

defined dressing

Clearly designated areas and savvy storage accessories help a couple share a closet in harmony.

PROBLEM: Tara and Pat's walk-in closet was a jumble of professional and casual clothes all mixed together, making it difficult to locate needed items. With two young kids to get off to school and Tara resuming working outside their home, they needed to streamline their morning routines.



1. Slim hangers save space, and their velvety material keeps shirts from slipping off. 2. A pullout rack keeps ties organized. 3. A tall shelf unit offers plenty of storage for casual shirts and sweaters. 4. Shirts and jackets are hung above pants to make it easy to put together a matching outfit on busy workday mornings.

SOLUTION: Professional organizer Kathy Jenkins of Come to Order (see bio in "Meet the Pros," page 24) walked the couple through a comprehensive storage plan that first required the couple to empty the closet and take a

good look at its contents. Tara and Pat put shirts, jackets, pants, dresses, etc. into separate piles to help them decide what to keep. As they categorized items, they considered whether they had worn an item in the past



5. Hanging storage cubbies offer a handy spot for wallets and clutches. 6. Tall shelf dividers slip onto a closet shelf to keep purses from falling over. 7. Clothes are organized by clothing type and color. Suitcases and off-season clothing fill space on the top shelf. 8. Open shelves and cubbies keep shoes organized and on display. 9. Scarves and belts hang from a dedicated hook at one end of a clothing rod. 10. A decorative tray holds bracelets and watches. 11. Necklaces are within easy reach on hooks near a small mirror.



12 months, if items still fit well, and what outfits they liked the most and could see themselves wearing. “Purging is not the first line of defense,” Jenkins says. “Instead, decide what you love and are willing to find a home for,

then it’s easier to say good-bye to stuff that doesn’t make the cut.”

Jenkins defined separate areas of the closet for Tara and Pat so they could get dressed at the same time without bumping into each other. A large divided

shelf unit holds his casual clothes on the right, hers on the left. Pat’s professional clothes are organized on double hanging rods: shirts and sport coats on top and pants on the bottom. “This way he can mix and match and really see all his options,” Jenkins says. A tie rack pulls out next to his suits, which makes it a cinch to select a perfect ensemble.

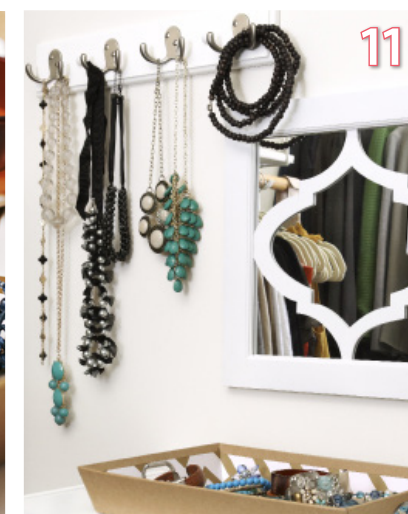
Tara’s newly integrated work clothes hang at the far end of the double rods in similar fashion. Her section also includes a single rod for dresses. Clothes are sorted by color, from light to dark, for ease in selection. “This also helps me keep track of what I have rather than going out and buying something new,” Tara says.

With the overall plan in place, storage accessories were added to enhance the organization. Labeled canvas bins on a high shelf are designated for out-of-season clothes, hiking gear, and other infrequently used items. Wire dividers on another shelf keep purses sorted and upright. Hanging canvas drawers organize smaller items, such as underwear and socks. Shoes are easy to access when displayed on shelves and in open cubbies.

A small mirror and nearby hooks and baskets for jewelry allow Tara to complete her look. “When I walk out of the closet, I’m ready to go,” she says. “And we’ve learned that it is a lot easier to keep things organized than to have to start over.”

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Written by Nancy Richman Milligan. Produced by Cathy Kramer. Photographed by Jay Wilde.



ONE-HOUR CLUTTER CURE

Get your shoe collection under control with these easy-to-follow tips from professional organizer Kathy Jenkins.

- **Sort and categorize.** Take all your shoes out of the closet and group into general categories, such as dressy, casual, and workout.
- **Identify what to keep.** Get rid of any shoes that don’t fit or are no longer in style. Consider your current lifestyle to determine how many dressy or casual shoes you need. Donate the extras.
- **Make a home for them.** Set up shelves or boxes for your shoe collection—leaving about 20 percent of the storage space open for future purchases.