

# HOMEFRONT

How...

## To Restore Order in the Closet

**T**his time of year — with temperatures in the high 70s one day and mid-40s the next — our clothes closets are stressed to the bulging point. Sweaters, mufflers, tights and boots are vying for space with those beguiling linen blouses and strappy sandals. Anything appropriate becomes difficult to find, and if you do find it, chances are it's mashed and rumpled.

Local professional closet organizer and personal stylist Alison Lukes says the first step to a better closet is to make sure everything you've got hanging, folded or piled in a corner has a place — in your life and your home. "If it doesn't," she says, "you probably don't need it."

With what's left, here are basic guidelines from Lukes that can help you make the most of your current closet space. Maybe this weekend.

**Store out-of-season items** in another space or at least out of sight. (We think storing memento clothing — a college T-shirt you'll never wear again but can't part with — someplace other than the closet helps, too.)

**Keep shelving clean and well organized** using wire or acrylic dividers to separate items such as sweaters, handbags and workout clothes. Use baskets and bins to hold smaller items. Line closet walls with hooks for belts, scarves and totes.

**Use the right hangers** to save space and preserve the shape of your clothing. Hang by color and by item; fold by color. Folding boards, like those used by retail stores, can be purchased at the Container Store (\$4.99) and are an easy way to keep your closet looking showroom ready. If you need more room for folded items, set aside part of the closet rod for hanging canvas shelves and drawers.

**For shoe storage**, Lukes likes the Add-On Shoe Rack (\$4.99) from the Container Store because the dimensions can be inexpensively customized to any closet: higher under shorter hanging pieces and lower under longer items.

**Use clear acrylic shoe boxes** for out-of-season shoes and other seasonal items such as bathing suits and heavy winter socks. Stuff tall boots with rolled-up magazines to help maintain their shape.

**If storage space is still a problem**, consider rented storage space. Most dry cleaners will pick up and store your off-season pieces. Pricing depends on how much you have and how long you plan to store it.

Terri Sapienza

