's jumbled. I would argue that the less clothes you have, the more creative you are about your dressing," Fascitelli says.

She's right: Back at home, I filled a giant garbage bag with "Give Away" items. It's a start.



Step one in organizing: Purge! Only keep the clothes you wear.

### MORE ONLINE

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For an online video of how to organize your closet, go to [www.suntimes.com](http://www.suntimes.com).