



APRIL 2016

REAL SIMPLE

LIFE MADE EASIER

Winter Clothes Storage, Simplified

But do you have to? Well, yes, if you want your items to weather the off-season successfully. (No holes!)

By Michelle Crouch

1 Sort and Organize

Pull out all your winter clothes and separate them into three piles: wash, dry-clean, and good to go. Don't forget your hats, scarves, and gloves. While you're at it, ditch anything that's outdated or damaged. This is also a good time to vacuum the closet and wipe down shelves.

2 Wash, Then Pack, Everything

Yes, this is a drag, but washing and dry-cleaning garments that have been worn is the best way to prevent pests from attacking, says Steve Boorstein, the author of *The Clothing Doctor's 99 Secrets to Cleaning and Clothing Care*. Moths, silverfish, and other creepy crawlies love munching on the sweat, food residue, and body oils (yum) left on clothes. A thorough laundering can also help to eliminate stains that may be invisible now, but that will appear in six months, when it may be too late to get them out.

3 Store Knits in Canvas Bins

Clothes, particularly those made from natural fibers, need air circulation, says [Stu Bloom, the owner of Rave FabriCare, a garment- and textile-care company in Scottsdale, Arizona](#). Airtight containers can hold moisture in fabrics, potentially causing mold, mildew, yellowing, or a musty odor. Already own plastic bins? Poke a few holes in them, or cover stacks of sweaters with old, clean cotton pillowcases or sheets to protect them from dust when they're stored on a shelf. Pack the heaviest items on the bottom, the lightest on top.



4 Hang Tailored Pieces

If you have room in a closet, stow garments such as dresses, coats, and silk or leather items on wooden or padded hangers. Then place them in breathable garment bags or slip a clean cotton sheet over a rack. No hanging space to spare? Fold items with tissue paper inside bins. Never store anything in dry-cleaning bags, which trap chemicals and moisture and cause yellowing.

5 Pick a Good Spot

Pull out all your winter clothes and separate them into three piles: wash, dry-clean, and good to go. Don't forget your hats, scarves, and gloves. While you're at it, ditch anything that's outdated or damaged. This is also a good time to vacuum the closet and wipe down shelves.

6 Keep Pests Away

Drop cedar blocks, balls, or sachets into the storage containers, and slip cedar rings on hangers. (Be careful that the cedar doesn't touch fabric; it may stain.) Cedar repels insects, but only if its odor is strong. Revive the scent every 6 to 12 months by sanding it lightly. Or opt for sachets filled with lavender; bugs despise its scent.