



The holidays seem to be all about making lists. Gift lists, shopping lists, to-do lists. Now that we're heading out of the holiday season, if you're like most people, you're about to make another list; a list of resolutions for the New Year. Many of us resolve to lose weight, quit smoking or start exercising. I prefer to call my New Year's resolutions "goals", as it feels more like something to work toward, not a specific means to an end.

With that in mind, this is a great time to set some New Year's goals for your home. Cold weather and shorter days make this an ideal time to commit to some home organization projects and finally clean out that closet (drawer, guest room, basement) that you've been meaning to get to. Getting organized might not make you lose a dress size, but it will definitely lighten the clutter load at home, free up needed space and de-stress your life.

Closets are a great place to start working toward your winter home organizing goals. Remember that old adage, "If you haven't worn it in a year, throw it out." Unless you have ample closet space, that's probably really good advice, although I'd caveat that by saying that certain investment pieces (such as suits) and evening attire don't really fall into this category.

Here are 10 tips for getting your clothes and closets organized this winter:

1. Go through your closet with a critical eye toward your wardrobe. Is the item still in style? Classic pieces are almost always worth keeping; trendy stuff that you haven't worn in a few years needs to go.
2. Does it still fit? It can be really difficult to throw away items that are a little too small; we're all optimistic that just a few more runs on the treadmill or a few less holiday egg nogs will make the difference in getting you back into those skinny pants. So, if one of your New Year's resolutions was to lose weight, resolve to re-evaluate your wardrobe in six months and see if you're back into any of those clothes before you decide to purge them. That will be perfect timing; right about when you're bringing out your summer wardrobe.
3. Is it in good condition? Check items for wear, particularly at the cuffs and hems, and toss or donate anything that's showing its age. And while you're at it, go ahead and bag up all those pants you've been meaning to hem and take them to the tailor.
4. One you've gone through your clothing with a critical eye, you have several options for disposing of your no-longer-needed items. If items are of current style and in good condition, consider taking them to a consignment or resale shop; you'll receive a percentage of the sale price of these items once they're sold and if they don't sell, the shop will donate them to charity for you. Items that are less desirable in terms of style, or are showing wear, can be donated to local charities, most of who will pick up directly from your home with a few days' notice. Be sure to make an itemized list so that you can get a receipt for tax purposes.

5. If you're short on closet space, be sure all your seasonal items are packed away. Free-standing wardrobe cabinets are inexpensive and can be placed in a basement or spare room to increase your storage space. (Ikea has some great options.) Also, think about letting your dry cleaner store some of your better wool items or large pieces. Most cleaners will offer free winter storage with dry cleaning, and I find this to be a great solution for items like down comforters and coats. One final pointer on storing off season clothing at home: Be sure all items are clean before you store them away. Moths are attracted to human scent. And don't forget to pack away your off season shoes to free up room in your closet. Store your sandals away for winter and your boots away in the summer.
6. Speaking of shoes, I prefer shoe boxes for shoe storage, both in the closet and for off-season storage. If space is at a premium, consider installing high shelves above the rods in your closet for additional shoe storage. One of my clients replaced all her cardboard shoe boxes with plastic storage containers with lids; she took digital photos of each pair of shoes and attached them to the outside of each box so she always knows exactly what's inside. A cheap, easy way to stay organized.
7. Accessories are big culprits when it comes to clutter. Keep scarves and other small items in plastic organizers with drawers. Don't forget that your closet door can provide additional storage. Mount rows of hooks or necktie/belt racks on the back of the door to help keep your accessories organized. Another client uses multi-tiered skirt hangers on the back of her door to keep her bras from getting tangled and crushed in a drawer.
8. Consider your wardrobe and your dressing needs to determine the best organization for your closet. Would you function best with your clothing grouped by use? For example, organized by career, casual, formal, etc? Or do you mix pieces from different areas of your wardrobe? If so, organizing by color might make more sense. Either way, make sure frequently worn pieces are easy to find.
9. Install double rods to increase your closet space. Shirts and skirts can be hung on separate rods one above the other, which will cut in half the space you require to store those items. Under-bed storage boxes are also a great way to store less-frequently-used items and things you want to store flat, such as stretchy knit items. These are also terrific for boot storage.
10. Consider a professionally installed closet organizing system. There are many do-it-yourself options that are reasonably priced. Impact can provide a complete plan for your closet, or we can do the entire project, from design to build.

Feeling overwhelmed? Remember, Impact Interior Design Solutions specializes in de-cluttering and organization. Let us help you get your new year off to a great start! Then you can focus on those OTHER resolutions...like getting back into those skinny jeans.

Darla Rowley, President
Impact Interior Design Solutions, LLC
darla@impactids.com www.impactids.com

You can find more information about home staging visit www.impactids.com.

For permission to reproduce, contact Impact Interior Design Solutions 248-761-3320, or info@impactids.com ©
Copyright 2011, all rights reserved.