

Falling Into Organization April Miller for *Home & Cabin*

Fall is a time of transition – vacations are over, kids are returning to school - it's back to regular routines and warmer clothing. September always feels like a fresh start, a chance to turn over a new leaf. It's the perfect time to take stock of our closets; to say "See you later!" to summer and embrace fall with gusto.

The entry closet (or if you're like me and live in a older home, the coat rack and basket!) is an easy place to start. Picnic baskets, soccer stuff, and other summer paraphernalia can be packed away in labeled containers for easy access in the spring. Pack away summer shoes and jackets, and replace them with fall footwear and coats. Take some time to create a landing strip – a place to lay mail, somewhere to hang keys – and if needed, put up some hooks for coats, and create storage for shoes. I recommend keeping a donation bag near your entry. Drop items in as they outlive their use and get it out the door when the bag is full!

Organize the kids' closets next. Remove summer clothes and evaluate pieces for sizes (kids' clothes is easy – it fits or it doesn't), wear, and stains. Create a donate pile, and store the rest. If there are any sentimental pieces, remove them from circulation and store them separately but be selective. As you replace summer clothes with clothes for fall and winter, evaluate each piece. Consider organizing your child's closet by school and play clothes – it'll make it easier for your little one to dress themselves saving you some headaches on school days!

Now that you're got some momentum going, you can move into the toughest area – your closet. Putting away and cleaning out clothes can be one of the most difficult organizing tasks but if you've got hangers packed too tightly or (this one drives me bananas!) clothes spilling over into another closet, this one will pay off the most!

Remove your summer clothes from your closet, evaluating each piece before storing it for the next season. Keep your summer clothes container accessible for about a week so you can store missed items. If storage space is a concern, move summer clothes to a space earmarked for sweaters during the summer – when you switch out next summer, it'll be a simple switcheroo!

Before placing fall and winter items in your closet, look at each piece critically. When evaluating clothes, there are three questions I find most useful: Do I love this item on me?, Have I worn it in the past year?, Am I holding on to this out of guilt? I also realized that when I pack for a trip, I always pick my favourite clothes – pretend to pack for a two-week trip and you'll quickly discover the "leftovers"! Finally, only clothes that fit belong in your closet; items that don't fit just make you feel bad and that's no way to start your day.

Once you're done pruning, group the remaining items by type; I even organize within the type according to color! One of my best tips is to turn your hangers backwards as you place items in your closet. As you wear something, turn the hanger around. The next time you switch out for seasons, you'll have a visual reminder of which clothes you've actually worn making for an easier transition next season.

These tips can help you reclaim some space and save you time, making the

transition into the new season calm and chaos-free!

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