



# 9 WAYS TO DETOX YOUR WARDROBE

*Are your drawers overflowing, but you still can't find anything to wear? Spring is the perfect time for a wardrobe overhaul, but where do you start? Kate Finnegan asks the experts how to take the stress out of decluttering*

**M**aybe it's a spring thing, maybe it's a 2019 thing (see Bobby Berk's house makeovers on *Queer Eye* or the whole Marie Kondo phenomenon), but clearing out your house, and life, has unexpectedly become a hot topic — particularly when it comes to what seems to be everybody's dirty secret: the wardrobe. "I've been getting so many calls," says Danijela Coho, aka the Wardrobe Fairy, a London-based professional closet declutterer and organiser. "There's been a lot of interest this year," agrees Hayley Stevens of Vault Couture, a luxury wardrobe management service. "I think Marie Kondo has revealed how much better you can feel when you're more organised, and now people want to do it for themselves." But can you do it yourself? How do you get from a daily state of wardrobe malfunction, with shoes stuffed in drawers and jumpers dangling from wire hangers, to the unlikely scenario of opening the doors and sighing with pleasure? We asked four organising wizards for help.

**1 DON'T DO IT ALL AT ONCE**  
Marie Kondo gets her clients to take everything out of their wardrobes and pile it all in the middle of the room. Unanimous tip from all of our experts: do not do this! "I can get everything out because I know what I'm doing," Coho says, "but if you're by yourself, you'll just lose your mind. It's overwhelming." Instead, tackle one section at a time. "Do it by category," says personal shopper and wardrobe organiser Anna Berkeley. "Get out all your T-shirts or all your knitwear. Or you could break it down into workwear — trousers, shirts, skirts for the office — or weekend clothes. You'll get a sense of achievement with each section you do and that will encourage you."

**2 BE HONEST**  
"No matter how good an organiser you are, if there are too many items, your wardrobe will never function properly," Stevens says. "To be efficient with your space, you need to be 100% honest about what you've got and what you wear. A good first question is: what are your most used items?"  
Stylist and founder of Practical Princess Erika Gibbs recommends a trying-on session: "You need to see what's working for you now. We

evolve, change and grow, our lifestyles change, our bodies change. So try on and re-evaluate."  
Take out damaged or stained clothes. "See what can be rescued, what needs dry-cleaning," Stevens says. "If it has a small hole or mark, get it fixed. Don't put it back in your wardrobe and don't procrastinate. If you're not going to get it fixed, give it to charity or recycle."

**3 ACCEPT THAT THE MONEY HAS GONE**  
Berkeley says her clients often hang on to clothes because of guilt about what they cost. "They say, 'I can't get rid of this because I spent hundreds on it five years ago.' You have to accept that the money has gone. Hopefully you wore it, but if it's something you've never worn, then it must be held up as an expensive mistake. Think about why you didn't wear it. It's a good way of seeing where you go wrong with shopping. Then let it go — resell it or give it to charity or a friend."

**4 MAKE A SEASONAL WARDROBE**  
Start thinking seasonally. "You don't want to be wading through kaftans and summer dresses when you're trying to find a party dress," Gibbs says. "Only have in your wardrobe what's working for you now. Then, in six months' time, do a swap over. We're heading into spring now, so you need easy access to your lighter jackets, for example."  
What to do with your out-of-season clothes? "Either vacuum pack and put them under your bed, or store them on those high shelves at the top of the wardrobe or the cupboard that you can't reach. Or put them into storage," Stevens says. (Both Vault Couture and Practical Princess rent out storage space.) Protect your knits in cotton boxes (moths tend to avoid vegetable fibres). "I stick cashmere in plastic bags in the freezer because as soon as it warms up that's when the moths go mental. If you can't fit them in the freezer, store them in your coldest room."

**5 DIVIDE INTO CATEGORIES**  
Once you have removed your out-of-season clothes, Berkeley recommends dividing the remainder into further categories. "I always divide into work, evening and weekend, so you can see what you've got for different occasions."  
"The most common reaction when I'm doing a clear out is: 'Oh my God, I forgot I had this!'" Coho says. "People have so much, they can't see what they own. That's why I'm a big fan of hanging as much as you can — even T-shirts and jeans — because you can see it more easily." Think logically. "You need to be able to access what you use most often," Stevens says. "Use the floor, low shelves and rails for your most-used things. Put out-of-season pieces or things you're keeping for sentimental reasons on higher shelves."

## THE EXPERTS



**Danijela Coho**  
Aka the Wardrobe Fairy, whose clients include Rita Ora.  
[wardrobeafairy.co.uk](http://wardrobeafairy.co.uk)



**Erika Gibbs**  
Stylist, founder of Practical Princess and author of *Practical Princess Perfect Wardrobe* (Ryland Peters & Small £9.99). Clients include Kate Moss.  
[practicalprincess.com](http://practicalprincess.com)



**Anna Berkeley**  
A former buyer for Selfridges and Prada, Berkeley offers styling, personal shopping and wardrobe organisation.  
[annaberkeley.com](http://annaberkeley.com)



**Hayley Stevens**  
Client relationship manager at Vault Couture, a wardrobe management service with storage facilities and digital access.  
[vaultcouture.com](http://vaultcouture.com)

**6 SHOW SHOES RESPECT**  
"People seem really reluctant to get rid of shoes," Berkeley says. "But shoes date very quickly and you don't actually need that many. In which case, save yourself the space and let them go. There are plenty of places to recycle shoes now." Remember, you are more likely to wear them if you can see them, so get them out of their boxes and onto a shoe rack. "Put in shoe trees or tissue, and feed leather with polish, especially if they shoes are expensive," she says.

**7 USE THE RIGHT TOOLS**  
All the experts agree that good hangers are the single best investment for your wardrobe. Practical Princess has its own range. Other experts recommend bulk-buying thin velvet hangers (from Amazon or TK Maxx). "I use them for everything except coats and jackets, for which I use wooden hangers," Coho says. "They will save you space, your clothes won't slip off and they'll look consistent." Don't hang up knits, particularly heavy ones, as they'll stretch. Multi-hangers will accommodate four or more pairs of trousers, and you can use door hangers for bags. Berkeley suggests a tie rack for scarves and belts. Coho also recommends using drawer dividers: "Put your pants in one section, bras in another." She uses Muji's acrylic boxes for jewellery and sunglasses.

**8 BORING BUT ESSENTIAL**  
"When you're doing a seasonal changeover, it's really important to clean the inside of your wardrobe to remove the dust and also to prevent moths," Gibbs says. Berkeley recommends wiping surfaces with vinegar and using cedarwood moth balls. "Use acid-free tissue to stuff your handbags and shoes to maintain their shape," Stevens says.

**9 NOW MAKE A LIST OF WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE**  
"A good wardrobe organisation will show you what you don't have," Gibbs says. "Normally it's the plain things you don't buy because you'd rather have a statement knit or party dress. You'll find that what you need is a fitted black jumper so you can wear that full skirt again, or wide palazzo pants to put with shirts and knits. These are the pieces that help you to build an outfit. Make a list and invest. Suddenly you'll be wearing your whole wardrobe, not just 20% of it." ■