

# Top-To-Bottom HOME ORGANIZING

A Complete Guide to Organizing  
Every Room in the Home



Caralyn Kempner

Illustrated by Katie Erickson

*SAMPLE CHAPTERS*

Top-To-Bottom  
**HOME**  
**ORGANIZING**

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## Adult/Master Bedroom

**A**n adult's bedroom can look magazine perfect with the right organizers and furniture. Visualizing what your bedroom would look like if you were to sell the house can help in the decluttering and organizing process.

There are places to create storage in a bedroom that are commonly overlooked. The bed area is one of the main areas where clutter forms, and usually storage opportunities are not utilized. There are many ways to gain storage under the bed and surrounding it. The type of furniture selected for the bedroom also plays a significant role in obtaining the best storage for bedroom items. The following covers all the places and ways to capitalize on bedroom storage possibilities.

### The Bed

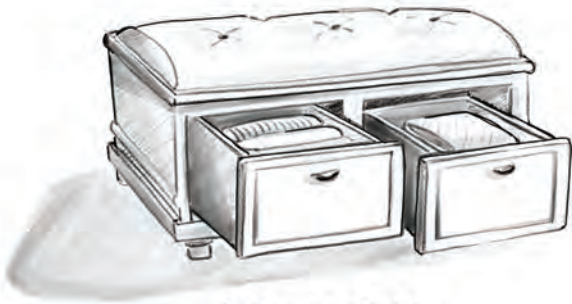
If your bed does not get made every morning because your clothes, laptop, paperwork, books, and the like are permanently residing on the comforter, it's time to find places for those

belongings. Organizing the bed should include all the surrounding areas, such as the headboard, nightstands, under-the-bed space, benches and walls since these areas can be used as storage locations for items needed near the bed.

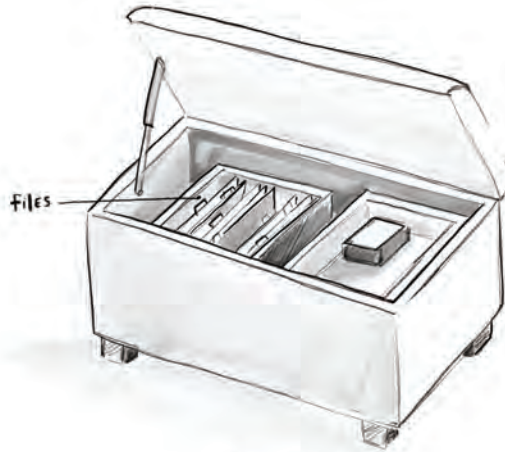
### Headboard and Overhead Shelving

A storage headboard or overhead shelving, or both, are key to efficient bedroom storage, but since that area is a focal point of the room, it must stay clutter-free and orderly. Start organizing such spaces by clearing everything out and evaluating the belongings before replacing them. Anything not used at the bed should be relocated to another storage place close to where it's needed.

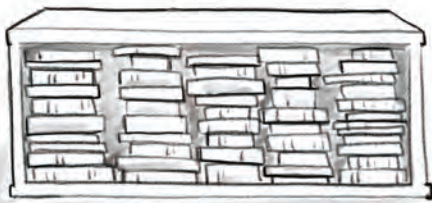
Items lying loose need containment. Organizers, such as magazine racks, baskets, bookends, canisters, and boxes, both conceal and create order in this space. Take advantage of available outlets or add some for charging laptops, cell phones, and the like, which are convenient to keep near the bed. Items no longer needed or wanted should be donated, sold, or discarded.



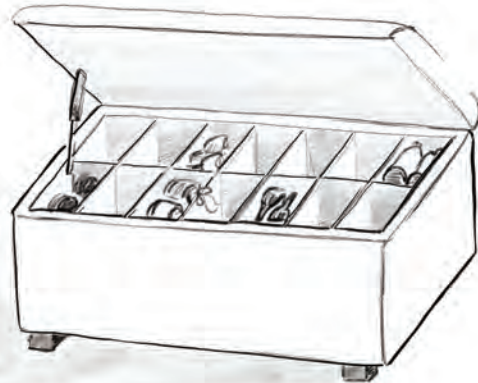
Bed Linen Bench



Office Bench



Bookcase Bench



Shoe Storage Bench

**FIGURE 6.01**  
End of Bed Storage Benches



Gaming Bench





## Headboard Storage

FIGURE 6.02  
Storage Headboard



## Built-in Storage

FIGURE 6.03  
Built-in Shelving around the Bed

## Under-the-Bed Storage

One of the best spots to store belongings in the bedroom that is commonly overlooked is under the bed. There are many organizers designed for this space, such as long, shallow, wheeled, lidded containers and footwear organizers, that make storage in this space easy. Besides under-the-bed organizers, there is a type of bed called a *storage bed*, which is designed with built-in drawer compartments below the mattress.

## Storage Beds

Beds with built-in drawers below the mattress need to be organized and decluttered one drawer at a time when each one contains separate categories of items. However, empty all disorganized drawers with many categories simultaneously and sort them together. In some cases, dressers and other furniture pieces that hold related items may need to be organized with these drawers. Make certain that the various groups of items are divided by type and decluttered before returning them to the drawer or compartment that best fits the sizes of the inventories. Incorporate drawer organizers to separate different but relatable groups of items in the same drawer, such as underwear and boxers.



## Bed With Storage

FIGURE 6.04  
Storage Beds

## Under the Bed

There are endless storage possibilities for under the bed, but arrangements must be compartmentalized and containers should be easy to move in and out. Get started organizing this space by pulling everything out from down under. Sort forming groups of similar items and get rid of things that are not needed and wanted. Decide which items need to stay at this location and whether any can move to a more convenient spot. For example, everyday shoes can be transferred to available space in the bedroom closet or a mudroom shoe organizer. The following are good articles to stash under the bed, along with the best ways to store them.

### Footwear

Both off-season and everyday footwear can be housed under the bed. Footwear containers designed just for under-the-bed storage are a good option. Those with a lid or cover keep off-season footwear free of dust. Wheeled open containers are necessary for footwear worn daily for easy accessibility.

### Off-Season Clothing

A basic plastic lidded under-the-bed container can easily store off-season clothing. Group like items in the same containers, such as sweaters, pants, shorts, and so on; always label the containers with their contents. Plan to declutter clothing inventories both when you fill and empty containers.

### Bedding

The cleverest and most appropriate item to stash under the bed is bedding. All the sheets, pillowcases, and extra blankets are convenient to store at this location. Plus, the linen closet will have more room.

### Closet Excess

Under the bed is good for storing bedroom-closet spillover items, such as purses, shoes, belts, clothing, and so on, due to its close proximity to the bed. The long, shallow containers used to store footwear can also hold these items, but use a different one for each category of items.

### Long-Term Storage Items

When closets and storage areas are jam-packed, the following less-frequently used items are great picks for under-the-bed storage:

- **ARCHIVAL GARMENT STORAGE BOXES** that store bridal gowns, vintage apparel, heirloom linens, fabric keepsakes and the like.
- **ARTWORK**, including works done by artists in your home (i.e., children), can nicely spread out under a big bed. Always contain artwork pieces in professional storage boxes so they stay well preserved.
- **LUGGAGE** always seems to be a big storage problem anywhere it's placed. Wrap suitcases in plastic when stored to keep them dust-free.
- **PERSONAL SPORTING GOODS**, such as skates, rackets, sticks, gloves, cleats, and so on, are good to store in a bedroom where they stay safe and secure away from the extreme garage temperatures. Most under-the-bed storage containers can fit many sporting goods due to their larger sizes.
- **PHOTOS, VIDEOS, TRADING CARDS, and GREETING CARDS** fit nicely in 4.5 x 8 x 11.5 inch-size photo-storage boxes. Many photo-storage boxes have an acid-free, archival construction, which is important for storing these types of items.

- **WRAPPING PAPER STORAGE BOXES** are often difficult to store in a home since they're long and shallow. Oddly shaped thirty-inch rolls of wrapping paper, gift boxes, bags, ribbons, and bows can all be store in specialized gift-wrap boxes that come lidded to keep items dust-free.

## The Nightstand

A well-designed nightstand with multiple drawers or cabinets helps keep the bed area tidy. When space allows, use nightstands on either side of the bed to allow for more storage opportunities. When you spend time reading or watching television in bed, it's amazing how many items end up in there with you. However, it's important that nightstand compartments not become the catchall spot for everything. Limit items to those you need and use while in bed. Some of the best items to stock in a nightstand are remote controllers, eyewear, mouth guards, dentures, retainers, eye masks, tissues, nail files, lip balm, hand cream, earplugs, a diary or journal, and writing instruments.

Buy travel-size items or miniature versions for anything stashed in your nightstand since it's a compact space. Figure out how to trim down the bulk in your nightstand drawer—like using pill boxes to store aspirin, sleep aids, or medications instead of the original bottles.

Always create compartments in a nightstand drawer, or the drawer will turn into a junk pile. Shallow desk trays and kitchen, dresser, and bathroom drawer organizers all work for this space. If you have deep drawers, use stacking tray organizers to double your storage capacity. Sometimes a nightstand is just not enough storage. You can also utilize a

bedside compartmentalized caddy organizer that attaches to the mattress for nightstand overflow.

Make sure the nightstand remains visually free of clutter so the space looks simple and clean. Good ways to cut down on traditional nightstand items would be to consider ceiling-hung or wall-mounted lighting rather than a table lamp. In place of a traditional alarm clock, use your cell phone alarm or a charging dock with a built-in clock radio. Consider valet docking stations that charge portable electronics and have multiple compartments to hold items like jewelry, watches, wallets, keys, and so on. You can also move all portable electronics to a nightstand drawer and create a safe and hidden charging station by installing an electrical outlet at this location. Replace larger tissue boxes with pocket-size tissues in a small drawer. Use a ring holder or decorative bowl or dish for jewelry, keys, loose change, and pocket items on the nightstand counter.

## Bedroom Desk and Entertainment Center

A desk area needs to blend well in a serene room like a bedroom. The best way to accomplish this is by keeping desk items contained in their own spaces for operating convenience, and conceal them as much as possible. A hardworking desk needs a high-performance work zone with plenty of organizers so the space stays organized while looking its best. Note: if your office is in your bedroom, reference the Home Office section of this book to see how to organize this type of space.

A less demanding workspace used for light duties, such as home-related paperwork, needs far less space and can be easily hidden inside a secretary desk; armoire; or foldout, wall-mounted desk.

Start organizing your bedroom desk by removing everything from it. Group like items, such as writing materials, office tools, books, files, reference materials, and so on. Use the trash, shredder, donation, and sale boxes to get rid of things. Computer monitors can be wall-mounted and camouflaged as a picture with a decorative screensaver photo. Wireless computer peripherals are easy to hide in a deep drawer or a bedroom closet.

An entertainment center in a bedroom is worth the investment in rooms with televisions, audio equipment, or gaming units. Many related items can be neatly stashed out of sight, such as CD/DVD players, computers, portable electronics, charging stations, game stations and accessories, remotes, music, and movies.

The cleanest version is a wall-mounted television in which the cords and cables are run behind the drywall, thus eliminating the need for a stand or center. Cables and cords can be kept in an unseen spot, such as a closet. Since operation can be wireless, DVD/CD players and stereos can also be hidden.

Television or stereo consoles and stands can hold different types of equipment on various shelves or compartments where cords and cables will drop out of the back. Built-in entertainment centers often have many compartments for everything from equipment to music and movies. However, they'll require more work to route and access cables and cords. One of the biggest and most important organizational projects for entertainment centers is cord management, which is worth detailed instruction. See the Home Offices and Armoires chapter for more detailed information about cord management.

## Bedroom Storage Furniture

Any piece of bedroom furniture, such as a dresser, chest, highboy, or armoire that contains clothing, lingerie, socks, scarves, belts, and the like, can be organized together. As mentioned, it's important to have the bedroom closet completely decluttered and arranged before you start organizing the bedroom furniture so the contents can be easily transferred to the closet, if need be.

Before you begin dumping drawers and cabinets, have separate bags ready for donation, dry cleaner or tailor, sale or consignment, off-season, trash, closet, or items that belong elsewhere in the home. Also, it's a good idea to have a bag for those articles that you spend too much time deliberating over. Label this bag with a question mark (?) and the date. These items should not go back into the drawer. Rather place them on an overhead shelf or in an under-the-bed storage container. Record a "check-back date" in the calendar when you'll reevaluate them; usually a few months is enough time. Chances are you'll have a more objective viewpoint and be less indecisive the second time around.

If you have not done so already, consider storing off-season articles outside your drawer space. Not only will you create more storage space, but also you will establish a forced decluttering opportunity every season when you empty or place these clothing in storage containers.

## Decluttering Drawers

It's best to stick with organizing one drawer at a time when it contains a particular type inventory, such as just sweaters. Otherwise, if all the drawers are in a jumbled mess, empty them out and begin to sort things into like piles. Set aside odds and ends, such as books, makeup, music, journals, and

so on. Sort these items into groups, if possible, and then locate better places for them. For example, journals and diaries belong in a nightstand or a desk. Makeup and grooming supplies can move to the bathroom.

Sometimes we need to create a place for items by adding organizers. For example, you can install a wall-mounted shelf for books and magazines or use an under-the-bed organizer to contain memory items, such as pictures or achievement awards. A spare drawer can also be designated for odds and ends, but make certain to establish division in the drawer with organizers to keep it from becoming a junk pile.

#### **Bedroom Furniture versus Closet Storage**

The following reasons are why hanging closet storage is optimal:

- Hung clothing is kept wrinkle-free; folded clothing wrinkles.
- Everything is easy to see at a glance when hung, whereas folded piles conceal.
- Freshly folded laundered clothing usually gets placed on top of an existing stack of clothes. When clothes are accessed, they're usually taken from the top and clothes left at the bottom of a pile are not used. This is a common problem with stacks of folded clothes.
- Folded clothes in a drawer are easy to mess up.

The most important items to move from a drawer to a closet for hanging are those that wrinkle the most when folded in drawers. Items that are harder to arrange in drawer storage, such as bulky sweatshirts, sweaters, jeans, and sweatpants, can be stacked on closet shelves. Many accessories, like

belts, ties, and scarves can hang from closet hook organizers. Closet shelves can also store baskets to hold smaller articles, such as socks, nylons, boxers, underwear, and the like.

#### **Drawer Arrangements**

When you are ready to put items back into the drawers, don't revert to old organizing patterns, especially if they were not working. Instead, really think about where to best place certain items. The following are storage suggestions for drawer arrangements:

- Match the item to the size of the drawer: small items in smaller drawers, medium items in medium drawers, and so on.
- Divide inventories by placing a separate category in each drawer, such as T-shirts in one drawer and pajamas in another. However, small inventories can share space in the same drawer, keeping related items together, such as bras and underwear.
- When different categories share the same drawer space, create division by using organizers.

Drawers are great organizers by themselves, but they can also be further compartmentalized with additional organizers. It's always a good idea to look beyond what various drawer organizers are marketed to hold and find new ways to use them. Many kitchen, bathroom, and office drawer organizers can store bedroom items quite well. The following covers the various drawer organizers to use for bedroom belongings:

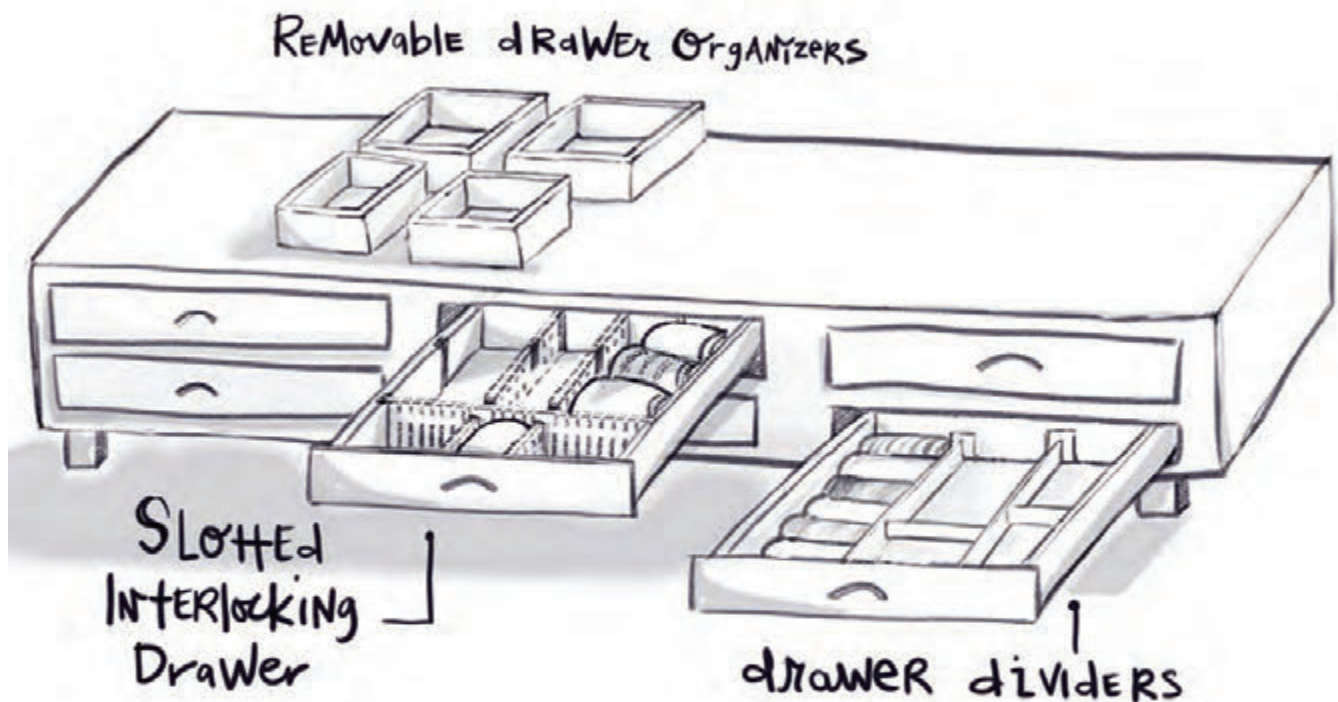
1. The **SPRING-LOADED BARS** are inexpensive and adjustable and come with separate pieces to divide both vertically and

horizontally, thus forming a rectangle or square compartment. They're made in different materials, such as wood, plastic, and cedar, and also come in adjustable lengths, plus varying heights for shallow, medium, and deep drawers. However, some spring-loaded dividers can lose tension and collapse over time.

2. There are **SLOTTED, THREE-INCH PLASTIC-STRIP KITS** that can snap or be cut apart and interlocked to create customizable drawer compartments. These are limited to shallow drawers since they're only three inches high, but they utilize any dead space.
3. **HONEYCOMB** or **DIAMOND DRAWER ORGANIZERS** contain multiple small compartments good for holding individual pairs of socks, underwear, ties, and the like. The compartments are scaled to fit only one item securely, which prevents shifting. They

also keep items easy to see since they're not piled or stacked on top of one another. These organizers are not adjustable and are limited to shallow drawers and small items.

4. **TRANSPARENT ACRYLIC DRAWER DIVIDERS** are excellent for high visibility. Heavier divider materials, like acrylic, rely on stable holders that mount to the inside of the drawers, making them strong enough to store bulkier items.
5. **INDIVIDUAL REMOVABLE CONTAINERS** or **BASKETS** can separate belongings in a drawer, but measure them to prevent any unused space. These organizers have the benefit of being removable and transportable. Specialized containers for drawers are available to hold items, such as bras and underwear. Some are long and thin and geared toward storing socks or folded



**FIGURE 6.05**  
Drawer Organizers

boxers in a vertical row. Drawer containers are commonly made with a cardboard frame and lined in nylon, linen, canvas, or a soft fabric to complement clothing.

6. Small, thin drawers can benefit from **SHALLOW TRAY ORGANIZERS**, which are usually only two inches high and anywhere from twelve to twenty inches in both width and length. These organizers have built-in dividers formed into many individual compartments. Some of these organizers are adjustable so you are able to expand the width to fit the drawer.

### Storing Clothing in Drawers

There are different ways to store clothing in drawers: folding and stacking, filing, and rolling. These options are a personal preference, and each has both merits and drawbacks.

#### Folding and Stacking

A traditionally folded item, like they're displayed in stores, fits the length of most drawers. There are organizational tools, commonly referred to as folding boards, that fold clothing this way uniformly, quickly, and easily.

Clothing can be folded in different ways to accommodate space or preference. For example, depending on size, fold shirts and pants over once or twice for varying storage options. Shirts can be folded sideways or face front with the sleeves hidden in the creases. Fold pants so the pockets are seen from the top. This way you can easily identify a pair.

Keep clothing piles limited to three or four pieces each. Clothes will be easier to find and less likely to become jumbled. Place thinner clothing in shallow drawers and thicker items in

deep drawers, so piles are scaled to the drawer's height. Certain clothes that don't wrinkle easily, like tanks, tees, leggings, boxers, athletic apparel, and pajamas, can be folded into smaller squares or rectangles to double drawer space.

Stacking folded garments can be neater since rolled clothes can loosen. It's easier to transfer folded garments from place to place in stacks, like from the laundry room to the drawer. No more than three to four folded items should occupy any stack of clothes you create in your closet. This is especially important for drawers that conceal everything but the item on the top of the pile.

Soaring stacks of folded items will inevitably lead to disorganization as you continuously make your way to the bottom or middle of the pile, and a big stack is more work to straighten than a small one. Only load a stack of clothes if they're identical items, like white T-shirts. Then, make sure to rotate these piles by placing laundered clothes at the bottom of the stack.

#### Rolling

You can roll almost any piece of clothing or accessory, but certain bulky items like sweaters will stack too high in a drawer. Rolling garments has advantages, such as fewer wrinkles. More clothes can fit rolled in a shallow drawer than folded, and they're easier to view and access. In medium or deep drawers, rolled clothing can stack on top and in the crease of two lower rolled garments where they cannot unravel and everything is visible.

Small items, such as ties, socks, and nylons, can be rolled and placed in drawer organizers with many small compartments. With such organizers, you can group certain colors in section so you are able to see at a glance how many you have of each.



**FIGURE 6.06**  
Rolling & Filing Clothes

### Filing

An alternative method to stacking clothes the traditional way is to file your folded clothing. Filing requires that clothing stand in upright stacks with the crease side facing the opening of the drawer; the drawer front becomes the base for the bottom of your stack. This method is space saving and makes clothes easy to access and see.

In order to stabilize filed clothing, it needs to be more compact or folded smaller. For lighter clothing, place a piece of cardboard inside the fold of the shirt to create shape and weight so they file well. Arrange filed clothing in color order. A drawback to filing is that the clothing stack falls over when pieces are depleted.

Whether folding, rolling, stacking, or filing clothing in drawers, use organizers to contain, divide, and secure items in place.

## Choose the Right Bedroom Furniture

One of the biggest problems with bedroom organization is ineffective furniture in the room. It's

important to be able to spot the pieces that aren't adequately storing your belongings and strongly consider retiring them or make modifications when possible.

Furniture pieces that have too many small or large drawers and not enough middle-sized ones are problematic. Small drawers are shallow and only useful for storing limited articles like socks, scarves, belts, and such. Large drawers are deep, dwarfing the clothing, and they lend themselves to hard-to-manage folded piles.

Certain furniture pieces, like long and low dressers, invite counter clutter and fail to use vertical space effectively. In comparison, highboys, chests, and armoires are better furniture choices because they have many compartments, use vertical space, and take up much less horizontal room, making them easy to arrange in a room.

Armoires or wardrobe cabinets are bulky, but when used effectively, they're great assets in the bedroom. The best contribution these pieces offer is additional hanging storage for closet overflow. In addition, they can be outfitted with drawers, shelves, cubbies, and pullout baskets to accommodate any need. An armoire can also convert into a desk. For more information on repurposing an armoire, reference the Home Office and Armoires section of this book.

Jewelry and lingerie cabinets are smaller, specialized furniture pieces. They typically come with vast amounts of many small compartments to securely store many different types of small belongings. Many jewelry cabinets are designed to be wall mounted and camouflaged in a bedroom. It's best to have just a few efficient furniture pieces in the room that can hold everything. Downsizing wasteful furniture pieces will successfully declutter the bedroom.



## Front Hall or Coat Closet: Priority Items

Many front hall closets are also considered coat closets and offer little depth. These closets typically are straightforward to design with all the organizational components facing forward.

However, for deeper closets, a walk-in closet system can be installed that dramatically expands design options. Just a little more depth allows you to separate inventories better by arranging certain organizational components on different walls. For instance, a deep-enough side wall can hold hanging rods or shelves. Then the back wall can store another organizational component, such as shelves for storing another category like shoes. A deeper closet offers many arrangement options, so it's important to look at all the possibilities when designing these spaces.

The front hall closet is often times overstuffed with many odds and ends, but outerwear, footwear, gloves, scarves, and hats take storage precedence in the front hall closet. It needs to be decluttered a few times a year, especially between seasons. You may need to clear an area around the closet, such as an entry hall, to place belongings while you sort and downsize. Have bags or boxes ready for off-season, sale, trash, recycle, donation, and items to transfer elsewhere.

When your coat closet is filled to the brim, you may need to seek alternative locations for some of the items. In such cases, determine which things can logically go elsewhere. For example, shoes, hats, and gloves can be separated by individual household members and placed in their individual bedrooms. You should also look just outside the closet door to create places to store items that are traditionally placed in a coat closet. A foyer chest, bench, armoire, dresser, or wall organizer can hold countless items.

Leaving a front hall closet half full to save room for guest coats is an antiquated concept. A portable coatrack that can be broken down and stored away is good for guests' outerwear and can also be repurposed as a garment rack for a garage sale. This way, you can make permanent use of your closet space all year long.

### Organizing the Front Hall Closet

Start by first emptying out all the contents currently in the front hall closet. Next, sort belongings into like groups and then split the pile by household member. For example, place all your winter

coats in a pile and then subdivide them by family member. This is important to do since you may need to console some individuals about reducing their things. Downsize any inventories you have control over first; those that need another person can be placed aside until they're ready to help.

You want to establish rules to control closet clutter. For example, allow no more than two in-season jackets, gloves, hats, scarves, shoes, boots, and the like per person. Plan to remove the excess by relocating, donating, selling, and so on. Now is the time to make good decisions about what should stay in the front hall closet and what should be relocated. Even if the front hall closet has the room for certain items, it still may be better to move certain items into other closets, rooms, or different home entry points if they're the more convenient places for easy access.

If not already in place, begin a system so off-season articles are removed from the coat closet and held at another location. You should have a set of storage containers labeled off-season coat closet or labeled with the name of the articles.

### Downsizing Outerwear, Footwear, and Accessories

When downsizing wearable items like coats, hats, gloves, and shoes, look them over closely to ensure sure all buttons are present and not loose. Test zippers and snaps. Check for stains, rips, and tears. On footwear, look over both heels and soles.

Generally, wearable items that are in good condition but have not been worn in the past two years are likely to never be worn. Find out why the item is not worn and see if it's correctable. Perhaps a minor

detail, like changing the buttons, is in order. This is your opportunity to take charge and fix the problem, rather than procrastinating. If the work or expense is too much effort for the return, it's time to donate or sell the items.

Bag all articles that need special attention like fur storage, shoe repair, and cleaning. Make sure that you really want to keep things before making the effort to preserve or properly care for them, because doing so is time consuming and expensive. Have household members choose the coats and shoes *they* want hanging in the front hall closet. Again, limit to only a few coats, shoes, and so on per person.

You should end your decluttering session with bags of items to donate, sell, repair, alter, and clean on their way to their next destination. For example, donation bags should be loaded in the car or



Sidewall ENTRYWAY CLOSET

FIGURE 22.01

Entry closet with side shelving and hanging rods

a call should have been made for a pickup. Items to sell should be boxed, labeled, and placed in a designated storage place for them.

### Outerwear Storage

Most outerwear should be hung on a rod for jackets and coats to maintain their shape. However, it may be more convenient to use hooks for children's jackets so they're more easily accessible. Over-the-door or door-mounted coat racks with hooks can also be used. These organizers free up valuable hanging-rod space. Double-hung hanging rods are perfect for closets short on space. However, there should also be enough room to have a rod for long coats.

In very shallow front closets, hanging rods can be mounted on the sides of the closet,



Side-Hanging Rods

FIGURE 22.02

Hang rods from sidewalls in shallow closets

perpendicular to the door and facing each other, instead of the conventional way. This is a good solution when thick coats and jackets don't clear a closed door.

### Footwear Storage

The most important thing to accomplish with footwear storage design is not to end up storing any loose shoes on the floor, no matter how well they're initially lined up. Inevitably, order will be lost, and the closet floor will become a mess. Footwear can be stored in a number of organizers. All closet systems have footwear storage components, such as slanted shelving, pullout shoe racks, and cubby organizers. These footwear organizers are best placed at eye level and below, so everything is easy to see and reach.

The most common footwear organizers to add to an existing closet are shoe-cubby pocket organizers that suspend from a hanging rod. However, these organizers are prone to sag when weighted down with too many shoes, so keep loads light. These organizers are commonly found in canvas, but they're made in plastic, as well, for easier cleaning. Make sure that you are still able to share the hanging-rod space, so jackets and coats can move freely.

Door-mounted or over-the-door shoe organizers free closet space. Door organizers that use wire arch-shaped loops in the shape of a shoe or upright prongs to secure footwear are stable and vent the footwear. Over-the-door pocketed shoe organizers tend to have tighter pockets, making them suitable only for slim footwear.

Freestanding cubby or tiered-shelf shoe organizers designed for floor storage come in many sizes and materials. Some are even movable and have casters for optimal access. Be careful when selecting cubby organizers, because they're

generally not adjustable and many have small compartments that cannot fit boots or even chunky shoes.

The bottom shelf of a floor-based shoe organizer should almost touch the ground so you are not wasting any space. Doing so will cover the floor and avoid the chance that shoes wind up lying on the ground, which leads to disorder.

### Scarves, Hats, and Gloves

Gather all outerwear accessories throughout the home and sort them into different groups, such as dress gloves, ski gloves, fleece gloves, mittens, ear muffs, ski hats, headbands, scarves, and so on. Match up pairs of gloves or mittens. Place single gloves missing their mates in the same place you keep single socks that are not paired. Pin a note with the current date to the glove or mitten so you are able to keep track of how much time passes, so you're not keeping them forever. Discard such socks or gloves in a month's time after making an earnest search for the mate.

Check your outerwear accessories for rips, stains, and wear. Anything outgrown or not worn in the past two seasons should be donated or sold. Each household member may need two pairs of casual hats, gloves, and scarves. It may be necessary to have a number of pairs of each to accommodate extensive collections of outerwear involving many colors, but think conservatively and stick with what is actually worn. Additionally,

dress or work outerwear accessories, or both, may require another set.

Outerwear accessories can be divided and stored in separate bins, containers, or baskets. Each group can store a single person's accessories or hold a separate category like gloves. Label containers with their contents. Use glove clips to keep pairs together in a storage container so they're easy to locate. Over-the-door or wall-mounted clear, pocketed organizers easily divide individual pairs of gloves and keep them visible and accessible. Towel bars mounted onto the backside of a closet door can hold gloves and hats with rod clips. Scarves can hang over rods tied in place.

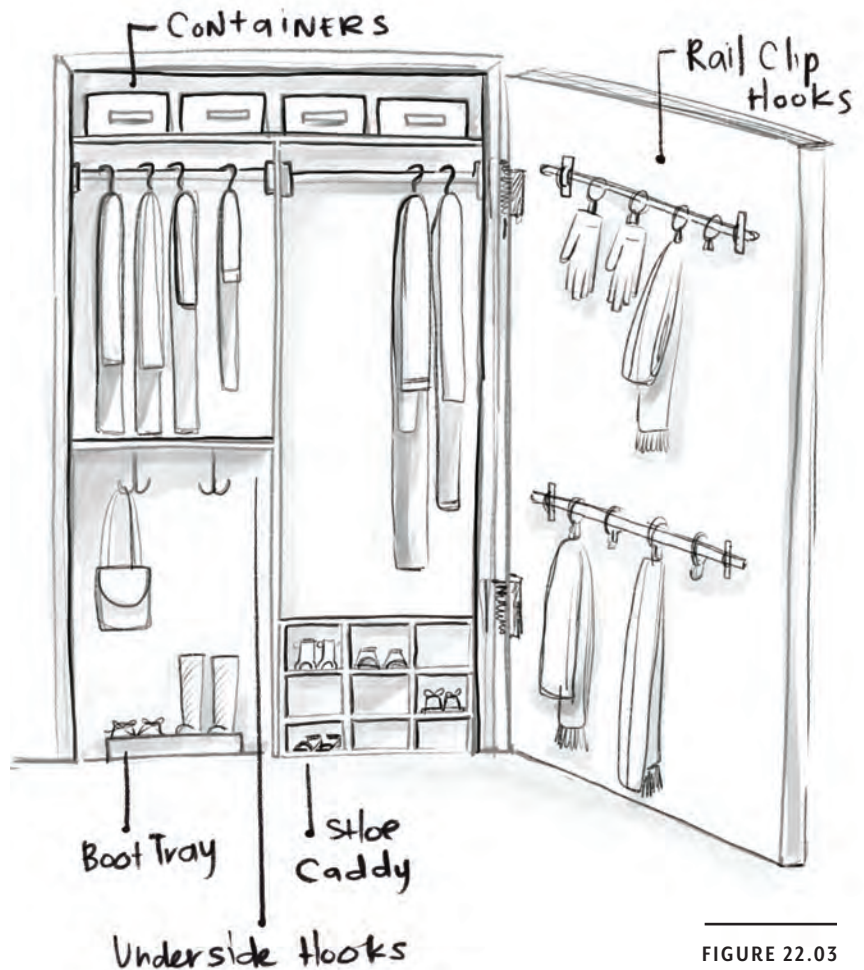


FIGURE 22.03  
Front Hall Closet

# Laundry-Room Layout and Design

Laundry facilities vary from large, designated rooms to laundry areas that are combined with other spaces or are in closets. When rethinking your laundry arrangements, design and layout can also fall into budget categories like upscale and budget friendly to help you find appliances and other items in your price range. First and foremost, though, the laundry room or area must be designed for optimal functionality, which depends on both the available space and the household needs.

## Laundry-Room Layout

The best planning tool for designing your laundry space is a detailed room sketch. A somewhat technical drawing of your laundry facility can be helpful, whether you are modifying an existing laundry facility or performing a complete renovation. In either scenario, it's easiest to navigate any organizational project when you actually see everything on paper.

It's also helpful to document existing features that will not change, such as the location of a sink or appliance. You can take photos and carefully

measure every wall, ceiling height, door opening, window location, electrical device locations, and so on. This information can be put into a CAD software as a baseline file for developing the project further by plugging in fixtures and lighting. Look for CAD software that allows you to import your own images or photos of a room and enter exact measurements. A live chat customer service is another thing to look for since there is a learning curve to this software. Most offer 2D and 3D design, which is also great to have. There are a number of interior design software programs on the market for this purpose; most are under one hundred dollars. The best are by Punch! Software and Virtual Architect Home Design Software.

When designing your laundry area, recognize that most laundry chores start at the washer or sink and end in the laundry basket or on a hanging rack. Design your laundry room in a systematic fashion that follows the laundry cycle, so the room functions smoothly. Therefore, counters, hanging racks, and baskets should be strategically arranged near the appliances and sink.

Locate laundry aids and place storage essentials where they're used for convenience. The

ironing station requires an electrical outlet and a place to store the iron and spray starch. The dryer needs counter space nearby to fold and stack clothes promptly and reduce wrinkles and creases. For the same reason, place clothes hangers and racks close to the dryer, too.

## Upscale Laundry Rooms

In an upscale laundry room, cabinetry can surround the appliances, like the washer, dryer, or even a drying cabinet, which is a luxury appliance that accelerates the drying time for clothes that need to line dry or dry flat. It can also dry

bedspreads, boots, shoes, and coats quickly. A major benefit of laundry-room cabinetry is the counter space, which is ideal for sorting, stacking, and folding clean laundry.

Cabinetry in a laundry room offers more storage options than any other alternative. Tall cabinets can be equipped with a hanging rod to hang garments and hold hangers. Drawers and shelves can stock laundry aids, such as dryer balls, laundry pens, clothing dyes, and lint brushes. Shelving also can hold baskets to collect pocket items left in clothing, like receipts, change, and so on. Baskets can also hold socks missing their mates. Large base shelving can hold portable laundry baskets that need to travel throughout the

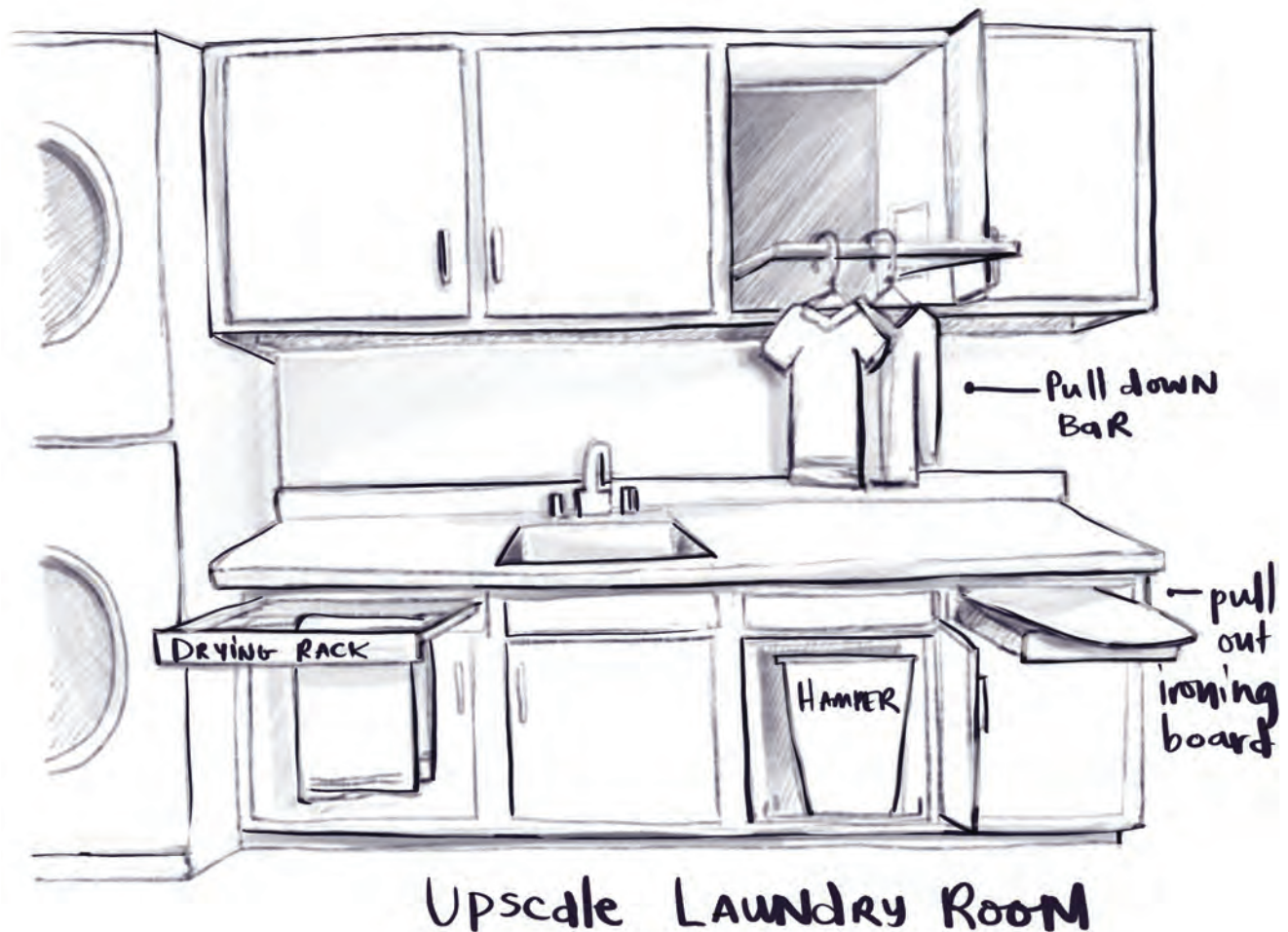


FIGURE 44.01  
Upscale Laundry Room

home. Look for collapsible laundry baskets for space-saving storage strategies.

Cabinets have accessories like pullout hampers to sort laundry. You can also designate one hamper for dry cleaning and another for tailoring. Cabinets also tend to have pullout trash cans, a necessity in a laundry room.

More unique cabinet laundry organizers are built-in, pullout ironing boards that extend from a base-cabinet drawer. There is also an upper cabinet pulldown hanging bar that drops to eye level to hang ironed clothing or dry cleaning. Drying racks are incorporated into cabinetry as pullout drawers commonly placed on the underside of an upper cabinet.

### **Sewing Center**

In a high-end laundry room, one may find a sewing center, in which a sewing machine is stationed on a specialized sewing table equipped with storage drawers for holding tools and accessories. A good sewing table has an adjustable platform that can raise and lower for a wide range of tasks. Many sewing tables have collapsible folding sides to expand the workspace when needed. Wheeled tables with locking casters are great for stability and portability to another storage spot.

The area surrounding a sewing table can also be outfitted with sewing organizers, such as a wall-mounted thread organizer or floor stands that hold rolled fabric. A cutting table with storage below for patterns and folded fabric is another amenity for a more extensive laundry room. Many cutting tables have base shelving to file or stack fabric, patterns, and tools. Baskets on these shelves can hold tools or scrap fabric. An ideal cutting table is accessible from multiple sides and large enough to fit fabrics and use patterns. A cutting table in a laundry room can also serve multiple functions, such as a place to fold and

sort laundry or hold laundry supplies, such as baskets and soaps.

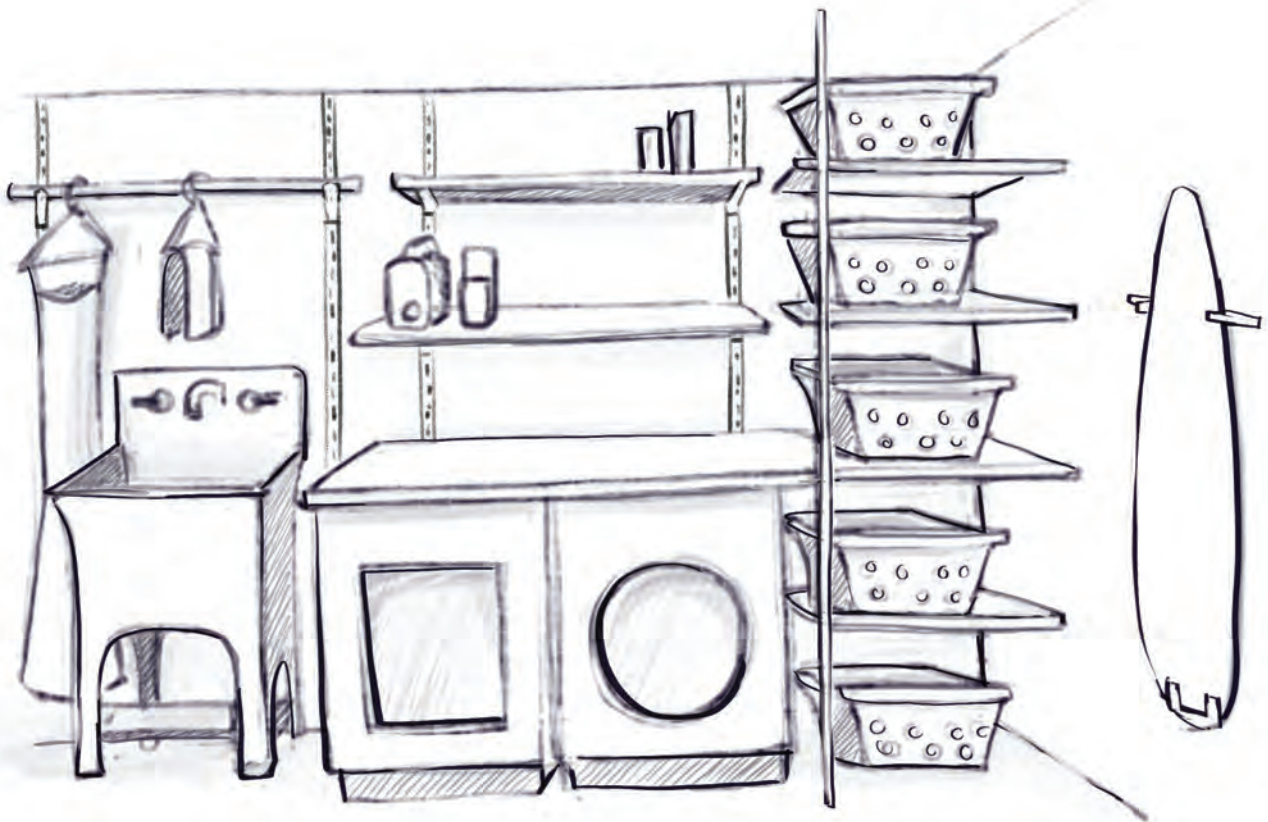
### **Budget-Friendly Laundry Rooms**

An economical way to create order in a laundry room is by using a track-based, suspended wire closet system on the walls surrounding the washer and dryer. These closet systems have accessory components that include pullout baskets, shelves, hooks, drawers, and hanging rods. There are also inexpensive laminate closet systems and wire shelving, which is sold separately at most home centers and can be used to store laundry items. Wire and laminate shelving generally comes in various depths; the deeper shelving can hold bigger items like laundry baskets, and shallow shelves can store smaller items like ironing supplies. An open-storage arrangement, such as a wall-mounted closet system with shelves, is important to keep neat.

### **Tidy Open-Storage Tips**

The following are a few tips to help keep open-storage arrangements tidy yet functional:

- Use bins, canisters, containers, trays, or boxes to divide, organize, and hide articles on shelves. For example, a basic compartmentalized drawer tray can contain smaller items, such as safety pins, laundry markers, scissors, lint brushes, and the like, so they stay orderly.
- Bulky, flimsy cardboard boxes that contain powdered laundry detergents look messy and don't preserve the product properly. It's best to transfer powder into clear airtight canisters with a scooper.
- Contain laundry markers in a cup holder.



## Suspended Wire Laundry System

FIGURE 44.02

Budget-Friendly Laundry Room

- A piggy bank is a good organizer to corral loose change.
- All shelving organizers look best when they match in color or material to form a uniform, neat appearance.
- Products placed outside an organizer can form into rows or clusters on shelves, where like items are kept together. For example, line all the spray stain removers in a single-file row. Also, face their labels forward so they're easy to see.
- Keep all the organizers in the laundry room consistent in material or color with that of

the closet system as to enhance the overall appearance of the space.

### Popular Organizers

The following are the most popular, affordable organizers for a laundry facility:

- Wall-mounted wallboard kits that are marketed to store small laundry items from attachable hooks, shelves, and rods. Similarly, basic sheets of pegboard, slat-wall, or wire grid can be installed to serve the same purpose. Items like lint brushes, laundry pens, scissors, spray starch, stain



removers, dryer sheets, sewing supplies, and stain removal tips are good to store on these organizers.

- Slim, tiered-shelf or drawer units designed to slip in between a freestanding washer and dryer will hold large bottles of laundry soap and all related cleaning agents. They come in a hard plastic material for durability and ease of cleaning. The shelf versions of these organizers are wheeled for easy access. These organizers can conveniently store all your laundry supplies out of sight.
- Wall-mounted, retractable valet or hanger storage organizers are inexpensive, space-saving ways to hold hangers or clothing. Many of these organizers are designed to open, retract, or pull down to open into a hanging rod and then close when not in use.
- Drying racks are important in any laundry facility. There are many types of inexpensive drying racks, such as retractable and wall-mounted ones. Others are floor organizers designed to easily collapse and take up little space.
- A freestanding utility sink versus a built-in sink housed in cabinetry is a budget-friendly solution for a necessary soaking tub in a laundry room. These sinks are heavy-duty, one-piece, molded construction and made of polypropylene or stainless steel. They tend to hold over twenty gallons of water and sit on steel legs. It's easy to form storage solutions around these sinks by using tiered drawer carts, hampers, rolling bins, wall-mounted folding tables, laundry carts, or laundry sorters, which are some of the popular economical freestanding organizers.

## Laundry Areas in Other Spaces

In many homes, especially townhomes, condominiums, and apartments, closets are used as laundry areas, so they're hidden, convenient, and save space. In a house, a closet is the spot to place a secondary laundry facility on another level. Often, a hallway, bathroom, bedroom, study, or office closet are key places for them.

### Laundry Area in a Closet

Generally, a double-size closet is necessary to create a high-functioning space equipped with shelving, hanging rods, counters, hampers and so on. Also, bifold closet doors will be necessary for full access to the space. Louvered doors, which have a series of wooden fins running horizontally to allow for ventilation, as well as privacy, are also necessary for closets that serve as laundry rooms.

The type of laundry appliances selected for a closet space influences storage arrangements. The three main types of laundry appliances are explained, along with how to arrange a laundry facility around them in a double closet space.

#### Stacked Washer and Dryer

Stacking laundry machines are arranged with the dryer on top of the washer, leaving floor-to-ceiling vertical space on one side of the closet. This open space is flexible for adding shelves, hanging rods, a small countertop, short cabinet, and floor organizers, such as a hamper. Depending on ceiling height, there may be space to add an over shelf or two above the appliances.

#### Side-by-Side Washer and Dryer

The best way to arrange a closet outfitted with side-by-side appliances that include a front-load washer is to create counter space directly above

for folding, sorting, and ironing. You can also capture additional storage space by utilizing the area in between the back of the laundry appliances and the wall. This space runs deep—around seven inches or so—due to the bulky components behind the washer/dryer, such as washer hoses and the dryer vent. A slim wall mounted shelf can occupy this dead space for storing laundry aids.

There is also a specialized over-the-washer storage shelf available that has a cantilevered design and fits most laundry appliances. These organizers are made to just hook onto the laundry machines without installation. In either scenario, overhead hanging rods, cabinets, and shelving can be placed to store laundry supplies.

#### **All-in-One Washer/Dryer**

This appliance is the same size as a single washer or dryer. Therefore, only a quarter of a typical double closet is needed, leaving plenty of space left for storage opportunities. Two-in-one machines are front loaders, so a folding and sorting counter can be placed on top that can also extend the full width of the closet. Overhead shelves, cubby compartments, or upper cabinets can sit above the counter.

Another closet design uses the open side of the closet for shelving, a pullout hamper, trash can, hanging rod, laundry baskets, laundry supplies, pullout ironing board, sewing machine, and so on.

#### **Laundry Areas in Shared Rooms**

When laundry appliances are shared with other rooms, it can be difficult to keep things organized, separated, and easy to find. Sometimes when a laundry facility resides in a kitchen, family room, office, bathroom, and so on, laundry machines are hidden in the room's closet, and all related products and accessories are collected in a common space, such as an armoire, to disguise everything.

However, it's not always necessary to hide laundry-room components in another room. Relaxed playrooms, art studios, tool rooms, mudrooms, office spaces, and some larger bathrooms are good places for an open laundry facility. In any room that also has a laundry facility, keep all the laundry products and supplies together in their own closet, cabinet, shelf, drawer, or organizer. Otherwise, it becomes easy to lose track of your laundry items amid unrelated belongings.

#### **Laundry Area in the Kitchen**

There are many ways to conceal a washer, dryer, and related items in a kitchen, which is a logical larger space to add a laundry area. Base cabinets in a kitchen can disguise laundry appliances behind doors, where upper cabinets or drawers can hold laundry soaps and other items. Kitchen base cabinets can also conceal laundry baskets. The base-cabinet countertop is a great place to fold and sort laundry, if you have the room. The kitchen sink can also be used to hand wash or soak soiled clothing. Upper kitchen cabinets that reach to the ceiling could disguise a laundry chute from an upper level. Clothing can then deposit into a basket located inside the cabinet, making it easy for dirty laundry to enter and hide in the kitchen.

A full-size ironing board organizer can be installed in a base-cabinet drawer, which collapses and hides when the drawer is closed. Above such an organizer in an upper cabinet, a pulldown hanging rod could hold ironed clothing. These hanging rods pull down to eye level and retract back into the cabinet while not in use.

Drying racks are another laundry organizer that are easy to hide in the kitchen. There are many wall-mounted, pullout racks designed to hide in decorative wall cabinets with doors that are perfect for the kitchen.

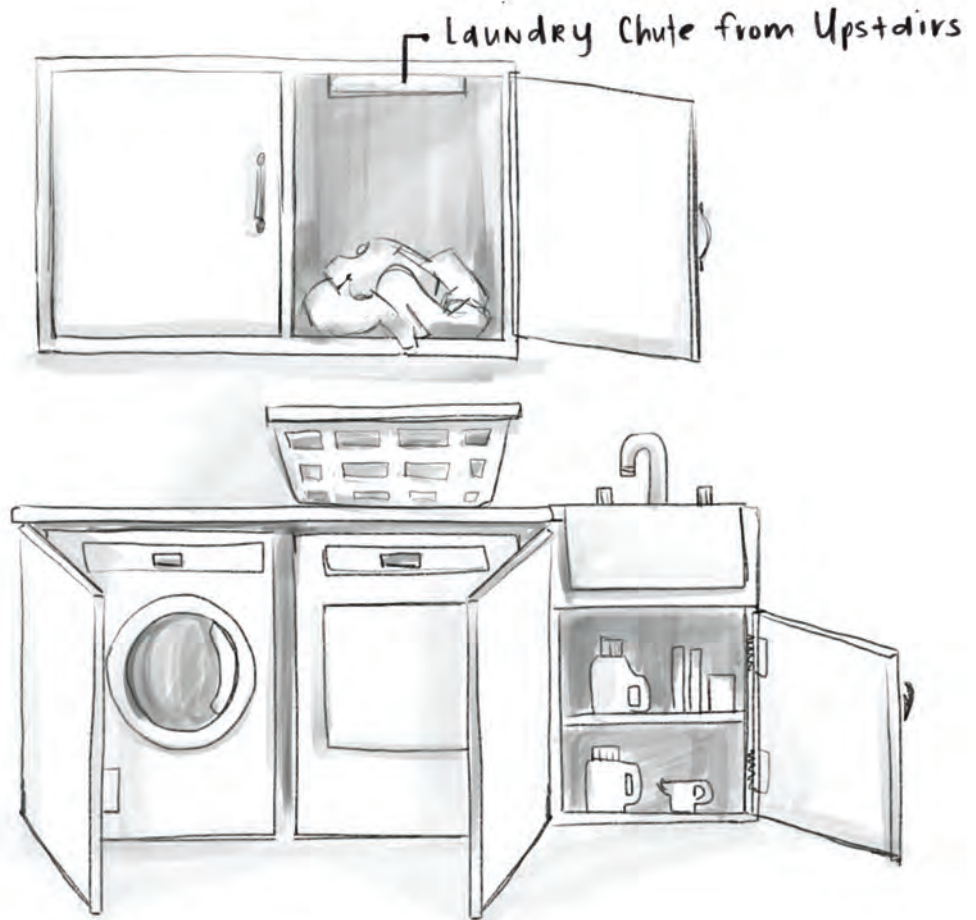


FIGURE 44.03

Hidden Laundry Area Inside the Kitchen

### Laundry Area in a Bathroom

A bathroom can be a good place to house a set of laundry machines, whether they're a primary or secondary set, provided there is enough room. The bathroom has the same requirements of a laundry facility, such as a sink, floors, and walls that must withstand moisture. Good ventilation is another feature a bathroom offers that a laundry facility needs. Hampers to hold clothing and towels are common to place in a bathroom and are a natural fit when placed next to laundry appliances. Additionally, a bathroom with a shower or bathtub can use a dryer to warm towels to use after bathing.

There are ways to situate a washer and dryer in a bathroom with the right amount of room. Space-saving, stackable washing machines take

up only about thirty square inches of floor space. These units are made with a smaller capacity than standard machines, so they're easier to squeeze into a bathroom closet or nook. Side-by-side laundry machines can be possible in large bathrooms with extensive cabinetry where they can be camouflaged in a base cabinet. Overhead counter space can get used for sorting, folding and stacking laundry. Shower rods and bathroom hanging rods can hold hung clothing. Bathroom cabinets, closets, and drawers can hold laundry essentials such as dryer sheets, detergents, stain fighting agents, and so on.

### Laundry Area in a Mudroom

A mudroom is the perfect place to add a laundry facility since both rooms are typically set away

from entertaining areas. Mudrooms and laundry rooms are both hardworking places that require similar features, such as a utility sink, durable countertops, good lighting, and easy-to-clean floors and walls.

Another benefit of combining these rooms is that open storage essentials, such as shelving units, wall organizers, and so on, are acceptable, and these organizers are less expensive than concealing cabinetry. A basic utility sink is a must in a combined space, as it will receive use from both laundry and mudroom chores.

One of the best features of this type of room is that messy things, such as sports uniforms, gardening clothes, beach towels, bathing suits, picnic blankets, or muddy belongings that would otherwise track throughout a house, can be washed, soaked, and dried before entering the home.

#### **Laundry Area in an Office**

A room or workstation that performs office duties should be combined with a laundry facility only if the washer/dryer noise won't affect the person's concentration. Isolating the machines in an enclosed space, such as a closet, or using the machines at different times may solve the problem. Another factor to consider is that two people could potentially be using the room for different reasons and tasks at the same time, which might be distracting.

Generally, a home office is a room not frequented by guests. Some, however, may have an occasional client, which means the washer, dryer, and accessories will need to be disguised. This can be achieved by using cabinets or closets. Otherwise, it's acceptable to expose laundry

machines and organizers in an office, especially when it's located in a more private part of the home.

#### **Laundry Area in a Craft Room/Workstation**

A craft room or workstation may be a good space to combine with a laundry facility if working on crafting projects isn't affected by the appliances' noise. Some craft room features, such as a crafting table, can be shared with a laundry facility for sewing, folding, and ironing purposes. Additionally, a craft room can benefit from many laundry-room features, such as good lighting, a utility sink, and easy-to-care-for walls and floors.

#### **Laundry Area in a Butler's Pantry**

A butler's pantry is a service area, commonly located in a hallway that links the kitchen and dining room. A laundry facility in a butler's pantry is a convenient location just off the kitchen, making any spillover items, such as laundry products or baskets, easy to store in a kitchen cabinet. A butler's pantry is usually equipped with a sink, countertop, base cabinets, and upper cabinets or shelves, making a laundry area easy to integrate here.

This space acts as a serving area for gatherings and is used as a bar or food station. It may also store china, stemware, silver, and liquor. Laundry appliances are easy to disguise in base cabinets, and counters can be used for folding and sorting. A sink located in a butler's pantry or even accessing a nearby kitchen sink is ideal for soaking and handwashing clothing.



## TOP-TO-BOTTOM HOME ORGANIZING

*Top-To-Bottom Home Organizing* is a complete, one-of-a-kind reference book designed to bring order to any living space in your home.

This must-have home-organizing guide will prove to be an invaluable resource that you can use over and over again. Innovative storage arrangements for your household belongings are featured in the countless illustrations.

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