

orderly fashion

Bid adieu to nothing-to-wear days and piles of crinkled clothes with our guide to planning the ultimate wardrobe

WORDS ANNA MCCOOE

When you fling open your wardrobe doors, how do you feel? If the answer is anything but celestial, there's probably room for improvement. When a wardrobe is overcrowded with a calamity of clothes, it simply isn't living up to its feel-good potential. Follow our guide to the perfect wardrobe, where a tailored configuration of shelves, drawers and rails will keep everything in divine order. >

5 steps to a perfect wardrobe



1 Tough love. The ultimate wardrobe is only filled with items you actually wear, so ditch anything unflattering, uncomfortable or worn out. To get you through the de-cluttering process, professional organiser Helen Butler of Clutter Rescue advises taking a charitable approach: "By removing these items and passing them on to someone who'll value them, you'll be surprised by the clarity created in your wardrobe and other parts of your life." However, you can reserve a corner of your wardrobe in the name of sartorial sentiment.



Tip: A HANGING SHOE ORGANISER FREES UP STORAGE SPACE AT GROUND LEVEL, WITH A MINIMAL SACRIFICE OF HANGING SPACE. BETTER STILL, IT ALLOWS FORGOTTEN STILETTOS, SLIPPERS AND SNEAKERS TO STAY ON DISPLAY AND FRONT OF MIND.

2 Change is good. Plan your wardrobe around your current collection of clothes, allocating half-height rails for shirts, pants and jackets, and a full-height rail for dresses and long coats. Thick knits are best on shelves, while underwear and sportswear are best hidden in drawers. A wardrobe needs to evolve along with its contents, so seek out adjustable shelves and rails. A modular wardrobe system, such as Ikea's 'Pax' range with 'Komplement' interior fittings, can be adjusted in tandem with the season's hemlines.

3 Utilise wasted space. Top-end wardrobe companies offer pull-down rails and pull-out racks to make use of deep corners, or you can put the backs of doors to work by hanging hooks for jewellery or ties. Helen has two words when it comes to storage: think vertically. "Use all the space in your wardrobe, but keep your most-used items between eye and waist height where they are readily available," she advises.

4 Finesse your personal style. Take cues from the best boutiques and hang items by size and colour, starting with long coats at one end and graduating towards shirts at the other – the space below can be used for shoes. Meanwhile, shelves of neatly folded shirts are best left to boutiques, where the staff are dedicated to such perfection. Hanging space and drawers are much easier to control.



5 Group small items. Beautiful boxes on shelves will keep hair pins, cufflinks and other little essentials organised and accounted for. Drawer dividers allow rolled-up ties or belts to sit neatly as a set. You'll fit in less, but think of it as your own personal clutter-control system, encouraging you to vet old items as you introduce the new.



walk right in

The hottest trend in wardrobes right now is the evolution of the dressing room, complete with island benches, ottomans and even chandeliers. "The idea of having a whole room or alcove dedicated to your clothes, shoes and accessories is an indulgent concept, so the fit-out needs to reflect this," says storage expert Lynn Scott of Creative By Design. If you're lucky enough to have a spare nook or a bedroom large enough to divide, go all out with wallpaper, wall-sized mirrors and LED strip lighting to illuminate clothes. If shoes are your thing, and they so often are, pull-out racks will display your stilettos like artwork while hiding your more practical (and grubby) runners in the darker depths.

Tip: "TO GET THE BEST USE OF YOUR SPACE, THE TOP HANGING RAIL SHOULD BE ABOUT 2000MM TO 2100MM IN HEIGHT, AND THE IDEAL WIDTH SHOULD BE BETWEEN 650MM TO 700MM. SHELVES CAN BE ANY DEPTH AND MATCHED TO THE ITEMS YOU'RE STORING"
- STEPHEN BORG, ELEGANT LIVING



investment pieces

The cost of every wardrobe depends greatly on the size, materials and choice of internal fittings. Standard configurations from Ikea and Stegbar (from \$240 for a basic Ikea frame to \$5000 for a fully kitted-out unit from Stegbar) provide terrific use of space on a budget. Prestige modular units from the likes of Poliform (pictured below, from \$5500) and Hülsta (from \$2535 for a 2-door module) are dressed to impress in stunning finishes, and can be configured to your liking. Bespoke wardrobes from specialist companies such as Elegant Living (from \$2500 for the most basic design up to \$30,000) and Creative by Design (pictured above, from \$4000 to \$40,000) are tailored for an exact fit, so that every inch of space is utilised. To stretch your investment, try using MDF instead of solid wood, while vinyl wrap finishes are typically cheaper than 2-pac polyurethane. Painted finishes are cheaper still. >



PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP LEFT) ANITA CALERO/TRUNK ARCHIVE/SNAPPER MEDIA; (TOP RIGHT) JULIEN CARMELI/GETTY IMAGES; (BOTTOM) JOHN DUMMER/TAVERNE AGENCY; (OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT) EDINA VAN DER WYCK/JPC SYNDICATION



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on the surface

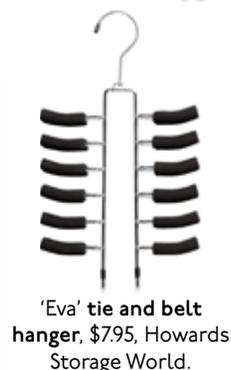
Textured wood and glossy polyurethane continue to provide fashion-forward facades for fabulous wardrobes. New to the scene are toughened glass doors. Stegbar's 'Aurora' range (pictured) can be etched with pattern, while Poliform offers glass doors in both gloss and matt finishes. Sliding doors allow you to maximise wardrobe space without worrying about room for opening doors.

handle with care

Not just any hanger will do! Use wide, wooden hangers for suits, shirts and jackets. Hang pants and skirts from hangers with felt clips, and fold delicate or embellished dresses over padded hangers to prevent the shoulder straps from stretching. For long-term storage, ensure fabrics can breathe. "Plastic can cause fabrics to sweat, so remove dry-cleaning bags and keep winter clothes in lightweight cotton or calico bags at the top of your wardrobe," says Tanya Lewis of Eco Organiser. "A sprinkling of cloves in a handkerchief will keep moths and silverfish at bay. Stuff handbags with old tea towels to retain their shape, then wrap separately in old pillowslips." Most wardrobes don't need extra ventilation, but if you live in a damp area, it may be wise to include a vent to your bedroom or the outdoors. **HB**

Storage solutions

'Reddy' robe, \$129,
Freedom.



'Eva' tie and belt
hanger, \$7.95, Howards
Storage World.

'Skubb'
organiser,
\$6.99, Ikea.



PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP) HOTZE EISMA/TAVERNE AGENCY



'Skubb' shoe boxes,
\$19.99/pack of 4, Ikea.



'Cedar Fresh' hang-ups
with hook, \$7.95ea,
Howards Storage World.
Stockists, page 197