

Published March 27th, 2024

## Designing Closet Systems: What You Need to Know

By Jennifer Raftis, CPO(r)



Professional Organizer, Jennifer Raftis, CPO(r) founded Efficiency Matters, LLC to help you with all of your organizing needs for your home and business. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and an active board member with NAPO, National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals. She is also an independent representative for The Container Store and has expertise in designing closets, garages, pantries, playrooms and more. In addition, she is a Corporate Organizing and Productivity Consultant and has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the U.S. Another large part of her business is move management especially working with seniors who are downsizing. She and her husband have lived in Moraga for 30 years, raising 3 kids and working countless volunteer hours with many local non-profit organizations and schools. Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com, 925-698-3756 www.efficiencymattersllc.com

material, and all the hardware. You can add lighting, soffits, and lockable drawers. Of course, this is often the most expensive option, but it is the most customizable.

Custom Designed - Installed by Closet Companies

When I am designing these closets, my clients are able to choose a wide variety of materials, colors, and hardware. The difference is that you are limited to the materials that the closet company offers (in some cases you can pick out your own pulls and knobs). They are customizable to a point. Often, the company has various widths, lengths, and depths to choose from which is great if your closet fits the exact size. These closets are built-in and can offer many terrific add-ons such as lighting, valet rods, belt racks, jewelry drawer inserts, soffits, lockable drawers, and even an island of drawers in the middle. These closets are expensive but are beautiful, functional, and add value to your home if you were to sell it someday.

Elfa Closet Systems - The Container Store

Installing a closet system can revolutionize your storage space, bringing order and efficiency to your home. Beyond just tidying up clutter, a well-designed closet system maximizes every inch of available space, making it easier to find what you need and streamlining your daily routine.

If you are considering installing or upgrading a closet system, here are some thoughts to consider. I have been designing closet systems as part of my work as a professional organizer for close to 10 years and I've learned a few things!

Before I tell you about the different closet systems, I want to share a couple of insider tips. There are 2 very important spaces that I recommend for everyone's closet and I rarely see them (because who knew!). The first one is a small designated space for the "dirty" clothes (clean + dirty - the clothes you can wear again before washing). I usually find this category piled up on a chair in the bedroom or heaped in the closet. A more efficient approach is to create a small hanging or stacking space in your closet to neatly keep these items together.

The second space is a place for donations - a small box or bag. Trust me, there are always clothes, shoes, purses, scarves, etc. that we no longer wear but for some reason, they stay in the closet. Having a donation bin in the closet makes it effortless to get rid of these items.

Here are the 3 different closet systems I like to use when creating custom designs:

Custom designed - built and installed by contractors

Custom designed - installed by closet companies

Custom designed - using Elfa closet systems and installed by the Container Store

Custom Designed - Built and Installed by Contractor

These closets are the most customizable as the contractor typically has the skills and experience to construct a high-quality space that is functional and beautiful. They can use every inch of the space, even if the walls are slanted.

You are able to choose the type of material, color of material, and all the hardware. You can add lighting, soffits, and lockable drawers. Of course, this is often the most expensive option, but it is the most customizable.

These Elfa systems are the most ingenious, customizable and budget friendly products that I have worked with. I have designed thousands of spaces using the Elfa system including pantries, laundry rooms, offices, playrooms, mud rooms, garages, walk-in, and reach-in closets. They have 3 different types of systems, all of which can be installed with ease. They are so simple to install, some of my clients have done it themselves (with the help of a video). All of the Elfa types have many components to mix and match including mesh drawers, valet rods, belt and tie racks, gliding pant shelves, and gliding shoe shelves (flat and heel shoes). These systems are really amazing for young kids as the hanging bars, shelves, and drawers can be easily moved higher as your child grows.

Elfa Classic - This system is the lowest in cost and can be cut to fit your exact space. They come in 3 colors (white, platinum, and graphite) and the material is a steel wire which provides strength and durability. They are coated with a protective finish to enhance resistance to rust and corrosion and provide a clean and attractive appearance. I have used this system in all areas of a home, warehouse, and office. I love the versatility of moving the shelves to fit the exact product. The garage components even have a utility board to organize tools and hardware, and now Elfa has a dedicated garage system with closed doors.

Elfa Decor Fascia or Decor - This system has all of the same versatile components and is offered in several colors: white, birch, walnut, or gray. The Fascia version is a piece of trim that goes in front of the ventilated shelf and the Decor is a solid shelf. The price point is higher on the Decor and Fascia and cannot be cut to fit. This is a great solution for a fraction of the cost of built-in closets and will add value to your home.

When designing your new closet, be sure to understand your unique needs such as accommodating the amount of clothing, shoes, and accessories you have as well as how many feet you need for short and long hanging space (yes, measure everything).

Happy Spring!

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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