

Are Your Closets Ready for Anyone to Peek?



Just how can you keep the pantry closet, craft closet, coat closet, game closet, storage closet, linen closet, and the bedroom closets organized, useable, and always ready for inspection?

~ from homemaker Tacy Rutherford ~

The HomeMaker's Mentor

All Rights Reserved © 2010

Lesson design & extra tidbits

by

Martha Greene

C-L-O-S-E-T-S

Just the word can strike fear into the hearts of many. Most people I know would rather have you eat off their floor than open a closet door without prior notice and planning. And that can require a lot of planning depending on the number of closets you have! In our house alone there is a pantry closet, a craft closet, a coat closet which doubles as a game closet, a storage closet, a closet aptly name "The-one-at-the-top-of-the-stairs-where-we-store-the-grow-into-clothes" closet, a linen closet, and the bedroom closets. Whew. So, just how do we keep all of these closets organized, useable, and always ready for inspection?

First, each closet should have a purpose. Even if it does double duty, each closet should be well known for storing only particular items. It is only once you have determined what will go into a closet that you can maximize it's potential.

For example, our coat closet doubles as our game closet. Which means it has been set up specifically to accommodate both needs. There is a set of inexpensive plastic shelves pushed against one side of the closet. On these shelves are stored the family games. In order to have the games fit onto the shelves with the most efficient use of space, the games have been shifted from their original boxes into plastic bins. The benefits of these bins alone are enormous. Pre-readers can see their games quickly, the boxes stack neatly and do not topple when the one on the bottom is being pulled out, nor do they require amazing puzzle-building skills to get all the games back in, and similar games can all be housed in one bin, freeing up valuable space. The shelf over the coat rod holds even more games, which are the ones which tend to be geared towards an older age (translation: lots of parts and pieces) so we keep those higher up away from little hands. We have a lot of coats in our family, but only coats that are actually being used are hung in the coat closet. All grow-into coats are hung in the attic on broom handles attached between rafters. And this leaves plenty of room to nestle the vacuum in between coats.

Once you have determined the purpose of your closet, you need to decide how to make the closet work BEST for what it will be doing.

Linen closets are notorious space wasters. When you open the door, there are beautiful shelves lining the closet, often spaced 18 - 24" apart. It looks so pretty! And then, reality sets in as you begin to make stacks of towels and sheets which topple at the slightest breeze and keeping track of shampoos and conditioners and soaps and toothbrushes . . . And just forget about finding the dental floss - it's so small it's lost.

The best linen closet organizers I have ever found are in the closet storage departments of Target and Walmart. Modular systems, which are designed for your clothes closets are actually quite perfect for a linen closet. For example, a shoe shelf will generally fit on one shelf of a linen closet and suddenly turn one shelf into three narrow shelves. Then, using drawer organizer baskets found in the kitchen section, you suddenly have a basket for bar soap, a basket for toothbrushes, a basket for toothpaste and floss, a basket for deodorant, a basket for . . . The possibilities are as unique as your family! And the shelf will usually leave some space on the side for storage of larger bottles such as shower cleaner, mouthwash, shampoo, etc. Label everything! If you store large bottles of shampoo in one spot, then write it on a piece of paper and tape it on. If you have a label maker, whip it out and have some fun!

For towels and sheets, those same modular systems sell cubby like shelves which are nice and square, but a little too tall to put on a traditional linen closet shelf. That is until you turn them on their sides and simply lay them down on your shelf! Now you have great cubbies just the right size for sheets and towels. Labeling these cubbies really helps so everyone can quickly find twin sheets, queen-sheets, crib sheets, hand towels . . .

There are many useful items stored in a linen closet which are needed infrequently such as heating pads, ace bandages, emergency supplies, and the like. These can all be placed in a shoe box sized plastic bins and labeled before being stacked neatly on that hard-to-reach top shelf. Now they are easy to locate, easy to get to, and easy to put away.

Having bins all the same shape and model makes a big difference here for neatness and ease of use.

[Martha's note: I have found this is the secret key!]

The floor of a linen closet is the perfect place to store tissue boxes, extra toilet paper, and more bins of items being stored. When we find a great sale on children's shampoo, I can stock up and place my extras into a labeled bin on the floor knowing that while I can get to the shampoo easily, curious little hands cannot. Again - knowing what you are using your space for helps you to determine how best to use it to its best potential!

The final closet clue is probably the hardest to heed. Never shove anything into a closet. Always, always, always put it away. This is where labels are so helpful because everyone in the family can learn where things go and help keep your home running efficiently. When things begin to get busy and I catch myself saying "I'll put it away correctly later" I am actually creating more work for myself. Now, not only do I have the nagging in the back of my head to "get back to it" which is a burden all its own, I have to move stuff around if I need something behind my shoving. Or even worse, someone else needs the item I didn't put away, meaning I now have to go handle it. Having determined what I store in a closet and then using my space efficiently now means I need to honor my own work and put items away. Obviously there will be true emergencies which excuse the shoving into any old place, but they should be the exception, not the rule.

Closets are just one of the amazing tools we have in our modern lives! They just need a little bit of attention and thought in order to truly simplify our storage needs.

Happy Organizing!

Storage Solutions to Help you Get Organized!

www.target.com
www.stacksandstacks.com
www.kangaroomstorage.com
www.spacesavers.com



Mesh rolling basket for storage on unused closet floor space!



Fill and label and find it in a jiff And looks so neat and tidy too!



Get lots of space out of one area on a single shelf with these!



Stackable baskets to keep shelves neat and tidy!



Under high shelves set some of these and make more room and shelf space instantly!



These are cloth and hold sheet sets, sweaters and more!

**Go to this address online to see helpful videos on how to fold just about anything neatly!
<http://www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/cleaning/laundry/how-to-fold-anything-0000000007871/index.html>**

This is where labels are so helpful because everyone in the family can learn where things go and help keep your home running efficiently.

Closet Divider Tabs



These are helpful on a long hanging rod in your clothes closet to keep things where they are meant to be. They sell them at various places out of heavy molded plastic but I have figured out how to make my own as they are quite simple and useful help in closet organization.

You will need heavy cardstock. You could use a variety of colors or just use white. You could even recycle the backs of spiral composition pads or use the cardboard from discarded shoe boxes! If you wanted them sturdier you could cut them from plastic empty milk jugs! Here is your pattern and you make them however you like. The idea is to make enough to divide up the long line of hanging clothes on a single rod. Label them as you will.

In my own personal closet my divider labels are

SKIRTS ■ TOPS ■ SUNDAY & DRESSY ■ COATS ■ SWEATERS ■ DRESSES

You label yours however you like—the idea is to divide up your hanging garments in an organized fashion.

Cut from heavy paper, cardboard or thin plastic from the pattern below using sharp scissors.

Label each divider as you like and slip onto the rod to keep the cloths divided and in the right spot!

2 Patterns included. The one with the smaller opening that is shorter fits well on rods with wire shelving that have the small thin rods attached to a shelf above. The larger opening fits well on round hanging poles.

www.thehomemakersmentor.com 2010 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

