



Walk-in closet in an Okanagan cherry finish melamine with tilt out hamper, crown and base molding. Available at ClosetsbyDesign.

how to organize

your bedroom

by Adriane Weinberg

A bedroom should be your peaceful haven, a place to relax and unwind from daily pressures and get a good night's sleep before facing the next day's challenges. It shouldn't be a chaotic place you want to escape.

Having an organized, clutter-free space will greatly improve your overall well-being. Close your eyes and imagine two scenarios: an uncluttered, organized and soothing environment or a clutter-strewn room that is anything but

peaceful. Form a mental image of how you want your bedroom to look, schedule appointments with yourself and, before long, you will achieve that goal and have a transformed space.

Organizing a bedroom is like organizing any space. First, eliminate clutter—anything not useful or enjoyable—so what's left can be organized. This is done by de-cluttering and sorting. Get plastic trash bags and at least four cardboard cartons. Label them “Donate,” “Needs Repair,”

“Undecided” and “Belongs Elsewhere.” The last box is for things that belong elsewhere in the house. It's not efficient to bring things individually to other rooms and most likely you'll get distracted. Depending upon the type of clutter, you may need two additional cartons labeled “Recycle” and “Shred.”

Decide on a spot to start, such as a corner of the room. Pick up every item and decide what to do with it. If you need to reduce a significant amount of clutter,

make it much harder to keep things than to eliminate them. For items to remain in your bedroom, assign each a home or permanent place. Work forward from that spot and don't skip anything so everything behind you is done.

If you're really unsure about parting with certain things, put them in the "Undecided" box. Be careful not to overuse this box because you'll just transfer your clutter elsewhere. Label that box with its contents and a future date, say 6 months from then, and put the label on the outside. If you haven't missed those things by that date, it's time to let them go.

By donating what you no longer want or have room to store, your discards can be enjoyed by family, friends or strangers. If donating to a charity that resells items, it will feel good to help the less fortunate buy your things at low prices and you'll get a tax-deductible receipt.

Some general tips:

- Keep eliminating clutter until your bedroom looks and feels comfortable.
- If organizing the entire room feels completely overwhelming, break down the project so it's manageable. Start with a closet, dresser or drawer.
- This process can be time consuming so set realistic expectations. Pace yourself.

Perhaps work for a few hours, take a break and re-evaluate when to resume. Don't do too much at one time or you will burn out. Years of accumulated clutter can't be eliminated overnight.

- If it's helpful for motivation, give yourself small rewards along the way and a bigger one when you finish.

When assigning homes:

- Group similar things together.
- Put your most frequently used items in the most accessible places (in-season clothing should be located in easy-to-reach spaces).

To maintain results, put things where they belong immediately after use for instant retrieval next time. Is this a foreign concept? If so, make a firm commitment not to leave things lying around. It takes 28 days to create or break a habit so, when done consistently for about a month, new habits will replace those that did not work well. Continue to eliminate what you don't need or want. To maintain the balance, create some rules to live by. For example, getting something new means eliminating an existing similar item. If there still is too much clutter, eliminate two similar items for each new one. Regular maintenance will keep your bedroom clutter free and organized forever.

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