

Surprise!

With a little inspiration and some easy reshuffling, you can create great spring looks from what you already own

Shop Your CLOSET

SPRING'S HERE, BUT BEFORE YOU EVEN THINK about going shopping and spending a lot of dough on the season's must-haves, plant yourself in front of your own brimming wardrobe. Follow our steps to organize your closet like a chic little shop to pick and choose from. You'll learn what to keep, what to toss, and how to restyle your favorites. Create a "look book" of photos of cool new outfits you've put together that's easy to reference when you're getting dressed. And start compiling tear sheets of styles you love from magazines for an "inspiration board." Finally, add a dose of personality—pretty wallpaper, vintage hooks—to make the space inviting. The result: a new wardrobe before you've stepped out the door.

written by KATHLEEN FIFIELD
illustrated by EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM
photographed by ALEX CAO



Find Fresh Looks in
YOUR OWN CLOSET

Style

146

SHOES,
BAGS and
MORE!

Absolutely
Beautiful

99 TIPS for
GETTING
GORGEOUS

JULIANNE
MOORE
Personal
Photos
p. 450

NEW! Spring
Clothes at
Great Prices



2) Get inspired

You've cleared the clutter and found creative ways to wear what you have. Now introduce order and imagination

Line it up You know how in the best shops you can riffle through a rack of clothes—zip, zip, zip? To get that ease within your closet, make sure

you group like with like (pants with pants, dark colors together, etc.), all pieces facing the same way, suggests Jessica Duquette of *inperfect*

order.com. “You want to make it as easy as possible to be inventive and creative with your wardrobe,” adds Jenny Gering of *go-lightly.com*.

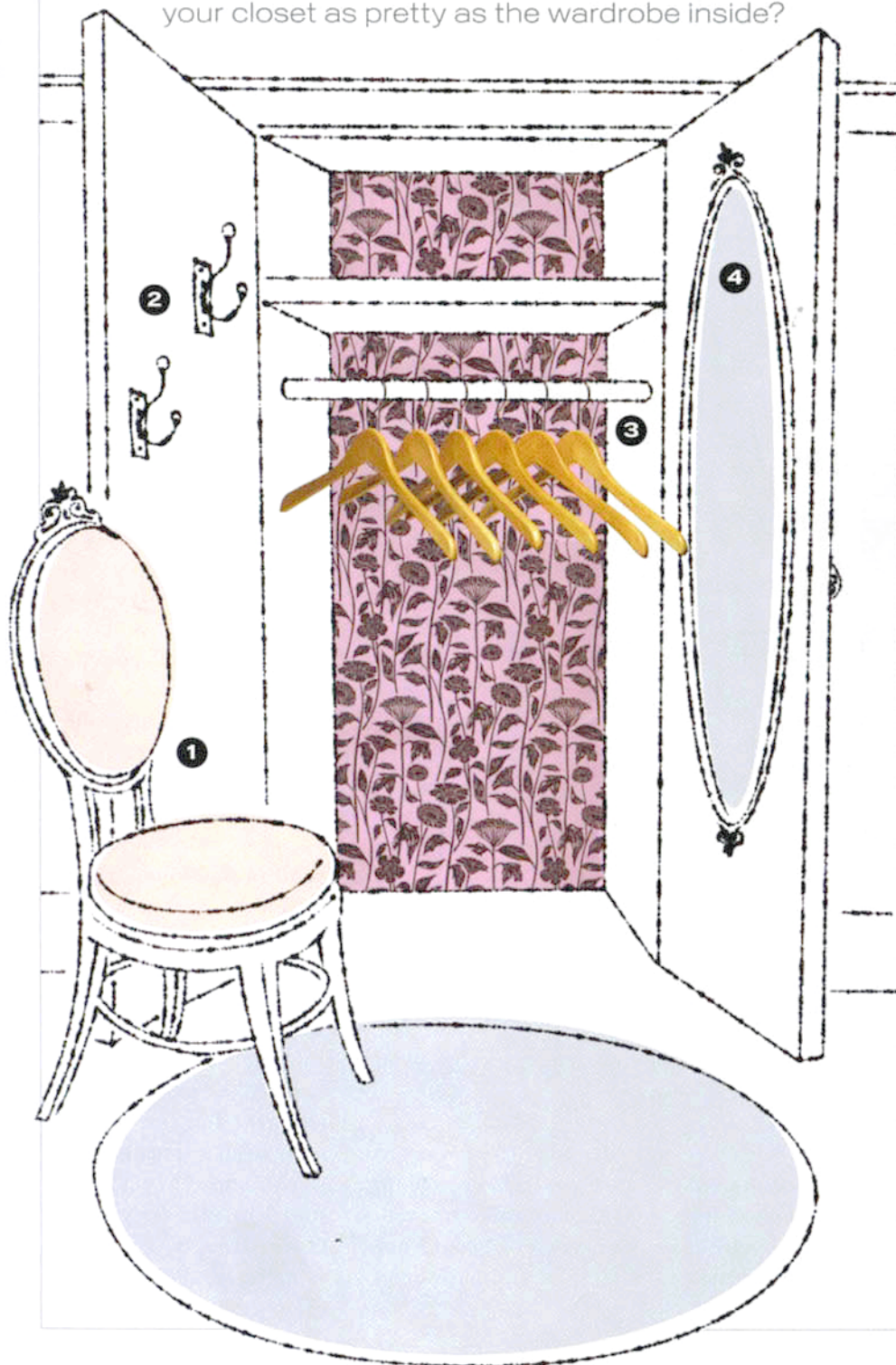
Make it accessible Use logic when it comes to positioning clothes and accessories in your closet, says Gering. “If items aren’t easy to reach, you’re much less apt to wear them,” she says. “Hang your go-to items at eye level whenever possible.”

Get visual Stores have tempting displays that inspire you to try a new top or outfit. Your closet, suggest Visual Therapy’s Jesse Garza and Joe Lupo, authors of *Nothing to Wear?*, should sport an “inspiration board,” a collage of looks you love (left). Tear pages from magazines that show an outfit, an attitude or a style that appeals to you. Mount tear sheets on a bulletin board to hang in the closet or near the area where you get dressed.

Time for a wish list Now that you know what you have—and what you want—you can figure out spring must-haves. Your game plan should address any “holes” in your wardrobe that have come into focus. As Garza and Lupo put it, do you have too much “cake” (basics) and not enough “frosting” (the fun stuff)? Too many solids and not enough graphic prints? Could a few ruffles balance out all the tailored pants, or bring some texture to the mix?

3) Add boutique touches

You'll be opening its doors every day, so why not make your closet as pretty as the wardrobe inside?



1 Create atmosphere

Make your closet feel like a chic boutique, “a place you want to linger,” says Simon Doonan, creative director of Barneys New York. “You’ll have fun getting dressed and feel better about how you look.” Have a comfy chair nearby, so you can sit as you try on shoes.

2 Give it personality

Inject signature elements into the space—pick a paint color or wallpaper you love, add molding to shelves, or install vintage hooks. Line It to the Limit organizer Ruben Lopez suggests covering shelves with fabric, as he did recently for Demi Moore. “She chose an Ultra-suede to give shelves a finished but rough look,” Lopez reports.

3 Splurge a little

If there’s one thing to indulge in, it’s nice hangers, say organizers. “For a uniform look, swap out your hangers with walnut, birch or maple ones,” suggests Lara Greenberg. “It pulls everything together.” A good choice (left): wooden hangers, \$8.50 for five; closetry.com.

4 See yourself clearly

A full-length mirror is a must—as is good lighting. Jessica Duquette, of In Perfect Order, likes incandescent lighting: “It’s bright enough to illuminate the entire closet. You’ll get some shadows, but you’ll have a more natural light to see how colors match up.”

Ask the Experts

How to keep clothing chaos at bay and create more room for your stylish pieces

Q Where do I start if I want to redo my closet myself?

A Determine how much space you need for short and long items. This will help you figure out what length poles you'll need. Then decide the number of shelves you want. Do-it-yourself sources to check out: Home Depot's Configurations by Rubbermaid line has ready-made components in stainless steel (4' x 8' kit, \$199; homedepot.com); Target's California Closets line offers a variety of shelving options (four-shelf unit, \$80; target.com).

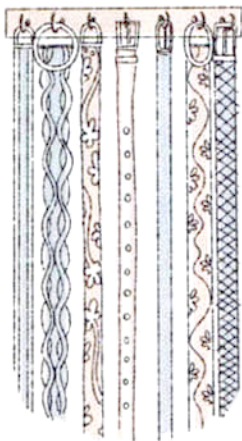
Q Any stylish ways to organize my messy closet shelves?

A Try to create space within space, say experts. Cord off shelves and drawers with acrylic dividers so they don't become resting spots for messes. Baskets on shelves also make great holding places for smaller items. 15" straw baskets, Ibolilli, \$30; at Closetry, 310-278-3173.



Q My belts and shoes are always in a jumble. What's your advice?

A Experts underscore the importance of keeping often-worn items within arm's reach. Instead of stashing belts in a drawer, install a row of hooks in your closet to hang them on. (The Container Store has a 20-inch belt



rack that holds up to 40 belts or scarves, \$4; containerstore.com.) As for shoes: If they are stored in their original boxes, take a Polaroid of the style and tape it to the front for easier retrieval, suggests Lara Greenberg. Hanging canvas shelves (see illustration on next page: five-shelf, \$48; holdeverything.com) or over-the-door shoe racks are other choices, says Handy Girl Organizer's Cyndi Seidler.

Q I want to keep my closet streamlined, but I agonize over getting rid of things.

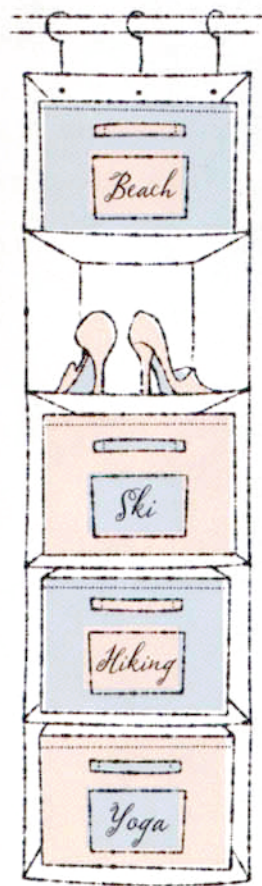
A A giveaway hamper could be the way to stay organized while allowing yourself a little leeway in deciding what needs to go when. Station your clothing outbox in a corner of the closet, toss in that mini you never wear (but can't quite part with) and over time, says Mark-Alan Harmon, "you'll realize you don't miss it." Just be sure to take your haul to the Goodwill once a season. Another key to keeping things neat is daily maintenance, says Greenberg: "You need to spend five minutes a day hanging up clothes before bed—it's like doing the dishes or brushing your teeth." Java Pandan hamper, \$99; Container Store, 800-786-7315.



Ask the Experts

Q How should I store my jewelry?

A Some pros, like Lara Greenberg, prefer lined drawers, where "everything is laid out and partitioned off," especially if it's fine jewelry. Others, such as Troy Adams Design's Lisa Adams, whose clients include Carmen Electra and Jewel, suggest hanging costume jewelry on a peg-board so it's easier to experiment with options as you dress. "Accessories, like your wardrobe, should be at eye level," says Clinton Kelly, co-host of TLC's *What Not to Wear*. You can also attach plastic hooks to a shadowbox to hang things up. Use a stapler or glue gun to attach solid-color silk or velvet behind the baubles so you can see them clearly. Wood-frame shadowbox, \$24-\$89 (depending on size); at Pottery Barn or potterybarn.com.



Q I can never find my ski clothes when I need them. Any suggestions?

A Clos-ette's Melanie Charlton puts together "closet kits" for her clients, containing everything for, say, a beach weekend—and labels the boxes accordingly. "The whole idea is to have stuff ready for easy packing. I stash all the gear that's needed in canvas cartons," says Charlton. "It depends on how much is needed—for skiing you may have a couple of boxes." One of her clients packs the whole family's swimsuits in a "Summer" box (try a medium-size canvas box, \$40; holdeverything.com). It's a smart way to store workout gear too.

—reported by Meg Hemphill, Kwala Mandel

Q What is the best way to keep my closet fresh and moth free?

A Lavender, says Mark-Alan Harmon, is his top pick because of its calming scent and ability to keep the bugs at bay. Another moth-fighting option, says Adams, is jasmine: "I tie jasmine sachets to hangers." For your boots, Kelly recommends cedar shoe trees. They get rid of odor and help preserve shape, he says, if you slip them in as soon as a shoe comes off. Finally, keep your closet doors open as much as possible to air out your clothes throughout the year. Elizabeth W lavender-filled shoe inserts, \$16 for two; 800-781-6126.

