

How to

do anything better guide

By Joanna Bober & Nina Carbone

How to...

REDO YOUR CLOSET

It's dark. It's daunting. It's teeming with ancient trends. It's...your mess of a closet. Organizing maven Melanie Charlton Fascitelli, author of Shop Your Closet, can help you make it a happy place.

TO GET STARTED

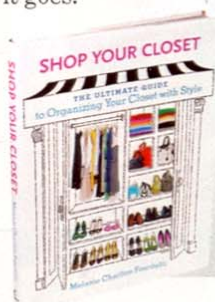
1. Give yourself enough time.

Set aside a weekend—or at least two full evenings after work—to clean out and organize your wardrobe. You'll need it.

2. Edit, edit, edit.

Sort your clothes into three categories: "Throw away" is for items that are damaged beyond repair—easy. "Give away" is tougher. To decide what to donate, ask yourself two questions, says Fascitelli: "Have I worn it in a year?" and "Would I buy that today?" If the answers are both no, then you know where it goes. And then: "What to keep."

Only hold on to items that got yes answers. If you're really having a problem parting with pieces, enlist a friend with great style who knows you; she can make sure you're not hanging on to an ill-fitting dress because it was a deal.



EXTRA TIP: Make a list of your clothing. When you go shopping you'll know exactly what not to buy again.



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HANG YOUR CLOTHES SO YOU CAN “SHOP” YOUR CLOSET

1 Ditch dry cleaning bags. Take all garments out of the plastic bags. They trap moisture, which can allow bacteria or mold to grow on your clothes. Then recycle bags at your cleaners.

2 Get smart about hangers. A hodgepodge of hangers looks sloppy and makes for a wrinkle fest. Banish all wire hangers (return them to your dry cleaner); they're not strong enough to hold any garment properly. Match hangers to clothing. Hanging a coat? Use a coat hanger. A skirt? Use a skirt hanger. (Try Huggable Hangers, \$45 for 36, hsn.com.)

3 Hang like with like. That means shirts go with shirts, pants with pants, and so on. You can also further separate

each category into color groups; prints get hung together by item type. This arrangement allows you to visualize outfits and helps you make combinations you might otherwise miss.

4 Fold only your sweaters. Most clothing retains its shape better if it's properly hung. An exception? Sweaters—they are best folded to prevent stretching out.

5 Leave breathing room. Sure, you want to hang as much as possible, but who wants to deal with a shirt that has been so tightly jammed into a closet that it's wrinkled when you yank it back out? Leave adequate space—you'll have neater clothes and be able to see what you own.

Keep your clothes in line

Always hang clothes facing the same direction. You'll be able to find things more easily because you'll see everything you own from the front. Plus, this uniformity prevents bulky fronts from wrinkling.

Shirts

Pants and skirts

Jackets

Dresses



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How to...

MAKE ROOM FOR MORE STUFF OUTSIDE OF THE CLOSET

Attention, anyone who needs more storage than under-bed space provides: Use “bed lifts”—plastic, wood or metal lifts that fit under bed legs—they’ll give you extra space (\$13 for eight, organize.com).

How to...

FIX ANY OUTFIT ISSUE

Here’s a genius idea: Hang a small corkboard either just outside or inside your closet, and pin onto it all your I’ll-need-it-eventually odds and ends. Having that stuff handy will make it *much* easier to get dressed fast.

1

Pins and needles

Attach them to a pretty ribbon—no more searching when you need a last-minute fix-it. Keep scissors and thread hanging too!



2

Buttons

Have loads of those extra buttons floating around in tiny plastic bags? String ‘em up on some thread so the next time you lose a button, you’ll know where to look.

3

Outfit tags

Want to remember a favorite combo? Hang same-color tags on the individual pieces so you can put them together easily.