

your clutter

We handed three lucky readers' toughest organizational problems—a dysfunctional foyer, a frustrating pantry, and an overstuffed closet—to the experts. Their solutions are so smart and easy to steal, we can *all* win the war on clutter.

cured!

BY BERIT THORKELSON | ILLUSTRATIONS ALI DOUGLASS



let's get organized...

Clutter Cure #1: The Entry



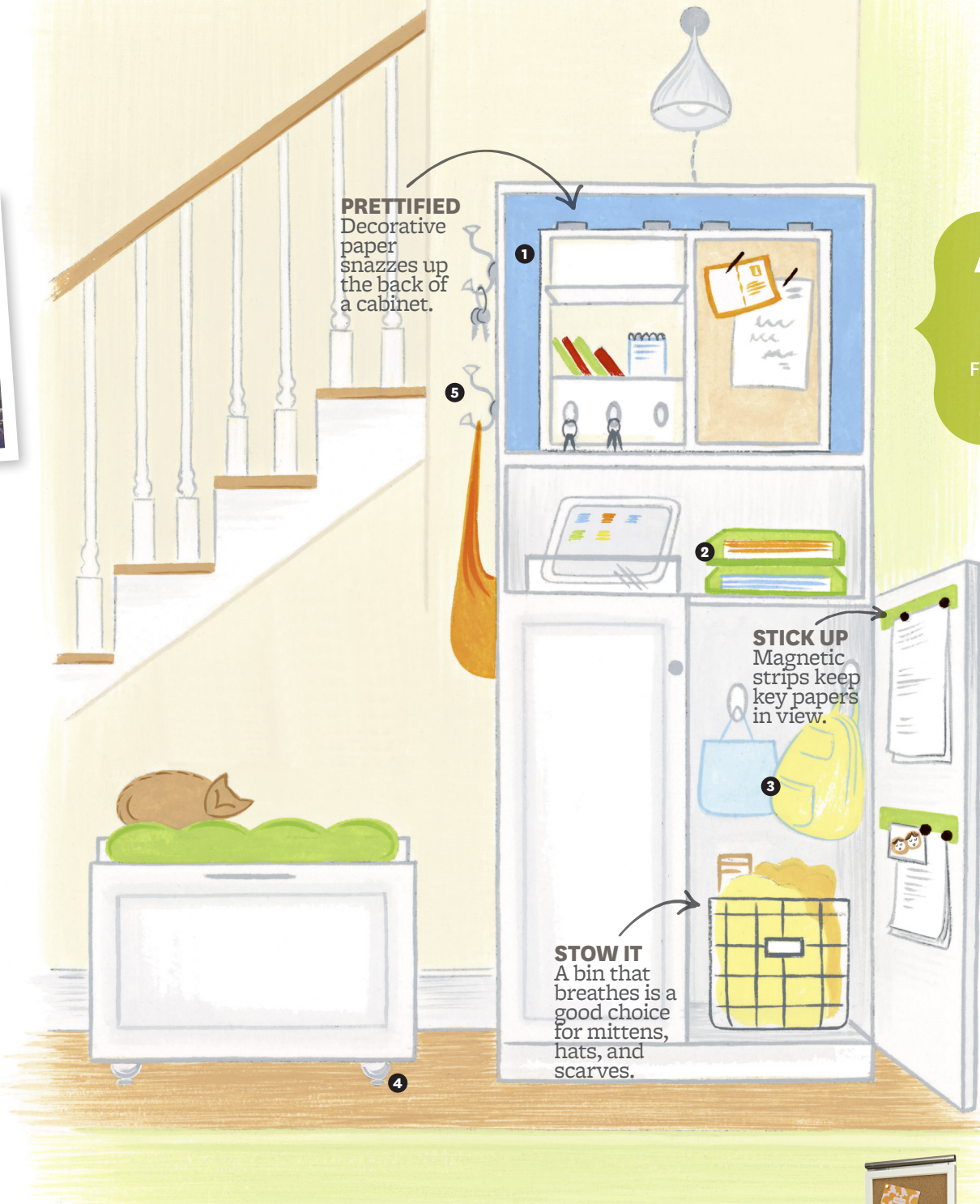
Jen Jones
Organizer and blogger
[iheartorganizing.blogspot.com](#)

Because her home lacks a foyer, reader Erin Liss tried to create one using a bookcase and a bench on one wall of her living room. But the solution didn't stick. "It gets cluttered quickly every day, despite my best efforts. Piles start taking over the floor. It drives me crazy," she said. Organizing expert Jen Jones doubled the storage space without adding a single square foot by replacing the dinky bookcase with a tall cabinet, which she tricked out with spots for a whole family's worth of bags, papers, and electronic devices.



Warm welcome
Jen Jones' smart solution combines open and closed storage to create a lovely landing spot for a busy family.

- 1** You don't have to be a carpentry pro to make a piece of furniture work the way you want it to. Removing a shelf turned this cookie-cutter cabinet into something unique and even more functional. Billy Bookcase with Doors, \$159.99; [ikea.com](#)
- 2** The upper cabinet holds everything Mom and Dad need to keep things humming along, including a charging station and a two-tiered sorter for mail and papers. Half the wall organizer is for keys and supplies; the other side is a corkboard for notes, schedules, and a calendar.



An organizing tip a day!
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- 3** The lower cabinet is the kids' domain, outfitted with hooks for backpacks and bags and open bins for stashing all manner of stuff. The best part: All of it mercifully disappears behind closed doors.
- 4** The little bench has a secret: It's not just a soft spot for removing shoes. The front tips open to reveal storage for nine pairs. Shoe Storage Bench, \$169.99; [improvementscatalog.com](#)
- 5** Never underestimate the clutter-busting power of a few well-placed hooks. Attaching them to cabinet sides, inside and out, ekes out every last inch of usable space.

more foyer faves



This bamboo charging station juices up three phones, a tablet, and a laptop, with nary a cord in sight. \$34.99; [greatusefulstuff.com](#)

The Expansia Wall Hook gives you nine hooks with just a couple of nail holes. \$35; [umbra.com](#)



Better Homes and Gardens® wire baskets have removable liners and chalkboard labels. \$9.74 and \$6.97; [walmart.com](#)

The Universal Expert Stool is seat and shoe storage in one sleek package. \$160; [westelm.com](#)



Industrial-strength Bjarnum hooks fold down for use or up and out of the way. \$9.99 for three; [ikea.com](#)



Customize an organizing solution with components that hang from a rail. Daily System, \$12-\$69; [potterybarn.com](#)

A hanging coat rack gives the functionality of a floor model in far less space. \$29; [urbanoutfitters.com](#)



Clutter Cure #2: The Pantry



Amanda LeBlanc

Professional Organizer
theamandas.com

The last thing a family of six needs is more chaos, especially at dinner. “It drives me crazy,” reader Kim White said. “I have to pull out three things to find the one I need.” Organizer Amanda LeBlanc’s first move was to replace fixed shelves with adjustable ones, which allowed her to fit two more of them. She also added storage via a rail of hanging baskets on the door. Then she collected entire categories of food in labeled bins—which you can do even if you don’t have a pantry—so nobody has to play “find the farfalle.”

A few of this pantry's problems: unorganized shelves and lots of wasted space up top.



Dinner order

Amanda LeBlanc says storing food in the right place and in the right container makes for an efficient pantry.

1 Store the things you access most between eye and waist level. Save the hardest-to-reach spots, such as the very top shelf, for bulky stuff you use once in a blue moon.

2 Adjustable shelves and baskets mean you can accommodate your tallest item without wasting space. FreedomRail, about \$350 as shown; organizedliving.com

3 A triple-tiered organizer holds up to three dozen cans. Plus you won't lose track of cans in the back. Gravity Can Feed, \$22.50; theamandas.com

4 The back of the door is a smart spot to hang a corkboard for grocery lists and meal plans.

VARIETY SHOW
These cereal fans stock multiple kinds, front and center.



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5 Transferring bulk foods and baking staples into clear, airtight containers keeps them fresh longer. Plus, a glance tells you when it's time to restock. Stick with straight-sided containers so no precious inch is wasted.

6 Long, narrow baskets utilize the full depth of each shelf. Label them with your categories of choice—snacks, quick fixes, baking supplies—so items can be found and put back easily.

7 Bins that are sturdy but let air flow are a good choice for potatoes and other heavy hauls. Better Homes and Gardens® Wooden Milk Crate, \$15.88; walmart.com

DOOR PRIZE
An average door back has 13 square feet of primo storage space. Use it!

more pantry picks



Tie chalkboard placards to baskets or bins. \$11.90 for four; etsy.com/shop/bradensgrace

A chest of drawers sized perfectly for spice bottles. \$40; surlatable.com



Colorful, stackable canisters look great in the pantry or on the counter. \$44–\$58; rodales.com

A pair of sliding mesh baskets brings order to any shelf. \$32; casa.com



Fabric sacks keep onions and garlic fresh longer. \$8.99 and \$11.99; shopmastrad.com



Pump the tops to make these Cuisinart Fresh Edge canisters airtight. \$50 for eight; homedepot.com

Adhesive backs and dry-erase fronts make labeling and relabeling easy. \$30 for 20 labels; wallsneedlove.com



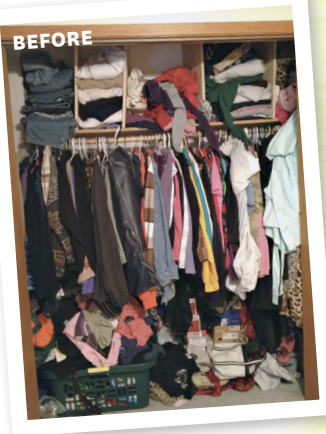
Clutter Cure #3: The Closet



Rachel Strisik
Professional Organizer
organizedinabox.com

Reader Annie Brezek's stuffed-to-the-gills closet wasn't so much storing her clothes as holding them hostage. "I can never get anything out, and if I do, it's wrinkled," she said. "It's aggravating. I end up always wearing the same thing." Professional organizer Rachel Strisik prescribed a thorough wardrobe edit plus underbed storage for off-season stuff. Then she raised the bar (literally) to create more space down low for shoes and—ta-da!—a dresser that puts folded clothes in a much handier spot.

No closet is meant to hold so much stuff. A third of it must go!



Good mornings

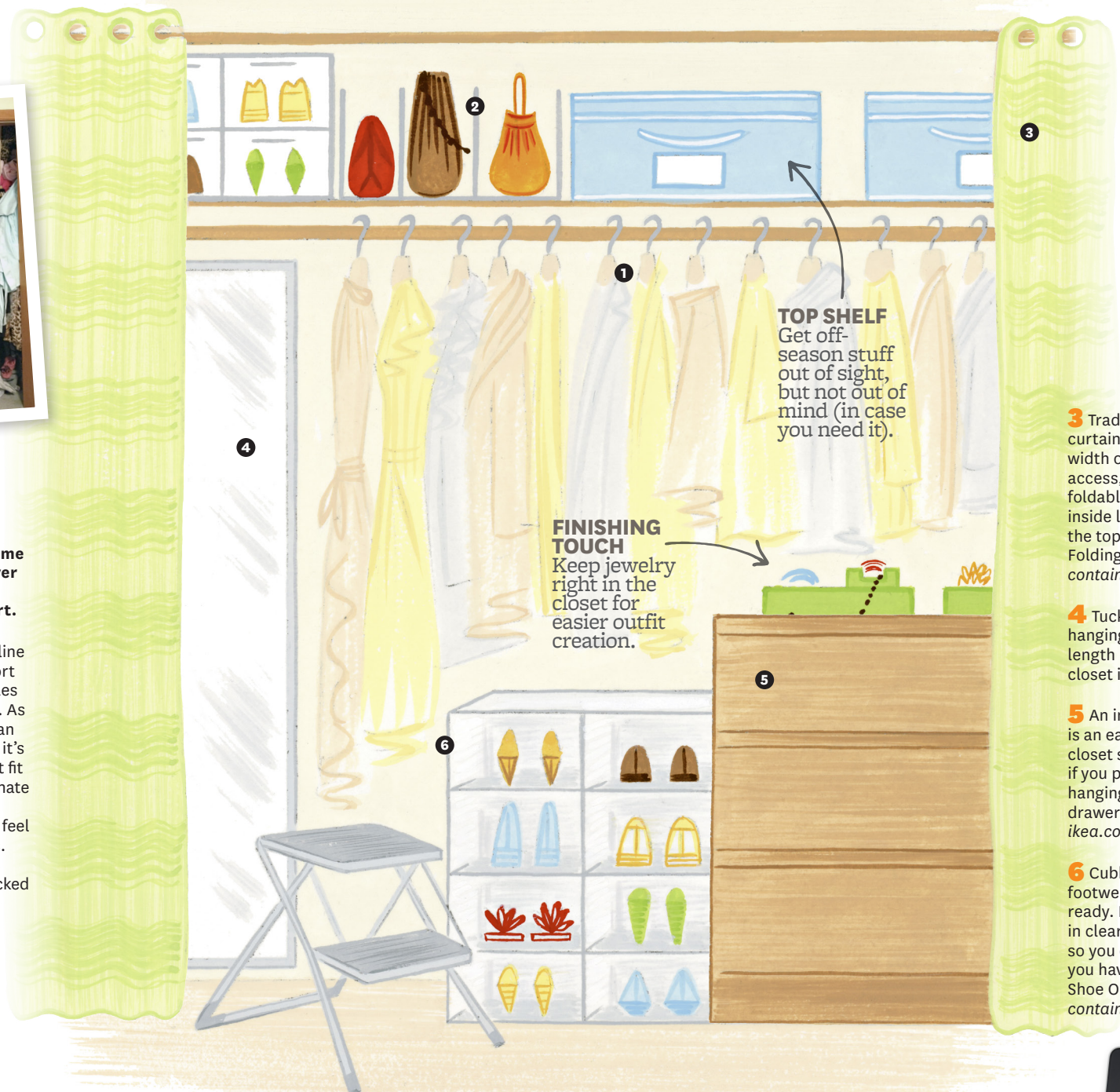
If you right-size your wardrobe, then add some of Rachel Strisik's clever solutions, every day can have a smooth start.

1 Here's how to streamline your wardrobe: First, sort your clothes into like piles (pants with pants, etc.). As you go, toss what you can part with—especially if it's stained, torn, or doesn't fit today—into trash or donate piles. Now, try on each remaining piece. Do you feel fabulous? If yes, it stays. If not, out it goes. Store keepers on slim, felt-flocked hangers to save space.

2 Dividers keep purses and bags, or stacks of sweaters, upright and organized. Acrylic Shelf Dividers, \$54 for four; clos-ettetoo.com

TOP SHELF
Get off-season stuff out of sight, but not out of mind (in case you need it).

FINISHING TOUCH
Keep jewelry right in the closet for easier outfit creation.



3 Trading doors for curtains makes the full width of the closet easier to access, and prettier too. A foldable step stool tucked inside lets you access the top shelf easily. Slim Folding Step Stool, \$24.99; containerstore.com

4 Tucked behind long-hanging clothes, a full-length mirror turns your closet into a dressing room.

5 An inexpensive dresser is an easy alternative to a closet system, especially if you prefer folding to hanging. Malm three-drawer chest, \$79.99; ikea.com

6 Cubbies keep first-string footwear organized and ready. Backups go up top in clear plastic boxes so you can see what you have. Eight-Pair Shoe Organizer, \$39.99; containerstore.com ■

more closet catchalls



Divided stacking trays corral jewelry. \$5 and \$9; poppin.com

Hang scarves with your clothes for effortless accessorizing. \$6.95; crateandbarrel.com



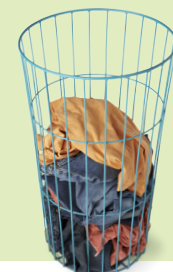
Drop-front fabric-covered bins keep stacks from toppling. \$21.99; greatusefulstuff.com

This lightweight unit stores 16 pairs. Better Homes and Gardens® shoe organizer, \$24.88; walmart.com



Lidded canvas bins give dust-free underbed or top-shelf storage. \$20.50–\$49; pbteen.com

Tuck a large wire basket into your closet as a handy hamper. \$39; landofnod.com



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