

Ingenious Ideas Dept.

Tackle Your Clutter One Step At A Time

(NAPSA)—If the words “clutter” and “messy closet” fill you with dread, you’re not alone. And you needn’t feel guilty about it either, so say professional organizers and behavioral health therapists who are seeing a trend. More people are seeking help to bring order into their out-of-control homes and offices.

Reasons for excessive clutter, organizers say, can include the fear of being without, competition with neighbors and peers, lack of time, living with people who are “clutterbugs” and just “holding on to lovable items.”

“You know, those items like the dress a woman met her husband in or a suit that a salesman wore on a record-breaking day,” explains Neil Balter, a closet organizing expert and consultant to ClosetMaid.

“People have become inundated with things coming in so quickly,” explained Linda Rothschild, immediate past president of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) and president and chief executive organizer of Cross It Off Your List, her 12-year-old New York City business.

Christy Best, a Monterey, Calif.-based professional organizer, and founder of the online Clutterbug Network, says she has been busy “helping people change their living environments and their lives” ever since the day she placed an ad in her local weekly newspaper six years ago.

“I’ve seen enough stuff, extra stuff, in the homes of my 600 clients in the San Francisco area to outfit an entire city,” she said.

Balter, who’s been building closet organizing systems and redesigning people’s cluttered closets for more than 20 years, claims everyone has at least one messy closet.

The hardest part of busting



THE UNCLUTTERED CLOSET—One easy way to unclutter is to remove 10 items immediately, including those shoes with the curled up toes!

clutter is getting started. But once you start, momentum takes over. Organizing the clutter and throwing out items no longer useful gives you control over your life. Less time is squandered looking for things.

“You know where things are, can retrieve them with ease, and get out the door that much faster,” said Rothschild.

The Cluttered Closet

Balter says the closet itself can be part of the closet clutter problem.

“It doesn’t help that most closets have one shelf and one pole and only so much space for hanging clothes,” he said. That’s easily remedied by “double hanging,” maximizing the hanging space by adding another pole. Redesigning the closet with an organizing system can double the useable space.

However, most people, Balter says, live by the 80/20 rule: They wear 20 percent of the clothes in their closet 80 percent of the time.

The rest is in “storage” so clutter busting the closet takes a “get tough” frame of mind. Anyone contemplating breaking the 80/20 rule can obtain a free brochure from ClosetMaid.

The closet expert suggests you start by counting and removing 10 items from the closet immediately.

On Balter’s 10-item hit list: “The shoes with the curled up toes, the beautiful blouse with the wine stain across the front, the 20-odd sweatshirts or T-shirts you never wear,” he explains, chuckling.

Then look at every item as if it belonged to someone else. Make four piles: clothes for the dry cleaner, the tailor, for charity, and what you’ll throw away. What’s left in your closet are the “A list” items.

Free Brochure

To obtain the free brochure, “Tips for Creating Your Dream Closet” call 1-800-874-0008.

For more information, visit www.closetmaid.com.