

South Florida

## HOME

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RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE LISTINGS INSIDE

## Turn chaos into order in closet

BY JANA SOELDNER DANGER  
Special to South Florida Home

Pants, skirts, shirts and dresses sprouting from jumbled hangers. Shoes mounded in disheveled heaps. Ties, belts and scarves crushed into crevices.

Why do so many closets resemble landfills rather than neat, orderly spaces that make getting dressed easier?

"Organizing is really hard to do," says Sal Roldan of The Closet Factory in Miami.

Part of the problem might be that just about everyone seems to be in a hurry. "People think putting things back where they belong will take too long," says Beth Levin of The Closet Queen in Miami. "And once you start to not put things back, the mess snowballs."

Individuals who want to create order out of closet chaos should begin by figuring out exactly what's there. "Do a complete inventory of your clothes," Roldan says.

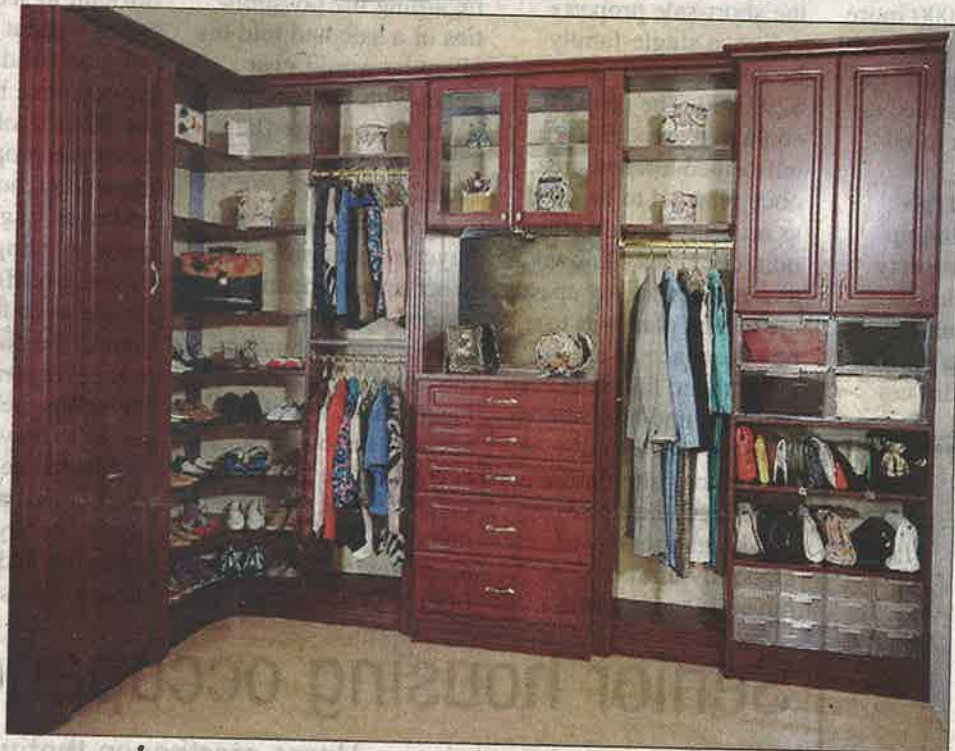
Also, clear some space. "Pick up everything off the floor," Levin says. "Once the floor is clear, the closet will feel better."

## KEEP OR DISCARD?

Cull some clothes. "People hang onto things for years thinking they'll wear them again someday, but the truth is they probably won't," Roldan says. "Styles change, and material gets old and faded. If you haven't used something in six months to a year, get rid of it."

Once is not enough. "Go through your closet every six months and decide what to keep and what to get rid of," Levin says. "If you're on the fence about something, try it on so you can see what it looks like. Is it stained? Is it dated? Is the fit right?"

Remember, clothes are to wear, not



A customized closet can be attractive and efficient. Home improvement stores, however, sell organizational items for the do-it-yourselfer. (Photo courtesy of Closet Queen)

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— Beth Levin, The Closet Queen, Miami

keep in a scrapbook. "People put sentimental value on their clothes, and they're not meant for that," Levin says. "If you have something you wore 30 years ago on your first date with your husband, take a picture of it and then get rid of it."

There's a simple way to find out which clothes actually get worn. "Turn your hangers backward," Levin says. "Then when you wear things, turn them forward. You'll know exactly what you use."

Getting rid of clothing can actually be profitable. "Donate it to someone who really needs it," Levin says. "You can probably get a tax deduction. If you have

designer or vintage clothes, try a consignment shop."

## ORGANIZE WHAT'S LEFT

Before hanging them up again, categorize the garments. "Put like items together — shirts with shirts, pants with pants, dresses with dresses," Levin says. You can also do it by color. Either way, it makes it easier when you walk into the closet."

Home improvement stores sell equipment to help organize closets, and homeowners who don't care to do the job themselves can hire a professional. To increase hanging space, get rid of the single rod many closets have and mount two of them, one on top of the other, so short garments like shirts and skirts can hang in double rows. In another area, mount a single rod high on the closet wall to hold long garments like bathrobes and ball gowns. A third area can be designated for medium-length items, with shelves placed above and storage underneath.

A flat or slanted shelf can be good for footwear. "Shoes should be off the floor and displayed in an open area," Roldan says. "They should be the first things you see when you open the door. Don't put shelves in hard-to-reach areas."

For handbags, use dividers in drawers or boxes. "Then each purse can have its own place," Roldan says. "Belts, ties and scarves should go on racks."



Some homeowners are lucky enough to have large walk-in closets with plenty of space for storage. But they still need to be kept orderly. (Photo courtesy of Closet Queen)