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Your Place Section 8

No room for waste

Making the most of limited living space

By Annemarie Mannion

It's a good idea to make the most of the cards you are dealt in life. And that maxim could also be applied to your living space.

Do you simply seem to have more clutter than closets? Are you coming down with claustrophobia in your kitchenette? Whether you're squeezing into a seemingly suit-case sized studio or spreading out in a rambling country manse, ideas abound for creating additional space, or at least the illusion of it, experts say.

Monica Thompson, owner of the Chicago-based company Chaos to Order, earns a living at making the most out of the square footage of her clients' homes and apartments. As the name of her company suggests, Thomopson organizes her clients' stuff and installs cabinets, racks, shelves and other storage fixtures to hold it. She also advises them to think of empty space in new ways.

When your domicile is diminutive, "you just have to think of taking advantage of empty spaces that you normally wouldn't. You have to be creative," Thompson says. Take, for example, the shower of one of her clients.

"We added cabinets above the tile in the shower," says Thompson. "My client stored towels and sheets there. The cabinets didn't get wet because they were made of laminate." A similar storage space could be created in a kitchen where cabinetry normally is installed about a foot below the ceiling. "That leaves a space where you can place cabinets that go up to the ceiling," says Thompson.

Basket case

Hanging baskets for fruit, food and other knickknacks are another good idea, she says.



Tribune photo by Michael Fryer

Monica Thompson, owner of Chaos to Order, shows how she has organized the space in one of her own closets.

Throw out or give away anything you haven't used in a year, and when you store things make sure they are visible and easy to reach. Shoes, for example, could be kept in clear, plastic, stackable drawers.

Closets with a single pole are a definite space waster. Add another pole and you have doubled your space. "A very small part of most people's clothing is long." Adding wire shelving or stackable bins that extend to the ceiling is another option, she adds.

"You can put your sweaters in there and they won't come tumbling down. And wire shelves and bins don't have to be expensive to buy," she says.

CHAOS TO ORDER



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