

What's In Your Closet?!



Closets get neglected for the obvious reason – they are usually behind doors! It's hard enough keeping the open areas of our homes neat and orderly, let alone the hidden ones. Our closets are often stuffed to the gills, containing things that are broken, unused, out of date, or don't belong.

A neat and organized closet, however, rewards us in many ways. There is the peaceful and orderly energy reflected back to us when we open the doors. There is the ease of finding things, and the ability to know what we have. There's that good feeling that comes from donating unwanted but usable items. And of course, more space to breathe!

Hopefully I have motivated you to tackle one of your closets. Here is how to go about this process:

- 1. Take everything out of your closet and place items in the categories** that apply to your situation: Keep, Clean, Repair, Donate, Consign, Trash. And as you take things out, **separate the Keep pile into categories of like items** (e.g. sweaters, t-shirts, pants). If taking everything out feels like too much, work on a section of your closet at a time.
- 2. Clean all the surfaces.**
- 3. Weed ruthlessly.** Save only things that make you feel great, things that you love. (It is said that on average we only use 20% of what's in our closets.)
- 4. Put everything you are keeping back in the closet by category,** and **label** sections and boxes/bins. Ensure that all items have space to breathe!
- 5. At the end of each session of decluttering and organizing,** throw away trash, bring things that don't belong in your closet to their proper homes, and take items to be cleaned, repaired, consigned and donated at your earliest convenience.

Now that your closet is clean and orderly, here are some tips to help it function at its best:

- **For a peaceful look, use all hangers of the same type and color.** To maximize space, choose hangers with a slim profile.
- Make sure that you have **good lighting.** Consider a self-stick LED light with motion sensor.
- **Put a bag or bin into your closet for items you want to donate.**

Karen G. Kramer - Space to Breathe

Professional Organizing Services for Your Home and Office

- **Other products that are helpful** are hooks, mirrors, shelf dividers, and over-the-door shoe holders which are good for many items other than shoes! (scarves, gloves, etc.)
- **Follow the “one-in, one-out” rule**, be mindful about new purchases, and do a thorough decluttering periodically, as needed.
- **Creative ideas: Paint the inside of your closet** an appealing color, or hang favorite photos or art work there. **Be your own personal “stylist”** and create several outfits that you love – hanging those clothes and accessories together.

This doesn't have to be a major chore. Ask for help, and don't schedule more than you want to take on. Involve family members, or barter with a friend. Put on some good music, and try to have fun with this project. The end result will be well worth it!

“Green” Organizing: Clothing Donations and Donating Damaged Clothing



THINK GREEN

Decluttering and organizing your closets becomes a great donating opportunity. Your donations can directly benefit many charitable organizations, and donating for reuse and recycling benefit the environment as well. Some organizations will pick up your offerings, others have easily accessible drop-off locations. See the Advice page of my website for *Resources for Charitable Donations*.

I am often asked if you can donate clothing and other items that are stained, ripped or damaged. The answer is YES. In their yellow bins, **Planet Aid** accepts all textiles (clothing, footwear, fabric, towels, linens, belts, stuffed animals, etc.) as long as they are dry, relatively clean, and free from mildew or hazardous materials like oil or paint. This organization works with members of the textile industry to recycle, repurpose, and donate everything possible. **Goodwill** also takes ripped and stained clothing for recycling, with similar requirements to those mentioned above.

Another option for textiles that are ripped or stained is to contribute them to pet shelters. These organizations particularly like towels, blankets, pillows - anything soft.

It is always good to check with an organization before you donate to find out their current requirements. Charitable donation locations not listed above probably won't want clothing that is ripped or stained.