



 Marla Tomazin

Marla's Style File

Control Your Closet Chaos: Ten Tips for Cleaning out the Clutter and (Finally!) Having a Closet You'll LOVE

If you've ever spent any time staring at a closet full of clothes while thinking, I have NOTHING to wear! then it may be time for a closet makeover. Read on for tips on how to clean out, get organized, and revitalize your wardrobe so you can look (and feel!) better than ever—and better yet, it won't cost you a dime!

By Marla Tomazin

When you open your closet doors each morning, do you feel a sense of dread? Is finding a presentable outfit akin to finding a needle in the proverbial haystack? If getting dressed in the morning is the most stressful part of your day, then time for you to consider a wardrobe intervention of sorts. No matter the shape, size, or layout, she insists the closet should be a place of solace where you can prepare for a productive day at work or a fun night on the town.

Clutter can be overwhelming. A packed, unorganized closet forces you to wear the same items over and over—or even worse, clothes that no longer work for you. In the process of cleaning out your closet, you might find you don't need all of the things you own to look good or be happy. In fact, once you rid your life of the clutter and chaos, you just may find that you look and feel better than ever.

Ready to take the closet-purging plunge? Read on for my top ten tips for making over your closet, and in the process, your wardrobe:

Get started by getting rid of the obvious. To begin your closet cleanout, purge ill-fitting clothing or things you just don't ever seem to wear. If in doubt, try it on right there on the spot. And if it isn't perfect, get rid of it. Ask an honest friend to get involved if you just can't decide. Insist on frank and honest feedback. This initial cleanout will help you to focus on weeding out the rest of your clothes.

Picture yourself in perfect ensembles. While you're trying on outfits, photograph yourself in the most flattering ensembles. Once you have decided what works together, group these looks by occasion and season in your closet. Having these photos at your fingertips will make preparing for a dinner party, office meeting, or vacation a breeze.

Don't let your hangers hold you back. It's time to let go of those old, cheap wire hangers and invest in some quality ones for your closet. Not only can wire hangers misshape or damage clothing, they also make it easier for clothes to get tangled up with one another or to get lost in your closet. Invest in some good, solid wood or plastic hangers for your closet renovation. I

recommend the Huggable Hangers brand, which she uses with all of her clients. They are effective, affordable, and can be bought at Bed, Bath & Beyond, HSN, or the Container Store.

It's time to LET GO of the acid wash jeans. Everybody has them—those outfits that we *just can't* let go of—it may be the mini skirt you wore on your first date with your husband or that great little top that you looked great in on your cruise...ten years (and ten pounds!) ago. You shouldn't romanticize about how you used to look in an outfit. Be honest with yourself and judge how the outfit looks now, not when (or if) you lose 10 pounds. You'll have the memories those clothes conjure whether those pieces are in your closet or not! There's nothing wrong with wearing trendy pieces, as long as you wear them only when they are in style. Holding on to outdated styles creates clutter and increases the risk of a major fashion faux pas. Get rid of outdated clothing **now**. There's nothing wrong with buying trendy clothes; just be sure you know when the trend is on the way out!

Focus on quality, not quantity. Do you really need 10 pairs of black pants, or would just one or two great fitting pairs work better in your wardrobe? When you have quality pieces that fit great, you'll find that you won't want to wear the other, lesser quality pieces you own. Instead, embrace your limited closet space as inspiration to make smarter shopping purchases.

Match your wardrobe to your lifestyle. Ask yourself: *Does my wardrobe match my CURRENT lifestyle?* If you're a corporate attorney, then it's reasonable for you to own five black suits. But if you're a freelance writer working from home, it's probably not. And while eight bathing suits aren't necessary for living in New York City, they made perfect sense when you lived in Florida. You need to determine the right amount of casual, dress, and party outfits you need based on your lifestyle, and toss and keep accordingly.

Just because the shoe fits, it doesn't mean you should wear it. If you find yourself avoiding a pair of shoes, either because they're uncomfortable or out of style, it's time to donate or discard the pair. Let go of how much you paid for them, how great they looked with that dress you used to own, or the fact that you think a pair of black pumps should be a wardrobe staple. If you don't wear them on a regular basis, they are adding to the clutter. You'll have a new skip in your step with all of your newly acquired closet space.

It's all about accessibility. When it comes to closet organization, many people make a key mistake when it comes to keeping key pieces easily accessible. To start keep the items you wear often at eye level so that you'll be able to find and wear the items that look best on you with ease. Move seasonal items, such as rain boots and heavy winter coats to a hall closet to make room for frequently worn items. And make an effort to rotate the pieces you wear to avoid wearing the same things over and over. After all, you don't want to miss out on wearing that great cashmere sweater simply because it was stuck in the back corner of your closet!

Say good-bye to stains. Be realistic about your ability to salvage stained items: Discard anything with a stain you wish you could remove, but just can't. The same applies for holes, rips, and missing buttons. This will make room for presentable items that you'll wear on a weekly basis.

Don't ostracize your accessories. Make having a space for accessories a priority when it comes to your closet. By banishing your accessories to a remote location away from your closet, you're limiting your ability to utilize these staple pieces daily. Having your accessories in close proximity to your clothes will also make it easier to mix and match different ensembles you may not have considered before.

Once you get organized, invest in great hangers, so your clothes will stay looking good. And remember, it's not necessary to get rid of *everything* that doesn't fit your current lifestyle. Consider storing things that you might want to hang onto and give one more chance. If you store them for a season and don't wear them, then you know it's time to get rid of them. And as a treat for all of your hard work, consign or sell what you want to get rid of and use the money to invest in a closet organizer. You may be surprised at how a closet makeover can make your entire wardrobe feel brand new again.

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About Marla Tomazin:

Marla Tomazin, Certified Image Consultant, established her image consulting business in 1990 with the goal of helping clients identify an authentic image and develop its effective expression.

Through her successful career in the fashion and retail industries, Marla has gained invaluable expertise in retail buying, merchandising, sales, and marketing. She began with May Company in Denver after earning a B.S. in Marketing from the University of Denver. Marla moved to New York where she worked with several well-known Seventh Avenue design firms. As she developed her business skills, Marla made a serendipitous discovery—an innate sense of style and facility for working with fabrics and colors to maximum advantage.

The progression to Certified Image Consultant was a natural transition. Marla utilizes her abilities in evaluating body shape, movement, and coloring as well as synthesizing optimal cuts, lines, colors, and textures. This results in balance and proportion that accentuate attributes and conceal flaws. Her clients include women, men, and corporations seeking external revitalization that mirrors their internal development.

She has lectured at The Learning Annex on “How to Become an Image Consultant” and at The American Women’s Economic Development Corporation on “What Does Your Image Say About You?”

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