

DECLUTTER & REFRESH YOUR WARDROBE



Picture by Mart Production from Pexels.

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

by Else Kosberg

INTRODUCTION

I don't know about you, but I can't even begin to count all the times I've been standing in front of my wardrobe closets in despair, looking at all the clothes in there and not having a clue what to wear. For years I had a tendency to shop on impulse, and – to be honest – this mostly happened when I was feeling low and without any self-esteem because I was so sick and tired of my own image in the mirror and felt that all my clothes looked bad on me, or – and this was the worst feeling: I felt that *I* looked bad no matter what I put on. And you know what they say: The clothes can really “make” a person. So I was desperate to find something that could make me feel good about myself, and this made me buy clothes that might have looked OK when I tried them on in the shop, but that ended up just hanging in my closet.

This impulse shopping resulted in a wardrobe full of clothes that didn't really match well, or they were really not the right size, or they were of a quality that just didn't keep in the long run. I think maybe you can relate to this.

Needless to say, really, but let's just face it: Impulse shopping is just a complete waste of money and effort, and after having done my part of that and more, I decided I had to stop. There had to be a better way of cracking the code to dressing well and finding my style no matter how I looked. I had seen women of all shapes and sizes look absolutely stunning, so I knew my size and shape didn't have that much to do with it. But I didn't feel good about myself, so what could I do?

Let me just say this before we dive into how you can declutter and refresh your wardrobe:

When I was younger, say in my twenties, I was always slim and quite *chic*. I knew what I liked and what looked best on me, and I had my own style and felt confident about it. But somewhere along the way, my life developed in a direction where I got health issues, put on weight and kind of lost myself a little in the process and in things that happened. I started to hate being photographed, and I didn't really like to get noticed in any way, because I didn't feel good about myself and the way I looked. This made me shy away from a lot of activities and events that I actually kind of *wanted* to attend, but I always had some excuse not to go. I was too busy with other things ... I didn't have anything to wear ... I wanted to prioritize being with my husband and kids ... I couldn't afford it ... You get the picture.

20 years down the line I didn't really recognize the woman I had become, and I knew I had to find back to who I truly am and start living in accordance with that. And for me, my appearance had a lot to do with it, but most important of all was – of course – how I felt on the inside. So that's where I started.

If this is something you can relate to, I would like to dive deeper into that part of the process and tell you *how you, too, can turn your life around and the way you feel about yourself*. Because a huge part of this process is not just about decluttering your closet and refreshing your wardrobe, but about decluttering your *mind* and learning to *appreciate who you really are and work with what you've already got*.

But right here, right now, let's move on to the step-by-step guide to what you can do to declutter & refresh your wardrobe, and let me just give you a tip so you don't get completely overwhelmed:

Prepare to spend a few hours per day over a period of days to do this. Trying on all the garments will take some time, and you should try different combinations, too, in order to find new ways to wear the clothes that fit and that you like.

I'm sure you'll be thrilled to find out that you can actually wear a lot more of your clothes than you thought you could!

Excited? I know I am! So let's dive in!



Step # 1: Take all your clothes out of your closet



Picture by Jorge Urosa from Pexels

If you have a rack that you can hang all your clothes on, that would of course be the best way to go about it, since it would give you a better overview of what you've got. But if you don't, I suggest you at least try to put them in piles according to category, for instance on your bed: Sweaters, skirts, trousers, dresses, blouses, t-shirts, shirts, jackets, cardigans, tights ... you get the picture.

Then, prepare 3 boxes (or at least 3 separate spaces) for garments that you will

- 1) Donate
- 2) Sell
- 3) Throw away / recycle

Step # 2: Try all the garments on

When you start trying all the garments on, you'll most likely find that some of them no longer fit. They're either too big or too small.

Now, if they're too small: Don't even think about hanging them back into your closet! I know if you've put on some weight and it's a garment you like very much and have an intention of getting into some day in the (near) future, you don't want to get rid of it too quickly. I totally understand that, and I can totally relate! But this is how we often think and that makes us stick with clothes for years and years and never really wear them. It's part of the problem that we're now trying to address, don't you agree?

So *be honest* with yourself. Ask yourself if this is TRULY a garment you see yourself wearing within the next 12 months. If the answer is YES, then I suggest you put it aside for now, like in a box, but NOT in your closet with the clothes you are going to wear on a day-to-day basis. If the answer is NO: Put it directly in one of the 3 piles or boxes for garments you are no longer going to keep, and move on to the next. Don't dwell on it! Instead, follow Marie Kondo's tip and thank the garment for the service it has done to you, and then put it away. This might make it easier for you to let it go.

Step # 3: Try to establish what kind of body type you are

If you haven't already done this, a wise thing to do either before or under your wardrobe decluttering process, is to study some of the many tips that exist online about different body types and find out what kind of body type you might be. If you really want to dig into what you can do to make the most of what you've got, a color analysis would also be very useful. A slight variation in color shades can do a great deal for your appearance. This will help you find out which of your existing garments might be most flattering for your body type and skin tone, and which might not be.

I'm not saying you should spend a lot of money on an expert in this field. Just trying on different colors in front of a mirror, preferably in a room with natural daylight, could give you a very good idea of what colors look good on you and not.

I find that Pinterest is a very good place to look for all kinds of style tips, and to make it easy for you, I suggest you take a look at [*my board "Fashion Tips"*](#) where I have gathered lots of Pins on this topic.

Also [this YouTube video](#) might be helpful – but there are tons of other resources on this topic online, so I'm sure you'll be able to find some that are to your liking.

Step # 3: Try to combine your clothes in different ways

Try to combine one shirt with various jeans, trousers, skirts and jackets, both in similar colors and different colors. See how the colors, the shape of the neckline of a shirt, the length of the skirt, etc. can change how the whole outfit looks on you. They can give an optical illusion of you being bigger, smaller, taller, shorter, depending on how you put them together. And you can dress an outfit up or down with various jackets, like an elegant blazer over a simple black dress for going out in the evening or going to the office, or a denim jacket over the same dress for a more casual look... The same goes for accessories like bags and necklaces. They can make an outfit look more elegant, more casual, and also give an optical illusion of you being bigger or smaller, depending on their size and shape.

Patterns also play a significant role. Should you wear small prints or big prints, graphical patterns, block colors, polkadots, checked patterns, stripes, or no pattern at all?

Also bear in mind that a garment can look better on you if you for instance put on a belt, tuck a shirt in, wear a different jacket with it, and so on. Even the way you arrange your hair can have an impact! Especially from behind! So play around and have fun, and take lots of pictures!

Step # 4: Take photos!

Nowadays most of us have mobile phones with excellent cameras on them, and I have found this to be a valuable tool when I go through my wardrobe. I put the phone on a table or at least something stable, set the timer to 5 seconds so I get a chance to distance myself a bit from the camera and get a full body picture (you can of course choose to set the timer to whatever time you need), and then I take a photo of every outfit I try on. I also take pictures of my backside to make sure the outfit looks good on me from every angle. This has really helped me avoid a lot of embarrassing situations! It's often so much easier to get the right impression of how an outfit looks on you, when you can study a picture and have a really good look at the details. Then I suggest you create a file on your

computer where you put the photos of all the outfit combinations you end up liking, and then you can categorize them however suits you best for later use.



I also like to create collages of these pictures sometimes, for instance of the same clothes combined in different ways.

Step # 5: Check the quality and state of your clothing

Check every garment to see if it's damaged, worn out, lacks a button, etc. If it's fixable and it's a garment you want to keep, then put it in a special "repair" pile and do the repair *before* you put the garment back into the closet. No need to put yourself up for embarrassment or stress later by finding out a bit too late that you've put on something that should have been fixed! Make a habit of doing repairs as soon as you can after you've discovered things like that.

Also, if a fabric has clearly seen better days, I suggest you don't keep that garment. If you want to recycle it, maybe you can keep some of the fabric and make it into something else? If you're not the crafty type yourself, maybe you know someone else who would love to give it a go?

Distressed jeans is in a category of its own, so I'm not really talking about that kind of clothes, but – depending on what style you want to be associated with – I suggest you try to focus on clothes from now on that are of good quality only.

Step # 6: Choose clothes that are comfortable to you

Clothes should always feel comfortable, in my opinion, no matter the occasion. Adjusting a garment so it fits you better is one thing. The material it's made of is another. But the *feeling* the whole outfit gives *you* about *yourself*, is maybe the most important thing. When you feel that you're looking your best in an outfit, - that it suits your body, your complexion and who you are as a person – wow! That's powerful! And that's achievable no matter what shape or size you are! That's what I think you should go after when you declutter and refresh your wardrobe. Find YOUR style and what makes YOU feel the best!

Step # 7: Keep clothes for different seasons apart

If you have room for it, I suggest that you keep the clothes that are not in season either stored in a different closet or packed away in vacuum bags. There's no reason why you should buy new clothes every season as long as you like the ones you have and they're both wearable and in good condition.

Last, but not least:

Step # 7: Consider building a Capsule Wardrobe

I've already suggested that you try to combine your existing wardrobe in different ways, but if you want to take this a step further and really declutter, refresh and SIMPLIFY your wardrobe, a so-called Capsule Wardrobe is a very good idea. This kind of wardrobe is built around a limited number of items that can be combined in many ways to create a variety of different looks. These items should be both versatile and basic, but you should always have a few that really show off your personality, too.

Capsule wardrobes are something you can use and reuse again and again. You can create a capsule wardrobe for each season, or mix and match items that can be used all year. It's a great way to save both space and money, so why not give it a go and see how you like it?

That's it! I hope you found this guide valuable! Please feel free to share it with someone else, and also follow my blog over at www.elsekosberg.com