

How to create the closet of your dreams

(Family Features) If you're one of the 57 percent of women who believe having an organized closet would make finding what you want easier and faster, there's no time like the present to stop dreaming about having a beautiful and organized closet. Take charge and start the project now.

Having a disorganized closet is a problem for at least one in four women, according to a recent ClosetMaid survey. Some women (1 in 10) are even depressed when they open their closet doors.

What's more, some research suggests the average American wastes as much as 55 minutes a day (roughly 12 days a year) searching for things they can't find.

Introducing some organization is a simple way to alleviate these worries. Whether you reside in an apartment in the city or a home in the suburbs, your best starting point is to create a plan of attack. Professional organizer Barbara Reich of Resourceful Consultants offers these tips for getting started:



that provides customizable storage inside and outside of closets. Available in Classic White or Premier Dark Java, it's easy to install and is extremely versatile with different accessories and options like shoe shelves, drawers and acrylic dividers to provide a completely personalized look. As an added bonus, this storage option can be adapted for a nursery, mudroom or pantry. A handy online design tool or a complimentary professional designer can assist you with the layout and design.

Let the organizing fun be-

gin. Before you restock your new closet, scrutinize your wardrobe and accessories, and get rid of items you won't ever wear or use again.

Once you've got everything neatly in place, enjoy your newfound organization, but be vigilant about keeping your closet in order. Dedicate 15 minutes each week to keep it looking as good as new.

Find more creative closet solutions at ClosetMaid.com.

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Assess your needs. Ask questions like: Do you have a walk-in closet or a reach-in? Need to create one within a room? Do you prefer more shelves over hanging space? Is shoe storage important? Do you prefer a flexible system, like wire, that can adapt to your changing needs or do you prefer something with a designer look? Are you a DI-

Yer or do you require professional assistance?

Define your taste and style. Do you prefer modern or traditional? Or are you more eclectic?

Identify the product that works best for your needs and your budget. One option to consider is ClosetMaid SpaceCreations, a designer-inspired, DIY-acquired option

How to clear a clogged drain



Home plumbing systems are designed to handle heavy usage. When everything is working as it should, toilets flush, showers drain properly, and sink basins empty of water in a snap. But when a clog is present in a system, water can quickly back up.

There are various techniques to clear clogged drains. Minor clogs may be cleared without the help of a plumber or even any tools. More significant blockages will require more elbow grease.

The first step to clearing a clog is to locate the problem. Drainage issues that affect a particular sink or toilet may be isolated to that fixture. Clogs that are present throughout the house may be indicative of a larger problem in the plumbing that is directing waste away from the house and into the sewer system.

Sometimes a clog can be freed by pouring boiling hot water or a combination of baking soda and vinegar down the drain. If that doesn't help, move on to a plunger, advise the experts at This Old House. By creating pressure within the pipes, a plunger can dislodge whatever is causing the backup. If the clog seems to be further down the drain, hair or grime may have become trapped. An auger, often referred to as a "plumber's snake," can be inserted into the drain to remove the grime and free up the water flow. Homeowners without access to an auger can try to fish the clog out of the drain with a wire hanger.

If clogs cannot be alleviated, drain traps may need to be accessed. Those who do not know their way around pipes and wrenches should hire a professional.

Minimize dust while renovating

Even though dust is ever-present both inside and outside of a home, when renovations are in full swing, dusty conditions are often exacerbated. Whether a home is new or old, numerous substances can be stirred up when removing walls, refinishing floors, removing tile, or expanding living spaces. These include silica from drywall, lead, asbestos, paint particles, and even waste from bugs or rodents.

Homeowners who want to remodel with minimal construction debris floating through the air — both for health purposes and general cleanliness — may find these proactive steps helpful.

- Prepare dust-containment plans. If a contractor is involved, it is often his or her responsibility to minimize dust. Do-it-yourselfers must make dust containment a priority. Protecting the floor and keeping the dust confined only to work areas can be achieved with plastic sheeting and other barriers.

- Designate an entrance and exit. The experts at This Old House say it is best to choose one doorway as the only means in and out of a work area. Ideally, this doorway should lead to the outdoors. All other doorways should be sealed on both sides.

- Remove extraneous items. It's best to remove clutter from the room, including any furniture that can be taken out of the space. This helps items from becoming dirty and hazardous particles from settling into nooks and crannies.



- Close vents and registers. If forced air systems are part of the home, it's best to divert air away from the work area. Block vents and intake registers so that dust does not clog the system or transfer to other rooms.

- Cut items outside. Design advice site Houzz says that some power tools have vacuum extractors to suck up dust at the point of contact, removing 90 percent of dust where it is generated. For those who do not have access to these tools, cutting and sanding can be done outdoors to keep dust outside.

- Open a window. If weather permits, an open window can provide ventilation. Another idea is to create an air vacuum in the work area. Picking a window at the far end of the work area and mounting a window fan blowing outward can suck dust out and away from other areas of the house.

- Clean up daily. By keeping on top of dust, including sweeping and vacuuming the work area frequently, dust will not accumulate and migrate elsewhere.

Dust is a common side effect of home renovation projects, but it can be minimized.

Did you know?

Mosquitoes are among the most common uninvited guests at backyard barbecues and other outdoor gatherings. But warding off these hungry and intrusive insects can be done in a number of ways.

One of the ways in which homeowners can minimize the likelihood of mosquito infestations is to ensure gutters are clean and clear of debris. Mosquitoes are attracted to decaying leaves, so ridding the gutters of such debris can reduce the risk of mosquito infestation.

Another, though probably less popular, way to reduce the risk of mosquitoes wreaking havoc on a backyard barbecue is to ask guests to refrain from wearing perfumes, aftershave or other

products that have strong aromas. Such items attract mosquitoes and can increase the risk of guests getting bitten.

Wardrobe can also play a role in a person's susceptibility to mosquito bites. Tight-fitting clothing can be bitten through by hungry mosquitoes, while more loose fitting clothing can be more efficacious when it comes to protecting partygoers.

Finally, maintaining any areas where water can gather is also an effective means to ward off mosquito attacks. Turn over a dog's water bowl when not in use or throw sand or dirt in any rain puddles to make the property less attractive to pesky and problematic mosquitoes.

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