

The North Carolina Journal for Women

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Preventing the Closet Takeover

The task of cleaning out our closets is one that we tend to put off. One reason is that there are a lot of memories and guilt in there, from the prom dress to the rainbow suspenders. But it really is ok to let go of any items that do not say who you are today, or as I like to say, "**not in your current life chapter.**"

It is best to make a habit of cleaning out your closet at least twice a year. A good rule of thumb (and easy way to remember) is to **clean it out during Easter and Labor Day weeks.**

Don't despair, closet take over can happen to anyone, but here are some tips to get a handle on your new closet:

- Start with the clothing to the far left of the closet and look at one item at a time asking yourself. Do I love this item? **Do I wear it regularly?** We wear just 20 percent of our wardrobe 80 percent of the time. If you find yourself saying, "**I might wear this some day...**" **realize that there is an 80 percent chance that you won't.**

Get rid of it!

- **Giving to charity is a good motivator.** Visualize another individual getting enjoyment from your donation instead of it being stored in your closet for another six months. If you feel the items are too new and valuable, **then find a consignment shop and get some money for them.**
- Keep off-season clothing stored in another area. Store coats in a front closet and not your bedroom closet. If you are storing hanging items in an attic or garage or anywhere the change in humidity or temperature may affect them, **be sure to pack them in cotton bags and not plastic.**
- There are **two ways to sort clothing in a closet, by color or by type.** Either way you will find some new outfit combinations that you were not aware of previously. When sorting by type, start with gathering all tops that you want to keep. Place the sleeveless ones all together then move to your short sleeve tops and do the same. Then continue with long sleeve tops, jackets, suits, skirts and pants. If hanging space is minimal, keep in mind that you can easily fold jeans and any knits on shelves or in drawers.
- And while we are on hanging, I recommend the **clear plastic hangers with the wire top.** These swivel, which makes facing everything one direction a lot easier. The wire tops take less space than plastic hangers. In addition, they hold clothing a lot straighter. **When you are shopping and they ask if you want the hanger, say yes!**



Book Corner

Fitness for Travelers

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- If you are not sure if you are wearing something enough to keep it, hang all of your current season wardrobe pieces on hangers with the hook backwards on the rod. **After you wear an item hang it back up front ways.** By the end of the season you can easily tell which items were worn and which were not. The items still hanging backwards are your items for reconsideration or donation.
- Look at your shoes and ask yourself the same questions. **Do I really wear them? Do I love them?** To find out the truth, stuff every pair of shoes with tissue paper. When you wear a pair you will have to take out the tissue. At the end of the season, the ones with the tissue did not get worn. **Now do yourself a favor and donate those shoes.**
- **Get shoes off the floor too.** There are many shoe holders on the market, from shoe shelving to shoe pockets that hang on the door to assist you. **A clear floor gives a more open feel and you can actually vacuum it!**
- In the past you brought a lot more into your closet than what you took out. To alleviate this problem, **think "one in, one out".** When a new item is brought in, an older item needs to go out. Keep a small box in your closet for just these items. **When the box is full it is time to run it to a donation center (great for kids closets too).**
- To alleviate excess purchases from clogging your closet, **create a list of items you need for your wardrobe each season and stick with it.** Sales are tempting, but before you decide to purchase a sale item ask yourself two questions. What will I take out of my closet to replace this with, and would I buy this item if it were full price?



Could this be your closet?

Congratulations! By following a few simple steps you can keep a closet to be proud of!



As a Professional Organizer, Cyndy Ratcliffe works with home and small business owners to clear their clutter and organize what is important. She assists individuals to reduce stress, boost their image, and be more productive through her speaking, teaching, and hands-on coaching of organizing techniques.

She received her bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Ashland University in Ohio and was a senior-level manager for over 20 years supervising 130 retail stores before launching Organizing Solutions, Inc.

Cyndy is on the Professional Faculty at Meredith College, a founding member of The National Association of Professional Organizers, North Carolina Chapter, and a member of the National Study Group on Chronic Disorganization.

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 **Organizing Solutions, Inc.**



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