

InStyle

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InStyle

How do I organize my **HANDBAGS?**



3 WAYS TO SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT

1 Resist the temptation to stick bags within bags. While this may seem like a clever way to create extra storage space, you might forget entirely about those you can't see.

2 Put the tallest items in back. But make sure everything is visible. If items need a boost to be in your line of sight, try propping them on yoga blocks.

3 Ditch dust bags. Only purses of ultrafine, easily scratched leather or those crafted with feathers, sequins, or beads need to be stored in fabric sacks or cardboard boxes. If you use one, make sure the brand is displayed on the bag or box so it's easy to know what's inside.

Hobos and totes work fine just lying flat.



SECTION EVERYTHING

Divide by color, type, or event

To help those floppy styles stay upright, use shelf dividers or cute bookends, if space allows. *2006 shelf divider, LYSK, \$7-\$10, bedbathandbeyond.com*

Stuff soft purses with specially designed pillows. You can order some from a site such as luxurypursepillows.com, or—free idea!—just ball up old T-shirts to fill 'em up.

DANGER ALERT!

Never put away wet leather. You could end up destroying the bag's shape. Instead, stuff it with paper (ideally archival tissue paper, but newspaper will do), then set it out to air-dry.

WHY NOT INSTALL HOOKS?

Take advantage of the undersides of shelves. Hang additional bags, especially those you reach for frequently.

Screw in bicycle hooks, Crown Bolt, \$1 each; homedepot.com.



Fill two or three pouches with a set of everyday essentials. Then just pop the pouches into whichever purse you pick, saving time (no need to dig through numerous bags to locate your lipstick or reading glasses) and—better still—leaving your neatly organized groupings fully intact.

How do I organize my SHOES?

HANG YOUR HEELS

Some pairs really do qualify as art, so put yours on display using photo ledges. (Bonus: They take up less room than boxes.)

Marble steel picture ledge, Room & Board, from \$29.99; roomandboard.com

Organize as you do clothes: by hue and event, with most-frequently-worn pairs where you can see them.



FAVOR YOUR FOOTWEAR

1 Always air out shoes after they've been exposed to rain or pungent odors. If they're really waterlogged, disinfect and ward off potential viruses (warts!) by using a UVC light-powered fungus-zapping insert such as Sterishoe (\$130; sterishoe.com) before returning shoes to your closet.

2 Remember to clean your leather shoes with a soft cloth; for suede ones, use a stiff brush. Dust that's neglected—especially on suede—can be difficult to remove from larger surface areas (like the toe box) and lead to irreversible damage, such as cracking.

3 Put inserts filled with cedar chips (LA Closet Design, \$33; laclosetdesign.com) inside closed-toe shoes. They'll absorb odor-causing dampness. Cedar shoe trees are another way to shape and deodorize footwear (the Container Store, \$20/pair; containerstore.com).

REBOOT YOUR BOOT PLAN

Consider hanging stiff tall boots: You'll save floor space. Shapers with hooks (the Container Store, \$10/ set; containerstore.com) will maintain the form of your footwear and attach to the same type of under-shelf hooks you use for purses.

Fold pliable pairs in half, then slide them into a translucent oversize men's shoe box.

Boots are seasonal and require valuable real estate, no matter how you store them. When the weather shifts, rotate boots out of your closet.

OR, ARRANGE PAIRS IN BINS

Choose clear, front-loading cases No more lifting piles of cardboard shoe boxes to access the bottom ones!

Plastic drop-front translucent shoe boxes, the Container Store, \$8-\$10; containerstore.com

One container can hold multiple pairs of flats and flat sandals

Dedicate a bin to neutrals, another to brights.

Keep "everyday" shoes, like running sneakers and rain boots, in a separate closet Since this is purely for convenience, ideally it's one in an entryway.



How do I organize my JEWELRY?

Pile bracelets on a paper-towel stand Two work even better: Use one for larger bangles, the other for thinner, more delicate pieces.

Stainless steel Cura paper-towel holder, Zack, \$52, wayfair.com.

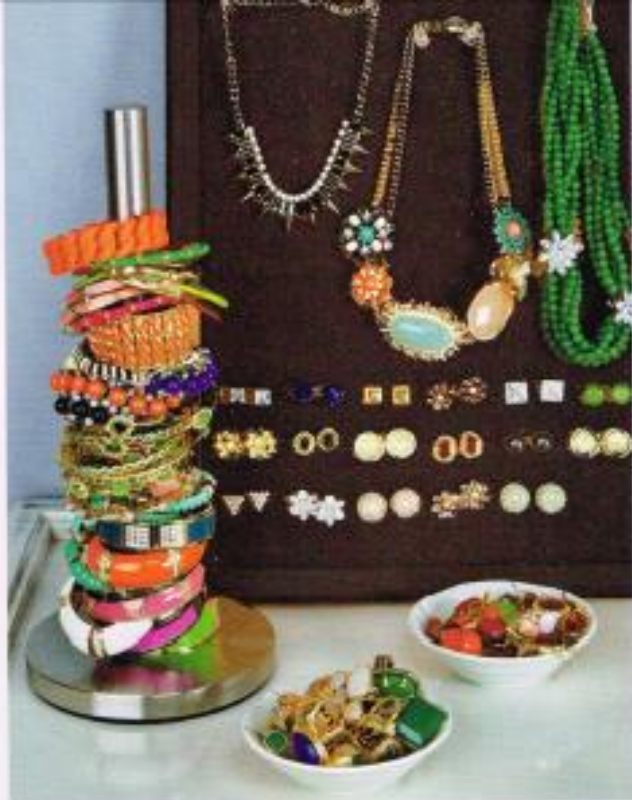
Turn a large corkboard into a jewelry hanger

Stick studs directly into the board, but first make holes with a pushpin to prevent bending the earring posts. Hang necklaces and chandelier earrings from small hooks (Hangable pushpins, Pinhooks, \$9/20; pinhooks.com). Never combine multiple necklaces, as tangles are inevitable.

Group rings, earrings, and pins in shallow bowls

And keep a few others on your nightstand and in the bathroom and kitchen, all places we tend to remove rings and forget about them.

Pearl River ceramic bowls, \$16/4, pearlriver.com.



3 INVESTMENTS TO PROTECT PRICEY PIECES

1 Contact a carpenter (check angleslist.com for names) to customize the top drawer of a dresser so that it's tiered and compartmentalized. (It's more budget-friendly than you'd think and makes the most efficient use of space.)

2 Take a page out of fashion stylists' books and use trays to store jewelry on shelves. Buy stackable Lucite trays (shopiomai.com sells customizable ones, starting at \$150) and arrange necklaces, larger earrings, and bracelets flat.

3 Specialized cabinets come with enough hooks and slots to hold every item on its own. To save floor space, try a two-in-one, like a dressing mirror/cabinet. Gold & Silver Safekeeper mirrored jewelry cabinet, Lori Greiner, \$169, qvc.com.



REALITY CHECK!

Determine how much underwear you really need. Most women wear the same dozen pieces over and over. When an item gets old, replace it. (And it may seem obvious, but toss the original.)

How do I organize my LINGERIE?

Always fold your undies Haphazard panty piles are a top drawer-disorganization offender. One fast fix? This grid divider, which creates individual compartments for pairs.

Plastic Diamond drawer divider, Organize-it, \$10, organizeit.com.

Group bras by shade Think white, nude, black, and colors, and lay them flat, not folded. Store cup-to-cup (like Legos) to retain their shape, instead of just chucking them willy-nilly in your drawer.

Keep lingerie sets mated Place them in an area apart from your basics.

How do I organize my KNITS?

YOU WEAR WHAT YOU SEE

Opt for tiered, hanging shelves Sort knitwear by color. If you have room to rotate your wardrobe, consider hanging shelves with a zip-front cover (\$20; organizeit.com). Come summer, close up your cold-weather unit and stash it. Canvas sweater organizer, Target, \$22/6-shelf; target.com.

Skip the vacuum bags Yes, sucking enough air out of a sweater to turn it into a pancake saves room, but it can cement wrinkles too.

Separate long- and short-sleeve pieces It will speed getting ready, and you won't disrupt neat piles rooting around for the item you're after.



Leave embellished items on their own. Use clear-front pouches with cotton backs to prevent odors and damage from dampness.

Cotton sweater bags, the Container Store, \$13 each; containerstore.com.

MOTH ZAPPERS!















Don't like the smell of cedar? Deter the worrisome wool-eaters with lavender; it works equally well (LA Closet Design square sachet, \$37; laclassetdesign.com).

EXPERTS LISA ADAMS, owner

BARBARA REICH, author of *Secrets of an Organized Mom*; MAXWELL RYAN, founder of

JULIE SUBOTKY, founder of Consider It Done.

To HANG or to FOLD?

ITEM	HANG	FOLD	HERE'S WHY
HEAVY SWEATER			Heavier weaves (such as cable) or dense fibers will maintain their shape when hung.
FINE-GAUGE SWEATER			Finer fibers (including cashmere) risk losing their shape when hung for extended amounts of time.
BLOUSE			Use hangers with rounded shoulders to prevent peaking.
T-SHIRT			Unless it's a dressy T-shirt meant for the evening hours, fold and store on a shelf, or roll and stash in a drawer.
JEANS			Fold each pair back-pocket-side-out to differentiate among them easily.
LEATHER PANTS/SKIRTS			Hangers with clips prevent creasing. A cotton pad (e.g., for makeup removal) between clip and fabric wards off scratches or indents.
EMBELLISHED ANYTHING			Whenever possible, use tissue paper between each layer to stave off snags. Hanging is the second-best option.