

As seen in the "Ask the Organizing Expert" Column in the [Lake Oswego Review](#) and the [West Linn Tidings](#)

Organizing with Custom Closets

Question: What do you think about custom closet systems? Are they worth the expense or can I make do with what I have?

I love closet systems! They truly are the epitome of a well organized space. They function well, and they look slick, too.

Closets are meant to store large amounts of stuff in small spaces; and, we're in and out of them regularly. As such, they demand order and organization. In my house, the master closet functioned fine, but the kids' closets were another story. Despite my best efforts, I just couldn't make them work. I tried hanging sweater bags to utilize vertical space. I bought cubby boxes for shoes. I contained loose items in baskets. I used bins as make-shift "drawers." Still, they were a mess. One disastrous day, while stuffing clean clothes onto crowded shelves, a bin of off-season football equipment fell on my head. I'd had enough! I made a call to Closets to Go.

[Lowe's](#), [Home Depot](#), [Target](#) and Fred Meyer sell modestly priced do-it-yourself closet systems. [The Container Store](#) and [Storables](#) will custom design a more moderately priced system for you. [Closets to Go](#), the [Closet Factory](#) and [California Closets](#) offer free design consultations and bids. Their cost is higher, but you also get a full needs assessment, delivery, and installation.

Closets to Go custom-designed my children's closet systems. They spent considerable time with me analyzing both their current and future needs. They prepared detailed drawings and invited me to visit their showroom, where I chose the materials, drawer pulls, and accessories. I also picked up new ideas for my pantry, garage and home office!

In a matter of days, the systems were ready for delivery and installation. Prior to their arrival, my husband and I spent a weekend tearing out the old shelves, painting and patching the walls, and purging the contents of each space. It took the Closets to Go team less than two hours to install the new systems. They looked amazing!

Returning items to their proper place was the fun part. I had a good idea where things were going based on the drawings. For my son – there are places for coats and jackets, nice clothes, casual clothes, and school uniforms. He has a place for laundry (not that it always makes it there), shoes, sweatshirts, and some toys that he's quickly out growing. My daughter's closet has a section for tops, dresses, coats, school uniforms, dress-up clothes, and even too-big clothes. She also has shoe cubbies, a full bank of drawers and plenty of shelves for her treasures. Both closets are fully adjustable and can be modified in countless ways.

To keep the closets looking tidy we use all matching hangers. We minimize what goes on the floor, and we purge the contents regularly. When drawers or hanging rods get overstuffed, they cease to function, and we know it's time to weed the contents.

If you're undecided about custom closets, consider these questions for clarity: Is the closet an oft used one, such as the master or a child's closet, rather than a guest room? Can you see large or even small blocks of space that aren't being utilized? Have you tried without success to make the space functional

with after-market supplies - bins and boxes and double hanging rods? Have you purged the closet of unnecessary items but still struggle with order and space? Will a closet system add to the value of your home? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you're probably ready for a consult. Fortunately a custom closet system comes at many price points, and surely you can find one that suits your budget. Enjoy the process, and may your closets be a source of serenity and order. And may you never be bombarded by a falling bin of cleats!

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