Livingetc
MODERN HOME DESIGN AND STYLE

These Are the 3 Items That Are Most Difficult to Store in Your Home — I Asked Organizers for the Solution

Hear what Joshua Fields Millburn of The Minimalists and experts in professional organizing have to say about homing difficult items, and where they could potentially live

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1. SMALL APPLIANCES

If every year you have fallen for the adverts claiming that the latest kitchen gadget will change your life, this one's for you. We can only use so many small appliances, and only so many of these appliances are something that actually add value to your life. Think about it, when was the last time you reached for that electric mixer, considering you don't like to bake?

Ashley Murphy and Marissa Hagmeyer, co-founder and CEO, and co-founder and COO of NEAT Method, say, "From stand mixers and instant pots to humidifiers and air purifiers, small appliances can be one of the biggest space-wasting culprits. We recommend designating a lower pantry shelf or enclosed cabinet out of the way for less often used appliances, and being selective by only allowing daily use appliances to sit out in the open."

Learning how to organize kitchen appliances will be a game changer in terms of saving you space and adding a sense of breathability to your kitchen. If you truly can't find a home for an appliance among your near-to-bursting cupboards, stop to ask yourself whether you actually need it. Then, if you can't remember the last time it saw the light of day, place it in a pile to donate.

2. SEASONAL DECOR

Many homeowners take great joy in adding seasonal decor to their space during the holidays. It lifts their spirits, gives them an activity to do with family and marks the excitement that comes with a changing season in a visual way. However, especially in smaller homes, it can be difficult to know how to store holiday decor.

Lynda Reider, founder and expert at Cut the Clutter RVA, says, "Seasonal items like holiday decorations can vary greatly in size – from fifty-piece tiny Christmas villages to two-story tall Halloween skeletons. These items are used only for a part of the year, making them difficult to store in a way that doesn't take up valuable space."

To give seasonal decor the best home possible, go through your decor first and see what you wish to keep. This is something I do every year because, if we're honest with ourselves, a lot of seasonal decorations can be cheaply made and easily damaged. Comb through your collection and see what's worth keeping — what do you love and feel you could genuinely look forward to putting up each year? Then, place your pile of keeps in an air-tight transparent storage container so your items are kept safe from being bumped into and are easy to locate. This box can be stored in an attic, on the shelf of a garage, in the shed or even under your bed.

Make a conscious decision in the future to invest in quality decor or if you're buying something cheaper assess the likelihood of it falling apart. And if you're in love with the idea of having larger decorations, perhaps only purchase ones you can deconstruct after use.

3. UNWANTED GIFTS

Unwanted gifts can end up stored anywhere and everywhere because they aren't wanted or needed in your home, yet carry a sense of obligation. The seventh sweater you were gifted last fall, the vase from your aunt's house who you were never close to, the well-meaning addition of a waffle maker for your kitchen gathering dust with the two already crammed behind your boxes of cereal.

Jamie Hord, founder of Horderly Professional Organizing, says, "A minimalist purchases things with intention and purpose, and will most likely know if they have a proper home for something before bringing it into their life."

For those of us out there who wouldn't consider ourselves as 'minimalists', this idea still raises the question of, 'Do we need or even want most of what is gifted to us?'.

Open up conversations surrounding gift giving and how to approach decluttering sentimental items. If you're acquiring too much you feel obligated to keep, try to designate one or two small labeled boxes for these items and make that space their home. That way, everything has a place and you can keep the amount of these obligation-fuelled items in your life under control.

As noted by Heidi Solomon, professional organizer and interior decorator at POSH Boston, "When space is at a premium, deciding what goes where is always a negotiation of value and priorities for each item in your space."

Take time to consider why your hard to home items are causing struggle, evaluate what function they serve in your life, and assess whether the space they take up in your home (wherever that ends up being) is worthy of being taken up by that possession. All the best on your journey ahead.

5 Closet Mistakes That Are Making You Wear Less of Your Wardrobe — According to Professional Organizers

Experts share an assortment of wardrobe organization mistakes that people make which prevent them from wearing a lot of what's in their closet

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1. STACKING TALL PILES OF FOLDED CLOTHING

Ashley Murphy and Marissa Hagmeyer, co-founders of NEAT Method, share, "Storing folded clothing in stacks is a common practice but it can encourage a person to repeatedly reach for those items on top. Instead, we like to fold each item to fit the height of the storage space they are in, and place them in 'file folded' rows."

Doing this not only saves more space than folding would, but it also allows you to see every individual piece of clothing in your possession. Ashley and Marissa recommend investing in a closet organizer such as their NEAT Method Acacia Drawer Dividers to help keep your storage in top form.

Mindy Godding, certified professional organizer, owner of Abundance Organizing and president of the National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals (NAPO), adds, "Flat surfaces can pose a challenge in wardrobes because they attract piles, making items harder to see and access. Use bins or acrylic holders to corral smaller items like socks and hats to keep them tidy and give them boundaries."

Folding and stacking clothing is a game-changer when it comes to saving on storage, but it can actually prevent you from wearing a lot of what you own. I'm definitely guilty of this — when I fold away my clothes I purposefully put my favorite pieces near the top of the stack so they are easier to reach… and we know what that means for the pieces at the bottom of the pile.

2. HAVING TOO MANY ITEMS TO BEGIN WITH

Organizing a room with too much stuff is tricky, and same goes for your closet — and it makes complete sense why you don't wear the majority of your items if this is the case for you. You simply won't be able to find everything or make time to wear each piece.

Jamie Hord, founder of Horderly Professional Organizing, says, "Having a wardrobe that is too crammed will avoid you from easily shopping from your own closet. You will then find it frustrating to find something to wear or to put items away, thus causing more of a mess and spending more time getting ready."

Using a method such as the no-contact decluttering method, where you go through your wardrobe and get rid of items without trying them on, is a great way to rid your closet of clutter. You can set yourself a rule such as, 'If I haven't worn this in the last two years, it's time for it to go.'

3. NOT PUTTING LIKE WITH LIKE

(Image credit: C/O horderly)

Heidi Solomon, professional organizer and interior decorator at POSH Boston, explains how not putting like items together can prevent a person from finding what they're looking for in a wardrobe.

"Keeping a space organized by sorting the clothes into categories, labeling bins/baskets that are higher up and having uniform hangers will make a world of difference in a disorganized space and help you shop your closet," says Heidi. "For instance, when you are looking for a blouse, you don't want to have to flip through all of your dresses, too. It should be really easy to find what you want."

Other options include the aesthetically-pleasing color organized closet, but that may not be as helpful in remembering the full range of what you have in your wardrobe.

If it isn't easy to find what you're looking for in your wardrobe, you will gravitate towards what is easy — the items at the front in your view. For this reason, it's vital to consider closet organizers to declutter your wardrobe to make it a more visually accessible space.

4. USING "OUT OF SIGHT" STORAGE

"Out of sight, out of mind has never been more true than in the closet," say Ashley and Marissa. That's why the folded items at the bottom of the pile or the clothes hibernating at the very back of your closet barely ever see the light of day.

They continue, "If you can, avoid tucking things away in unlabeled opaque bins and display shoes and accessories on open shelving. For the items you do have to store enclosed, be sure to add a label to the outside as a reminder of what is inside."

If you haven't already considered embarking on a wardrobe declutter and have shelves upon shelves of out of sight storage, now might be the ideal time to learn how to declutter clothes and take control over your space again.

5. INCORRECTLY DESIGNATING YOUR WARDROBE SPACES

Similarly to the benefits of storing like with like, there are troves of benefits that come with correctly delegating the space in your closet.

Ashley and Marissa say, "Upper closet shelves are a great way to maximize space in a closet. However, items stored out-of-reach are far less likely to be used. Instead, designate those areas for out of season or occasional use items only, making sure to prioritize "prime real estate" shelves and drawers for everyday items."

Now you're ready to wear your wardrobe with pride. Enjoy your new outfits!