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# Three Steps to an Organized Closet

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Housing costs have soared in the past 20 years, making it important to get optimum use from each square foot of valuable space. Indeed, there are businesses and products devoted specifically to closet organization.

These services and products can be expensive. However, advance planning will enable the homeowner to determine needs, design space and choose those accessories needed for a well-organized closet without leaving a large dent in the family budget. The key to functional and affordable space is planning.

## The first step

### Determine your space needs

Everyone has different needs depending on the amount and type of clothing they have, their sex, age and size. The two major closet types are the walk-in closet (Figure 1) and the reach-in (Figure 2).

**Figure 1. Walk-in. Figure 2.**

#### Reach-in closet.

Use the following estimates to determine the amount of rod length and height that will best suit your needs:

- Average rod length needed per person: 4 feet to 6 feet.
- Amount of rod space needed per garment:
  - 2 inches for women's clothing;
  - 2-1/2 inches for men's clothing;
  - 3 inches to 4 inches for bulky outergarments.

- Average rod height needed:
  - 63 inches for adult clothing (65 inches to 67 inches for a single shelf, 84 inches for a double shelf);
  - 32 inches for children's clothing (rods for children should be 4 inches to 6 inches less than their height).

## The second step

### Design your closets for functional use

Ideally, when two or more persons share a bedroom, each should have a separate closet. Because ideal situations seldom exist, household members often end up sharing closet space. To prevent frustration and headaches, organize and arrange the closet for the convenience of each user.

The sketches in this guide (Figures 3 through 7) show possible closet layouts. Each makes good use of the space at the top and bottom of the closet.

**Figure 3.**

**Figure 4.**

### Doors

- **Bi-fold.** These doors allow easy access to the front of the closet. They glide on recessed tracks and project into the room only half as far as side-hinged doors.
- **Accordian.** This type of door, usually made from a vinyl material, opens up almost the entire width of the closet at one time. You can buy accordian doors that will reach from floor to ceiling; by mounting the door on a ceiling track you save the cost of framing in a shorter door.

Allow 6 inches extra space inside the closet to make room for the thickness of the door when opened. Accordian doors may not be as dust-proof or last as long as other types.

- **Hinged.** Mount racks, shoe bags and other storage accessories on hinged doors to help organize the closet. Use care when attaching such items to hollow-core doors. Remember to allow clearance for the width of the door at front and side of closet.
- **Sliding.** Sliding doors open without projecting into the room. However, part of the closet opening is always blocked by the door.

# The third step

## Choose appropriate accessories

A variety of storage aids, organizers and expanders are available to help you make the best possible use of your closet space. See the illustrations (Figures 5, 6 and 7) for examples of how they can be used. Look for these aids in department stores, mail-order catalogs, hardware stores and specialty shops:

Nestables and stackables for garments and linens. Garment, sweater and purse bags.

Doubling racks for shirts, slacks, skirts and children's clothing.

Shoe racks and bags.

Storage systems and space expanders

**Figure 5.**

**Figure 6.**

**Figure 7.**

## The finishing touch

An attractive closet will give you a lift each time you open the door. Finish walls with washable paint or wallpaper. Treat floors for easy cleaning. Use light colors that harmonize with the color scheme of the room. Coordinate the colors of garment bags and accessories.

Provide adequate lighting with either incandescent or fluorescent sources controlled by a simple pull chain, wall switch or an automatic door switch. Shield the fixture and use at least a 60-watt bulb (walk-in closets will require 100 watts). Fluorescent bulbs produce greater light output per watt, so a 40-watt fixture should be adequate.

## Closet pointers

- Store articles within area of first use;
- Store within easy seeing and reaching distance;
- Stack only like things together;
- Use space fully and efficiently;
- Make units flexible; and
- Discard items you don't use.

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