



From Chaos to Cocoon

Image courtesy of BoConcept

Combat bedroom clutter with 7 tried-and-true secrets from the professionals

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CTW Features

Sweet dreams: Create a bedroom that is as equally functional as it is serene by troubleshooting your bad habits.

There are two kinds of bedrooms in this world – the restful and serene ideal photographed by home-decorating magazines and the real-world variety the rest of us return to every night. One of the biggest differences between the two, aside from their budgets, is the absence of distracting clutter in professionally designed and photographed spaces. Creating a plan for keeping your bedroom clutter free can help turn even the most disorderly space into a nighttime retreat worthy of its own photo shoot.

Today's bedroom is called on to serve many more purposes beyond its basic function as a place to sleep – acting as everything from home office to home gym. Add a few books, some magazines and unsorted laundry to the computers, exercise equipment, dressers and, of course, bed, and you have a recipe for a decorating nightmare instead of a calm and restful room in which to both end and start the day.

“Bedrooms are where we're supposed to unwind and relax,” says Charlotte Steill, owner of Phoenix-based Simply Put Organizing and a guest consultant on HGTV's “Mission: Organization.” “It's where we go to rejuvenate at the end of the day and the first thing we see in the morning – it shouldn't be a dumping ground.”

Moving from chaos to cocoon can seem to be an overwhelming task, but it's really a matter of understanding how you use your bedroom, and then creating organizational strategies that meet your needs. The time you take to analyze how you live in your bedroom will pay back benefits in your waking – as well as sleeping – hours.

“Unfortunately, we have a bent for being untidy,” says Kirsten Kemp, a Santa Barbara-based real estate consultant and host of TLC's house-flipping reality show, “Property Ladder.” “The more you can plan out how you live – no matter how small your space — really makes a difference in making you more productive.”



Image courtesy of Nurseryworks

Captain Hook: Hang your children's more frequently used jackets, robes and blankets on hooks so they're out of the way until you need them – and even then they're just an arm's reach away.

Don't go straight for a solution as you develop your organizational strategies. Instead, think like a designer and outline the functions you need your bedroom to serve and the common frustrations you have accomplishing these tasks today.

"Most bedrooms over the last 10 to 15 years have become multipurpose," says Jean Chené, vice president of San Francisco-based California Closets and general manager of the chain's Concord, Calif., shop.

"[Bedroom] space is at a premium, and you have to really think through how you utilize the space."

Because the bedroom is such a personal space, there are no one-size-fits-all solutions for turning a disorganized sleeping space into a sweet-dream-inducing design. But you can use the following tips as a starting point for developing a plan that brings restful organization back to your boudoir.

1. Calm the traffic flow

Having a lot of space isn't helpful if that space isn't planned to meet your needs. If you have to walk across your bedroom to get

from your dresser to the closet, or your jewelry box isn't near a mirror, you're more likely to simply leave things where you are when you take them off. "Clutter can happen just because it's inconvenient" to put things away, Chené says.

2. Simplify your bed

A mountain of shams may make your bed look more regal, but without a royal staff, it can also create a mess. "Fifty pillows on the bed can end up being 50 pillows on the floor," Kemp says. Getting rid of unneeded linens also makes it easier to make your bed every morning, a critical factor in maintaining a restful retreat.

3. Close up the office

Laptop computers and wireless networks make it easy for us to bring the office to bed, but exposed power cords and paperwork can make relaxing difficult – and late-night bathroom runs hazardous. Kemp suggests adapting an armoire or closet for out-of-sight equipment storage, while decorative boxes can keep your paperwork under wraps.

4. Conduct a closet cleanout

Simply editing your closet's contents in place isn't enough, Steill says. Instead, she makes her clients remove everything from the closet, complete a thorough cleaning, and then justify every garment that's returned to the space. "We very consciously put things back in an organized manner," she says, which means clothes worn most often are the easiest to reach – and put away.

5. Make the most of closet 'white space'

If you're still working with a simple rod-and-shelf closet, you may have untapped storage capacity between your lowest-hanging garment and the floor. Chené calls this area "white space," and says it's especially valuable in kids' rooms, where stackable baskets – or even milk crates turned on their sides – can create easily accessible homes for shoes, toys and other clutter creators.

6. Make your furniture do double duty

Experts agree that today's bedroom furniture should be both

functional and attractive, with room to stow the magazines, books and remote controls that can detract from a relaxing ambience. "If you're going to put something by your bed, make it a nightstand that has drawers," Steill says. And Kemp suggests using an end-of-bed, box-style bench that can provide both added storage and mask the line where mattress and box spring come together.

7. Get hooked on hooks

A row of hooks for bathrobes, workout garb and other frequently used clothing can make tidying up a quick and easy exercise. "I'm a big fan of hooks," Kemp says. "They're a lot neater than hanging things on your treadmill."

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