



Conquering *the Clutter*

By Candice Adler

Most people are challenged when it comes to their storage systems. It does not matter the size of their home, but instead the efficiency in which their storage systems works. We all accumulate

things over time, and before we know it, we have a need for more storage. There is never enough of it and their can never be too much of it.

It's always a good idea to stay

organized. If you are on top of the clutter, it will allow you to feel less stressed in your home. One of the keys to successfully living in your space is to keep things simple. If there is too much "stuff" it is

Photo by Eric Weeks



Rework each room to uncover the space you've been missing

nearly impossible to accomplish this. A key to living comfortable, and I believe the most important, is to put function first. So face the clutter, make a storage plan, and then everything will fall into place.

Clutter seems to cling for a few reasons. Either you're too busy to deal with it or you're hanging on to things for emotional reasons. I always tell my clients they have hired me to make their home what they desire it ultimately to be. This means I must tell them we will together have to cleanse the home in order to take it where it needs to go. What I mean by "cleanse" is make some decisions as far as what will go and what will stay. Although this is difficult, it is necessary.

Let go of clothes you have not worn for years. Even if something is expensive, it does not make sense to hold on to it if you never use it. I refer to this step as "clearing the deck". The past is over and the future isn't here yet. Live today and make your home as peaceful as you can for your present. As we go through the process of eliminating things, it will give helpful insight into the things you truly need and want. You can make better choices about what you bring into your home in the future. They say people who can live without clutter tend to trust themselves to make good choices. Being decisive is a gift.

When I refer to clutter, it's defined as "things you don't need, use, or like". Anything that is untidy or disorganized; too much in one space. It is difficult to purge our items, as some may see it as wasteful. I see it more as freedom to take back your home and organize it to make it the most efficient.

So let's start with seeking storage to accommodate your belongings we have decided to keep. In each room, there are items specific to the function of the room. These things need to be stored; such as books, children's games, and electronics in the family room. The home entertainment paraphernalia is always a challenge.

Clothes in the bedroom; never enough room is always an issue. The list for each room and its needs are endless.

In any well-adjusted home, there is bound to be a certain amount of natural clutter. After all, we do live in our home and it would be unhealthy to expect for excessive neatness. It's unrealistic to demand everyone to maintain the home to look as if no one really lives in it. My goal is to make it as easy as possible for most things to have a place, not only for esthetics, but moreover if everything as a home, you will always know where to find it. Develop an effective storage system for each room that designates a place for everything and allows you to get at whatever you need when you need it.

I usually use different systems depending on needs, style, price point, and ultimately, my client's long term goals. There are so many different options and price points available to the consumer today when fitting out closets. I use vendors to supply these plans to my clients along with material and install when we need to make the most of their closets. From drawers to hanging elements to jewelry organizers, all are available today. Depending on where you resource, it's amazing how efficient your closets can be if planned properly.

I have also chosen to think out of the box when considering options for my clients. I found an old hutch at a garage sale with drawers and glass doors. The lines of the piece were perfect and my client was thrilled to repurpose such a beautiful piece of furniture for her master bath, which was lacking a linen closet. We converted it into a home for her towels and toiletries. It looked amazing, as well as served the greater purpose. Being that it was exposed, it's important to be pleasing to the eye, yet functional in its purpose.

If storage in each room is already at capacity, such as in the kitchen, consider getting some reasonable shelving and

perhaps place in a basement or garage. If you only use the "good" China once a year, it makes no sense for it to take up room in your everyday space; especially if that space is limited.

One of my favorite types of storage is built-ins. Not only do they provide a home for your belongings, but also add design interest when displayed properly. They allow for architectural presence while also being a home to hold and display your treasures. Because they are so often literally "built-in" to exist in niches, recesses, dormers, and around windows, they take advantage of space that would not otherwise be used efficiently. They consume less floor space than bulky furniture, which can only make your environment feel more spacious.

Check out the family room. When planning your built-in, they should accommodate the electronic equipment that may be scattered all over. Consolidate them in one unit with closed compartments that can breathe and make the top the pretty part for display.

In the bedroom, fit out your closets to avoid the over abundance of clothes chests eating up your floor space. If you're very limited on space, consider a bed with a storage combination which gives you dual function. Your storage requirements and status of your budget will determine the size and complexity of whatever storage solution you decide best fits your individual needs. The style of your room will determine the look of your storage. Whether they are pricey custom units or ready-made units, you can spice them up with paint and trim to present a handsome finished look.

Commit to decluttering and establish a plan to take back your home. It's a process but a necessary one in order to move forward and organize your home. A word to the wise: make your space work for you. ■