



THE 4-STEP CLOSET CLARITY COMPENDIUM

C.Lee Cawley

Certified Professional Organizer ®

Organizing Expert & Educator







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Welcome



C.Lee Cawley, CPO

organizingnow

@cleecawleysimplifyyou

CLeeCawley.com

C.Lee on YouTube

Hello Friend,

I am an Organizing Expert and Educator and the owner of Simplify You, Inc. I've ben organizing homes in the Washington, DC area for over two decades. In 2008, I earned the coveted distinction of CPO: Certified Professional Organizer. There are fewer than 350 CPOs worldwide!

I earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Costume Design and went on to design for the Joffrey Ballet and the Juilliard School. My career has also included serving as Wardrobe Mistress for the Off-Broadway production of Driving Miss Daisy, working with clients at the Chanel Boutique in Manhattan, and managing a luxury clothing boutique in the UK. These experiences have given me a deep expertise in clothing, style, and presentation, and I'm eager to pass that knowledge on to you.

Today, I share my expertise through courses, classes, coaching, and consultations, helping clients and followers move from chaos to clarity with confidence and ease. My passion is transforming lives by offering insightful guidance, expert advice, and practical, actionable steps that create lasting change.

Please enjoy this Comprehensive Closet Clarity Compendium! (Oh, and I love alliteration!)

C.Lee

Please know that I only recommend products I would use myself. This guide contains some affiliate links. If you use a link to buy something, I may earn a small commission at NO cost to you. Thanks!

TOP TIP

Snap a bunch of BEFORE photos of the different areas of your closet at different angles so you can compare them to your AFTER photos when you finish! Trust me, it will be worth it! Extra points for posting your before-and-after photos in my fun FB Community!

CLOSET CLARITY

AN INTRODUCTION

This straightforward, step-by-step guide is designed to save you time and energy while making it effortless to get dressed quickly and stylishly.

The initial reorganization of your wardrobe will take the most time and effort, but once you've done this deep dive, future seasonal updates and refreshes become far easier. The investment is absolutely worth it—I promise.



I suggest that you approach this project in one of three ways. Pick one style that suits you and how much time you have:

MINIMUM: Set a timer for just 20 minutes a day to work slowly at converting your closet. Be consistent and try to edit every day until your project is finished.

MODERATE: Clear one category at a time. For example, gather ALL of your footwear and decide what needs to be tossed or donated. Then you can count the number of your shoes, boots, sneakers, and sandals and get ready for Step Four - Storage.

MAXIMUM: Play some fun music, perhaps invite a friend to help and give you advice, and do it ALL in one day! This can be exhausting but it IS the most efficient way to complete your closet cleanse.

PREPARATION

Gather or purchase these supplies
FIRST to make getting started easy!

White Trash Bags

for textile recycling fabrics that are stained or torn. These fabrics can often be taken or picked up for recycling by the same charity you are donating to. But it is kind to LABEL THEM as “RAGS” to save the charity from sorting them.



Black Contractors Bags

for actual donations. Remember, only donate things that are “dignity worthy.” Which means giving charities items that you would offer to your best friend.



A Rail for Sorting Hanging Clothes

Make your hanging clothes easy to sort with a rail. Or get two sturdy chairs and put a wooden broom handle across the top to make a temporary rail.

PREPARATION



Cleaning Supplies

You will be emptying shelves and rails, so give everything a good wipe down, sweep, or vacuum as you go.

A Few Shopping or Tote Bags

- For items you may want to sell or consign.
- For garments that need repair or alterations.
- For items that belong to other people.
- For items that need to go to other places in your home.

A Few Sturdy Bins

To store the “goes elsewhere” seldom-worn clothing and accessories. For precious heirloom clothing, use bins like these, for regular, seldom-used, or seasonal clothing, perhaps use under-bed bins like these.

Are You Ready to Get Started?





STEP

01

EDIT THE EXCESS

The first step is to **ASK yourself these questions about EACH item** to help edit the excess. Ideally, you will do this each year, or seasonally if you have to "swap" over your seasonal clothing!

IF the answer to any question is not a clear and decisive KEEP, then it is time to toss, donate, or sell that item.

TOP TIP

As you are evaluating items and asking the following 8 key questions, **sort your "KEEP" items into "LIKE WITH LIKE"**! This will make it so much easier to put all your KEEP items away when you get to step three.

THE EIGHT KEY QUESTIONS



1 - IS IT WORN, TORN or BEYOND REPAIR?

Now is the time to "thank it for its service" and let it go to textile donation places like those listed HERE.

2 - WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME I WORE IT? HOW DID IT FEEL?

Was it within the last two years? Did it make you feel great when you wore it? Was it comfortable: not too tight, itchy, or annoying?

3 - DOES IT FIT ME RIGHT NOW?

Really? I want you to answer this with 100% honesty! **Only things that currently FIT belong in your active closet and drawers.** Not things that are too long, too short, too tight, or too loose. If it needs altering, take it to the tailor NOW so that it DOES fit you, or let it go.

4 - DOES IT FLATTER?

Don't settle for just "okay" items—even for hanging around the house! Ask yourself:

Color - Does it favor your complexion?
Do people compliment you in it?

Cut - Is the cut flattering for your unique body shape?
Do you feel fabulous in it?

5 - DOES IT REFLECT THE IMAGE YOU WANT TO PROJECT NOW?

Do these clothes reflect your CURRENT self and situation? Different clothes work for different ages & stages of life. Make sure your clothes are appropriate for the life you are living right NOW.

THE EIGHT KEY QUESTIONS CONTINUED

6 - WHAT IS ITS AGE?

If you bought this garment in a year that started with “19,” then, dear friend, let me gently suggest that it’s time to retire it. If you still want to keep it, go through the questions above. IF it is a true vintage classic then it may be justified in staying.

7 - IS IT SELDOM USED?

See the categories in Step Two below. If your items are in one of those nine categories, then it may be best if they are stored elsewhere.

8 - WOULD YOU WANT TO RUN INTO YOUR EX WEARING THIS?

If not, then why are you keeping it? Enough said!





TOP TIP

Now that you have done the editing, leave a box or bag in your closet to serve as a “**donation station**” in the future! Create a dedicated place to put those no-longer-needed items aside the moment you’ve decided you want to donate them.





STEP

02

SEPARATE THE SELDOM

Now that you've cleared out ALL of the excess, let's look at what you are KEEPING!

Not everything MUST be stored in your **active closet and drawers.** Many of these items can be placed elsewhere to save space and cut the clutter.

I promise, this will make it SO much easier to maintain a clear and functioning closet!

Separate the seldom-worn items so that you can enjoy and wear your CURRENT clothing.

TOP TIP

Make sure ALL your clothing is CLEAN before you put it in storage! Stains will darken over time and body oils that are invisible now can also darken and yellow fabrics later, so thoroughly wash or dry clean anything you need to store.



Now, SEPARATE out your SELDOM-used clothes! **Do not skip this step!** These nine categories are almost always the cause of common closet clutter! The following categories DO NOT need to be stored in your current active clothing closet and drawers, especially if space is limited.

TOP TIP

Ideally, fabrics, fur, or leather should be stored in a climate-controlled area such as an interior closet or under a bed. Do not store these garments in a basement, attic, or garage unless it is climate-controlled, as temperature variations and moisture can be an issue, and can dry these items out.



THE NINE AREAS TO SEPARATE

1 - ASPIRATIONAL

Do you think it may fit soon? In the case of “aspirational”, emergency, or pregnancy-sized items, I permit you to store your favorites for when they DO fit. But please do NOT keep them in your active closet! Boldly label them with the size and store them elsewhere.

2 - HOLIDAY

Take all of your holiday-specific wear and store it. I generally store it WITH my holiday decorations so that I am reminded that I have them. Halloween costumes, ugly Christmas sweaters, and bunny ears don’t belong in your current closet or drawers.

3 - OCCASION

Store your cocktail dresses, tuxedos, and the specific accessories you wear only with them (bags, shoes, jewelry, and shapewear) together and NOT in your primary closet. Clothing that you would only wear to a funeral or interview can also get stored elsewhere if you have limited space.



TOP OCCASION WEAR TIP

Beaded or sequined clothing should NEVER be hung! The weight can cause these garments to stretch or grow. It is best to store these items flat, wrapped in tissue so that the beads/sequins do not rub or touch each other.

THE NINE AREAS TO SEPARATE - CONT'D

4 - MEMORABILIA

Pack up your precious memory clothes. Your wedding dress should NOT be hanging in your primary closet! Make sure they are clean. Use archival tissue and acid-free archival boxes to keep them saved for generations.

5 - MESSY PROJECT

Save just ONE set of warm weather and cold weather "messy project" clothes. If you only paint or garden a few times a year that is all you need. These may be best stored in the room where those supplies are.

6 - VACATION

If you have items you only wear or use when you travel, then store these together for such occasions. Store your cruise wear, large sunhat, and beach-only clothing together.

7 - SHAPEWEAR

If you have distinct items such as strapless bras, girdles, hose, or slips that you ONLY use when you wear specific clothing, then store these undergarments WITH those items.

8 - FANWEAR

Put your jerseys, foam fingers, clear handbags, rally towels, and any other specific fan-wear together. Rotate it into your closet to use during that specific sports season, then rotate it back out!

9 - SPECIFIC SPORTS

If you play a certain sport or work out daily or weekly, then these items can and should be stored in your primary closet or drawers. If you have ski gear, scuba gear, or other sport-specific clothing and accessories that are rarely used, store them elsewhere to pull them out on the occasions when you go to do those sports.

TOP TIP

Empty suitcases can be perfect to store some of your seldom-worn items! Specific sport and travel clothes are often taken on vacation so why not store them IN your suitcases or duffels?







STEP

03

LINEUP, LOCATION, & LAYOUT

This is the precise process I use when determining the best placement for items in closets and drawers for my clients.

By following this exact order as you plan your own space, you can feel confident in your choices.

Stick with these steps and I promise, you will create the closet of your dreams.



TOP FOOTWEAR TIP # 1

Take your shoes OUT OF THE BOXES!
It saves space, you can see your shoes, and **I promise you will wear them more often**. Yes, they may get dusty out of the boxes. Just keep a brush or microfiber cloth nearby to wipe them off and remember, wearing shoes on the street makes them dusty as well!



TOP FOOTWEAR TIP # 2

It can be helpful (and save space) to display shoes with one heel forward and one toe forward, as seen here.

This works well on closet shelves that are generally 14“ deep.

And don’t be shy about adjusting the shelf heights to accommodate taller and shorter shoes, to maximize your space, as shown in this example.

THE LINEUP

1 - FOOTWEAR COMES FIRST

Shoes and sneakers should ideally be stored on adjustable-height flat shelves. Don't hesitate to purchase extra shelves to fit more in. On average, each pair of shoes needs 9 inches of linear space to sit side by side on the shelf. So a 36" wide shelf can fit four average pairs of shoes.

2 - NEXT ARE HANGING GARMENTS

Please refer to Page 15 for the exact order of hanging your clothing. My advice is to hang AS MUCH as possible for ease of use!

3 - THEN CLOTHING FOR DRAWERS

Items best stored in drawers include underwear, bras, socks, sleepwear, workout wear, and loungewear. (If your drawer space is limited, then these can also go in bins or baskets.) If possible, I like to store jewelry in shallow drawers to keep surfaces uncluttered. (See my video for an example)



TOP DRAWER TIP # 1

Use dividers to separate different categories in each drawer. It can be helpful to "FILE FOLD" by putting an extra fold in each garment and standing them up so that you can see every item! You can also LABEL the edge of the drawer to know what each "column" contains (short sleeve, long sleeve, etc..)

THE LINEUP - CONTINUED

4 - STUFF FOR SHELVES IS NEXT

- Handbags, clutches, and totes should be stored on shelves. I like using clear acrylic sorters and dividers to help them stand up. (I store the dust bags inside the designer bags.) If you have extra rails, bags can also be hung using this clever type of hook.
- Jeans and casual pants folded into thirds fit well in small stacks on 14" deep shelves.
- Sweaters are also often best folded and stored on shelves to prevent stretching out on hangers.
- Also, don't hesitate to use BINS on your shelves. They are easy to label and move around as needed! Seasonal items can get stored low, and off-season items stored high. Then, when the weather changes, you can easily switch their locations!

  (See my Bonus "Supplies for Success" for specific suggestions)

5 - USE WALLS FOR THE WIN

Don't forget to use walls for displaying smaller items. Perhaps create an "accessory wall" displaying shallow items like jewelry, belts, ties, scarves & hats as shown below?

TOP DRAWER TIP # 2

Use a small piece of painter's or washi tape to tape your file folded garments stored on shelves or in drawers "closed".
Remove the tape, wear the item, wash it, and put it back with NO tape.
At the end of a season, anything with tape STILL on it becomes an excellent candidate for donation!







STEP

04

STRATEGIES FOR STORAGE

Have you had this closet conundrum?

Nearly every time we work in closets, clients ask me, “What is the best way to store my clothing”?

Choose from these 4 options:

- HANG
- ROLL
- FOLD
- or NO



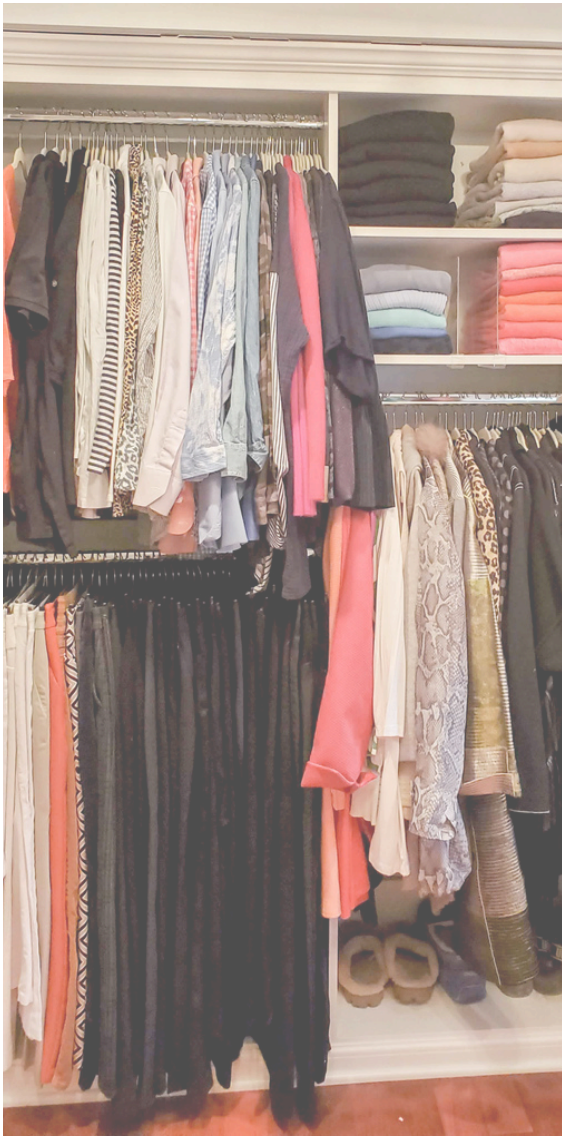
HANG, FOLD, ROLL OR NO?

HANG

I believe it's best to HANG **as much of your clothing as possible!** Bonus points to you if all your hangers match. Hanging makes garments much more visible. Now it's effortless to see and choose your garments. Plus, hanging items are much less likely to wrinkle.

Plan out your hanging clothes in this exact order:

1. **First are LONG hanging items**, like dresses and long cardigans or jackets.
2. **Next, add skirts and pants**, which may also need long hanging space. Try to keep "like with like." Separate any two-piece sets (twin sets, suits), doing so will give you an opportunity to wear those pieces in new ways.
3. **Next are things you wear on TOP:** blazers, jackets, blouses, casual tops, tees, shells, in that order. You may want to keep "like with like": all long sleeve, then short sleeve, then sleeveless tops should hang together. Bonus points for putting them in color order too!
4. **Finally, IF there is still space on your rails**, you can add in other things that you would like to be wrinkle-free and easy-to-see: pashminas, knitwear, tennis clothes, workout wear, logo tees, etc.



HANG, FOLD, ROLL OR NO?

ROLL

For bulky items, rolling can also be a great solution. Hooded and plain sweatshirts, sweatpants, ponchos, and big sweaters are all much easier to roll than to fold. Then place them on a shelf, as seen below.

FOLD

Items like jeans, sweaters, and tees can go on shelves or in drawers. Try not to stack them more than 9" high. Remember, folding is hard to keep looking tidy, so a BIN or BASKET may be an easier or better solution! Sometimes, for consistency, it helps to use a shirt folding device! Put in an extra fold afterward to be able to "file fold" in a drawer or bin.

OR NO?

For things in bins and drawers, you may not even need to fold them! If all your socks are the same, then no need to match or fold. Underwear, scarves, "slippery" sports shirts, swim separates, and more may just be easier to toss in a bin without any fuss!



TOP TIP

Always remove the protective plastic from the dry cleaners. It is NOT good for your clothes and can yellow some fabrics over time. If you want to remember that they are clean, leave items on the wire hangers, leave the paper tag safety pinned on, or group all recently cleaned items together.

TOP TIP

Beware of windows in closets! Over time, the UV light coming through can subtly fade clothing. Always use an opaque shade or cover them.

FINAL TOP TIP

Turn your hanger hooks BACKWARD when you start a season.

When you hang your clothes up during your "seasonal switch," there is one last KEY step to do! Go through and put all the hangers on the rail "backward" so the hook is facing out. After you wear and wash your clothes, you can then return them to the rail the "normal" way. This simple, cost-free action makes it effortless at the end of the season for you to see what you've REALLY been wearing. Then you will KNOW you can donate it to someone who will really wear it!

So there you have it! I hope you have enjoyed this Comprehensive Closet Clarity Compendium!



PS: If you enjoyed this E-Book and want to learn more about other things I can teach, please explore my website CLeeCawley.com

Thanks so much!