

# Clean Up & Unclutter Your Closets

*Tired of that chaotic mess you call your closet? With a few easy, low-cost fixes and tips, you can make your closets functional, organized spaces – and find what you need, when you need it. Getting your closets in order will give you back valuable time and provide you with some peace of mind.*

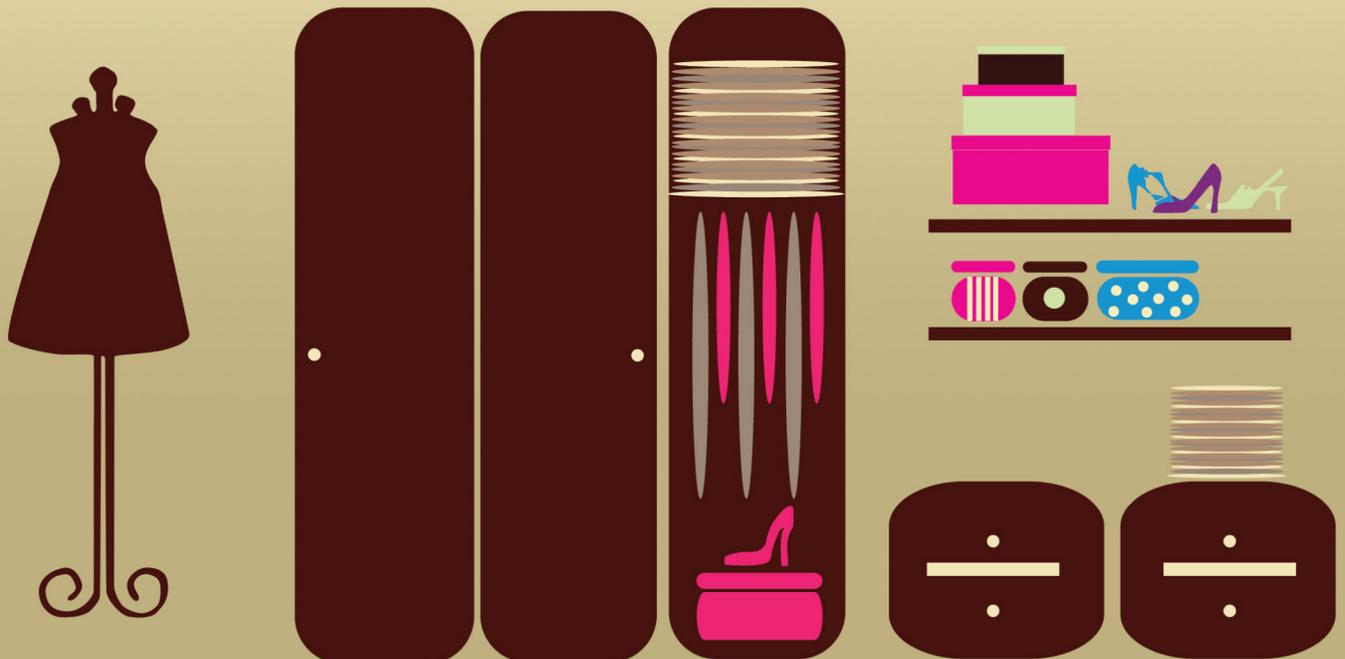
*Here are some organization ideas from Rubbermaid, which sells closet organization systems and accessories through Lowe's and other retailers:*

**1. Declutter** – Roll up your sleeves and empty everything out of your closets. The rule of thumb is to keep items you've worn or used in the past year; toss or donate everything else. You'll have several piles: seasonal, keep, repair, donate and toss. Purging your closets will make extra room for the items you wear often, and create storage space you didn't know you had. If you have usable closet space in other rooms, move seasonal or specialty items to those spaces.

**2. Plan Your Layout** – Use every square inch of space in your closets. Consider installing a closet organizing system, such as Rubbermaid's Homefree Closet Kits. Some kits have telescoping rods and expandable shelves to accommodate large and small closets. Plus, you can reconfigure the adjustable systems as needed, making them feasible for every room type. Think about how often you wear certain clothing or use particular items; your layout should make those things easy to access.

**3. Organize Accessories** – Canvas or clear bins, shoeboxes and hanging canvas organizers provide simple, functional storage options for accessories, shoes and seasonal items. Plus, you'll avoid having an avalanche of items fall from higher shelves. Don't forget to use the back of your closet door; an over-the-door organizer can neatly hold shoes, purses and other items while making the most of your space. Also, take advantage of the space under your bed for heavy sweaters, linens and other items you use infrequently. Under-the-bed storage bins, as well as space-saving plastic bags, can help you neatly store such items without them getting damaged or lost in the shuffle.

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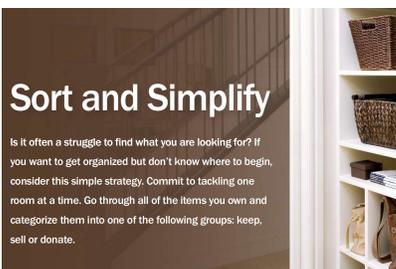


**4. Put it All Together** – Once you're ready to restock your closets, put the least-used items on the higher shelves; clothes and items that you use frequently at eye level; and shoes toward the bottom. Hang all your clothing with the hangers facing toward you (more on that later). Save yourself time and anxiety by sorting your wardrobe by season, clothing type and/or color so you can find what you need quickly. If you have room, add a seating area. For children's closets, drapes instead of closet doors add a fun, decorative touch and easy access.

**5. Hangers Matter** – Use padded hangers for delicate fabrics, plastic hangers for shirts and pants and wood hangers for suits. Get rid of wire hangers and remove clothes from dry-cleaning bags (they restrict air flow to your clothes and

retain dry-cleaning chemicals in the fabric). You'll create a consistent look and keep your clothes better organized if you use matching hangers and the correct types of hangers for specific items of clothing. If there are clothes that don't need to be hanged, put them away in drawers to free up even more space.

**6. Maintain the Calm** – Don't let your closets revert to their old ways. As you wear and launder clothes, hang them back up with the hooks facing into the closet. After a few months, you'll be able to see what you haven't worn, making it easy to find the clothes, then donate or toss them. Pull together outfits the night before to save time in the morning. Donate or toss one item for every new piece you add to your wardrobe.



## Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication

Are you one of the many individuals who would like to restore a little more order to your surroundings? You can count on this month's Item of Value to inspire new efforts at home organization. You'll find a helpful strategy for tackling a major reorganization project, and some advice on how to maintain a clutter-free space. It also offers some ideas on how to sell or donate items that could be put to good use by others. It may take some work, but the effort can really pay off whether or not you plan to sell your home. If you find that these tips help you to get more organized, we'd love to hear about it.



## Market Cools in July

The decline in market activity forecast by the Canadian Real Estate Association and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation continued to dampen real estate sales for a second consecutive month. "This is not just our local market," explains Joe Hough, Past President of LSTAR, "it's nationwide. What happened was this: the Great Recession created pent-up demand in our local real estate market; then, when it became clear, in the Autumn of last year, that Canada and our region had successfully weathered the economic storm, that pent up demand exploded, fueling our market for the period October 2009 until the end of May 2010."

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