

lesson 1

laying the foundation

Once upon a time, organizing my closet was very, very easy. I had a simple process and a great helper. Each year, before the start of school, my mom and I would pull everything out of my closet and my dresser drawers. I would try everything on for Mom and she would evaluate whether or not each item fit. And that, my friends, was the only decision criterion involved: if an item fit me, it stayed. If it was too small, way too short, or even slightly too tight, out it went.

As we went through my closet, my mom and I would compile a brief list of items to purchase on our back-to-school clothes shopping trip—a rite of passage I looked forward to each and every year. Making the list, like the rest of the process, was straightforward enough. My list included five outfits for school—one for each day of the week; a few “play clothes” for after school, after church and weekends; and a dress or two to wear to church on Sundays. The list also included shoes: one brown leather pair for school, a pair of sneakers (to wear with play clothes, of course), and one pair of church shoes.

While this approach was simple indeed, it definitely had its shortcomings. For one thing, the term “play clothes” still makes me cringe. While play is supposed to be fun, my clothes suitable for playing were anything but *fun*. Play clothes consisted of too-short-but-(hopefully)-no-one-will-notice pants; faded, twice-handed-down sweatshirts; and anything else that still fit but wasn't in good enough shape to wear to school. Taste, comfort, and my own personal sense of style didn't factor into the equation at all.

I'm willing to bet you have your own closet story to tell. And that story and the ghosts it left behind are very likely hanging out in your closet today. Perhaps like me, you lived in the smallest house in an affluent neighborhood, and had the small, non-designer-label wardrobe to go with your oh-so-small house. Or maybe your closet story is one of an ongoing battle with fluctuating jean sizes and the belief that if you let go of the skinny jeans you're giving up on your dream of fitting into them once again. Perhaps your closet is filled with memory clothing—items you cling to in an attempt to keep the memories they hold fresh in your mind.

Unlike your kitchen, the items in your closet are rife with stories, stories that can ultimately lead to roadblocks on your path to an organized closet. But when you move beyond your stories and the roadblocks left in their path, you become empowered to create an organized closet that contains clothing you feel good wearing, organized in a way that works for you.

While the closet can be a high-stakes place to organize, the rewards are worth it. You use your closet first thing every day, which means it can set the tone for your entire day. When your closet is organized and it's easy to find the perfect outfit for the day's planned events—your day gets off to a low-stress start. Plus, when you go through the process of removing your closet clutter, letting go of clothes that no longer fit your body and life, it actually feels like you have *more clothes*. When the clutter is gone, it's easier to store, find, and access the clothes you *do* wear. Plus, when you let go of clothing clutter you let go of the stories in your closet that aren't serving you any more...and perhaps some remorse, too!

If all that weren't enough...*wow*...lets just talk about how great an organized closet *looks*. For days after organizing my closet, I have been known to just open the closet door and stare in. An organized closet simply gives you an overwhelming sense of "*ahhhh*..." It looks good. It works well. And it feels good, too!

So, let's go create some *ahhhh* in your closet. Ready? Here's our game plan.

Lesson 1 is all about reading, understanding, and preparing. You'll learn about the goal of an organized closet as we concentrate on the closet itself, and as we focus on your wardrobe as well. You'll do some prep work to get ready to organize your closet. You'll gather the necessary tools and supplies, and learn about closet storage solutions and their role in organizing your closet.

Lesson 2 is all about taking action and organizing your closet! Make sure you've blocked out time on your calendar after Lesson 2 for a closet organizing appointment with yourself. At the end of this lesson, you will have completely weeded out your closet and transformed it into a newly beautiful and functional space.

All right...let's get started!



STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR GOALS

Before embarking on your closet organizing project, spend some time getting clear about what you want—not only in terms of your closet itself, but also in terms of the wardrobe it houses.

An organized closet is filled with items that fit your body and your life—and that's all! The items in this space are stored in a manner that makes them easy to see and access, making it simple for you to get dressed in the morning. Your goal for organizing your closet, then, is to clear your closet clutter and eliminate items that no longer fit your body or your life. This is quite similar to the process my mom used with me growing up—with one key distinction. You will also factor in your sense of style, taste and comfort. Ideally, the clothing you keep will be those items you feel best in. The things that make you feel frumpy, dumpy, washed out, or (insert your favorite negative description here) will all go out the door.

So to sum it all up, you want your closet to be filled with clothes, shoes and accessories that work for you—they fit your body and life. It's equally important that your clothes make you feel good—you want your clothes to flatter your body and fit your sense of style. Last but not least, your goal is to arrange and store your clothing in a manner that makes sense to you, makes it easy to see and access your belongings, and keeps your clothing protected.

“ An organized closet is filled with items that fit your body and your life—and that's all! ”

Essentially then, you have two complementary goals when organizing your closet. The first goal relates to your wardrobe itself, and the second goal relates to your closet and how it stores this organized wardrobe.

This is a sample of *Organize Your Closet*—a self-paced workshop from simplify 101. To continue on with this workshop, visit www.simplify101.com.