

SO CHIC! fashion

I LOVE THE NEW FALL FASHIONS, BUT WHERE DO I PUT THEM?

You love that new jacket. It's going to be great with the fabulous outfit you found last weekend. You rush home with it, open the closet door, and everything explodes. You barely find a spot to hang up the jacket—and may never see it again. Help!

According to Jennifer Furrier of Scottsdale's Essential Organizing, the number one problem people have with closets is "keeping too much stuff they don't use or plan to use someday." Erika Gentner of Dependable Divas agrees. "Everyone says, 'I'll wear this again when I'm back to size whatever' or 'I paid so much for this, I know I'll use it again somewhere.' Neither are good reasons to hang onto something."

Although it's not easy to clear out the clutter, this is an important first step. Another common problem people have, according to Chris Johnson, the designer manager at Classy Closets, is that "(Many people) inefficiently use their space. They generally don't utilize their vertical closet space, and by reorganizing and installing double-hang bars, for example, they will maximize the use of their closet."

TIME TO ORGANIZE

There are four basic steps to organizing your closet:

- **See What You Have.** The first step in organizing your closet is to pull everything out. Everything. Start with a fresh slate and take this opportunity to clean out the closet. Vacuum the space. Use a fresh lemon-scented cleanser to wipe down the shelves.

- **Divide and Conquer.** The hardest part of the job is determining what to keep, what to toss and what to donate. Create separate bins for everything. For example: a Keep bin for items

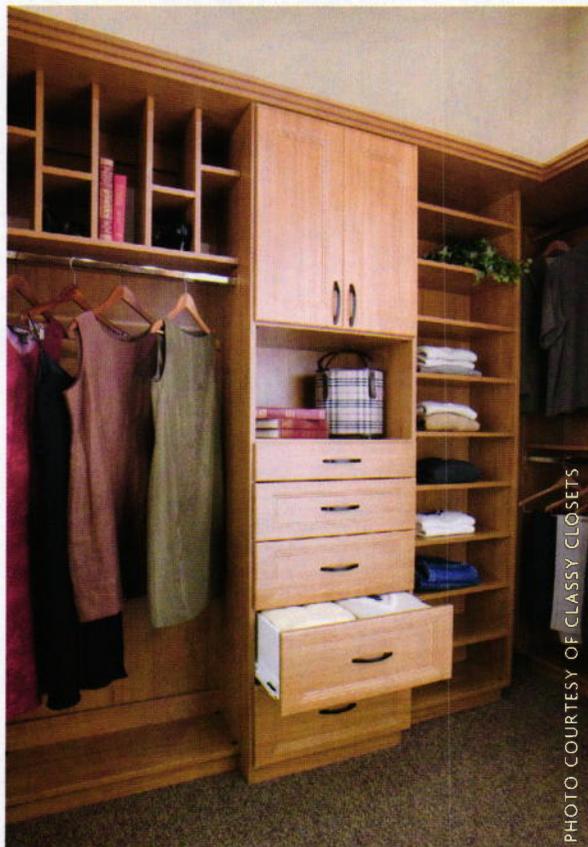


PHOTO COURTESY OF CLASSY CLOSETS

BY SUSAN LANIER-GRAHAM

you use all of the time; a Throw Away bin for ripped, stained or broken items; a Donate bin for anything out of style, that doesn't fit or you haven't worn in a year. Dependable Divas also creates a Second Look bin. "The first thirty minutes, people are hesitant and a lot goes into the second look pile. As they get going, however, they are more able to get rid of things."

- **Divide the Remaining Items.**

Now you are ready to organize. Here in Arizona where we really only have two seasons—spring/summer and fall/winter—you can either pull seasonal items out of your closet and put them in bins under the bed or in another closet, or you can designate a portion of your closet for those items. Once you've separated items by season, separate them in whatever way works best for you: cat-

egory of garment (special events, work clothes, casual clothes, wouldn't-be-seen-out-of-the-house clothes), type of garment (shirt, blouse, jacket, pants, skirt), and perhaps even color if you want to get completely organized.

- **Put Everything Away.** With everything sorted, you are ready to put it away. You can use your existing closet and space, or you might want to shop for baskets, shelving, bins and other organizing accessories. When the items you use every day are right there in front of you, it's easier to find them and you'll see that it's easier to put things away.

Organizing your closet isn't just about finding room for that great fall outfit. "It's really a matter of asking yourself how you want to live," says Furrier. "Start by living for today. If you're always holding onto something because you might need it, you're forgetting to enjoy what you have right now." ♦