

Hang coats by weight:

lighter coats in front, heavier ones in back. A sweater holder makes a great open cubby for kids' toys and boots.



Use clear plastic containers to store small or seasonal items like goggles or flip-flops.



Labels are a great way to ensure that the closet stays organized. Everyone can see what goes where. (Note: This writer once labeled her daughter, just for fun.)

A few well-placed hooks are good for dog leashes, umbrellas, and other items that often end up on the floor.



An over-the-door shoe container is a great storage tool for items that the family needs easy access to, like sunscreen, adhesive bandages, and bug spray, as well as things like wrapping paper, ribbon, and tape that often defy other methods of organization.



30 Minutes to Clutter Free

BY DAINTRY DUFFY

For many of us, the hall closet is the dirty little secret lurking just inside the front door. It's the ultimate repository for all the stuff we need easy access to—coats, umbrellas, and dog leashes, as well as all the stuff we don't have any other place for, like wrapping paper, swim goggles, and that ugly lamp that only sees daylight when your mother-in-law visits.

But Carson Tate, a professional organizer and president of Charlotte, N.C.-based Living Simply (www.livingsimply.net), assures us that we don't have to live this way. In 30 minutes, you can transform your hall closet into a clean, organized, and structured space. Here's how:

- **Sort** (5–10 minutes): Pull everything out of your closet and sort it by function—coats in one pile, shoes in another, and so on.
- **Streamline** (5 minutes): Keep only those

items that either make you happy or serve a function in your life. "Those moon boots you wore in eighth grade are not that cute anymore," Tate says.

- **Assess** (5 minutes): Decide how you want to use the space, and which tools you will need. Do you have enough hanging space? Would some shoe racks on the floor give you more adequate storage?
- **Organize** (10 minutes): Put everything back in the proper place. If you have a few extra minutes, label items for good measure.

The key to keeping storage space organized, according to Tate, is to do the job once, and then make the upkeep a maintenance task that takes a couple of minutes every day, rather than a chore that takes an hour every six months.

Now, perhaps we went a little over our 30 minutes, but wasn't it worth it? •

your space