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## EDITING YOUR CLOSET

Before you can figure out the best way to store your clothing and accessories, invest some time editing your wardrobe to make sure you're storing only clothes that you'll actually use.

Follow these simple steps to design and edit your wardrobe:

### 1. Identify the kind of clothes you need

Think about how you spend your time at work, at home and on any special activities. Then determine the kinds of clothes you need for each activity. For work you may need formal clothing, casual clothing or have a uniform. You may need technical gear for outdoor activities, exercise wear for working out, comfortable clothes for relaxing.

### 2. Determine the number of clothes you need

Once you've identified the kind of clothes you wear to support each activity, think about how frequently you perform each one. From there you can decide the number of each type of clothing you require. Part of your assessment should take in how frequently you launder your clothes. The more frequently you clean them, the fewer clothes you need.

Also, let the amount of storage space you have be your guide as to how much of one type of clothing you can keep. Often our storage spaces set limits on what we can comfortably own. Your drawers and closets should always be easy to access. If clothes are difficult to pull out then the storage spaces are probably maxed out.

### 3. Review what you own

Now that you've completed the above exercise and determined what realistically you need to support your lifestyle, it's time to see how closely what you own matches the theory! Examine your wardrobe. Does it reflect the way you spend your time? Does it fit comfortably in the space allocated? Are your clothes easy to see and retrieve? If not, it's time to edit your wardrobe to serve the way you are living now. Lifestyles change so it's reasonable to expect some mismatching over time. With the change of each season, take the time to assess your wardrobe to keep it fit for your lifestyle.



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#### 4. The tough part – editing

Rather than thinking of “purging”, an exercise in letting things go, I suggest focusing on selecting the items you choose to keep...the “best of” if you will. Recognize that you are investing your “indoor real estate” in every item you choose to store. Think about the return you want from that investment.

So, what should you keep? Items that are worth storing should:

**a) Be in good condition** This means no stains, rips, pilling, fading or other damage that would keep you from feeling proud to wear the item.

**b) Function well.** Zippers should work, a waterproof jacket should still be waterproof, athletic wear should support, etc.

**c) Fit and flatter you.** The style, cut, colour and size should suit you and your current shape. Your clothing should also communicate what you want about your personality. It is an important part of your first impression.

**d) Make you feel good!** Never mind if people have always told you that you look great in an outfit. If you don’t feel fantastic in it, it’s simply not worth keeping.

It can sometimes be difficult to assess our wardrobes on our own, not only because we see our clothes so often we lose perspective, but because we carry the emotional attachment to the acquisition of the clothing so we don’t view it objectively. Perhaps it was an expensive purchase, a super deal or a gift, all of which can feel like reasons to keep something that simply doesn’t fit.

If you find yourself having trouble deciding what works and what doesn’t, it’s a good idea to enlist some help. Engage a style-savvy friend or family member for their counsel, or consider hiring an Image Consultant/Stylist or Professional Organizer for objective advice. Bringing in someone with “fresh eyes” can be helpful. Not only will they likely see clothing combinations you may not have thought of, they actually have a better view of how the clothes fit you, especially at the back. It’s practical help to ensure fine fitting pants and jackets. They can also provide recommendations for any missing pieces to complete a wardrobe.



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## 5. Find places for the unwanted to go

If you can identify places for your unwanted items to go where they can still offer value, it can be easier to part with them. To be sure you are ready to give when the opportunity arises, keep a basket or bag in your closet to collect unwanted items. Then when the need presents itself, you'll be ready to contribute. Consider these ideas:

**a) Friends and family** – This can apply to your clothes and your family's clothes. I have a neighbour just down the road from me with two children two years behind each of mine. It makes it easy knowing that some of the favourites with life left in them will be put to good use by her kids. And it gives me a special pleasure every time I see one of her children in our pre-loved clothes. If she can't use them, she has a network of caregivers to pass them to.

**b) Women's shelters** – Check with your local shelters to see if they are in need of clothing. My local shelter puts out a "wish list" every month and often clothing is required.

**c) Helping women in business** – Some charities seek business attire to help women looking for work. This is an ideal spot for old suits and dresses.

**d) Local charities** – Several charities sell pre-used clothing to earn money. The money is used to help others in need, often in your local community.

**e) Foreign charities** – Countries who have faced a natural disaster are often in need of clothing. Keep abreast of the news and opportunities to donate.

You can also turn pristine pieces into cash. **Consignment stores** often take clothing all year round and sell them for a commission. If you pay attention to the change of the seasons, you'll earn top dollar. When, for example, you start to see spring clothing in stores, that's the time to take your spring clothing in for consignment sale. Review your clothing in bright light to rule out any with stains or discoloured tags. It's best to call ahead to determine if you require an appointment, the commission rate, how many items you may bring at one time, the discounting procedure, and what happens to the clothes you don't sell (they are often donated).