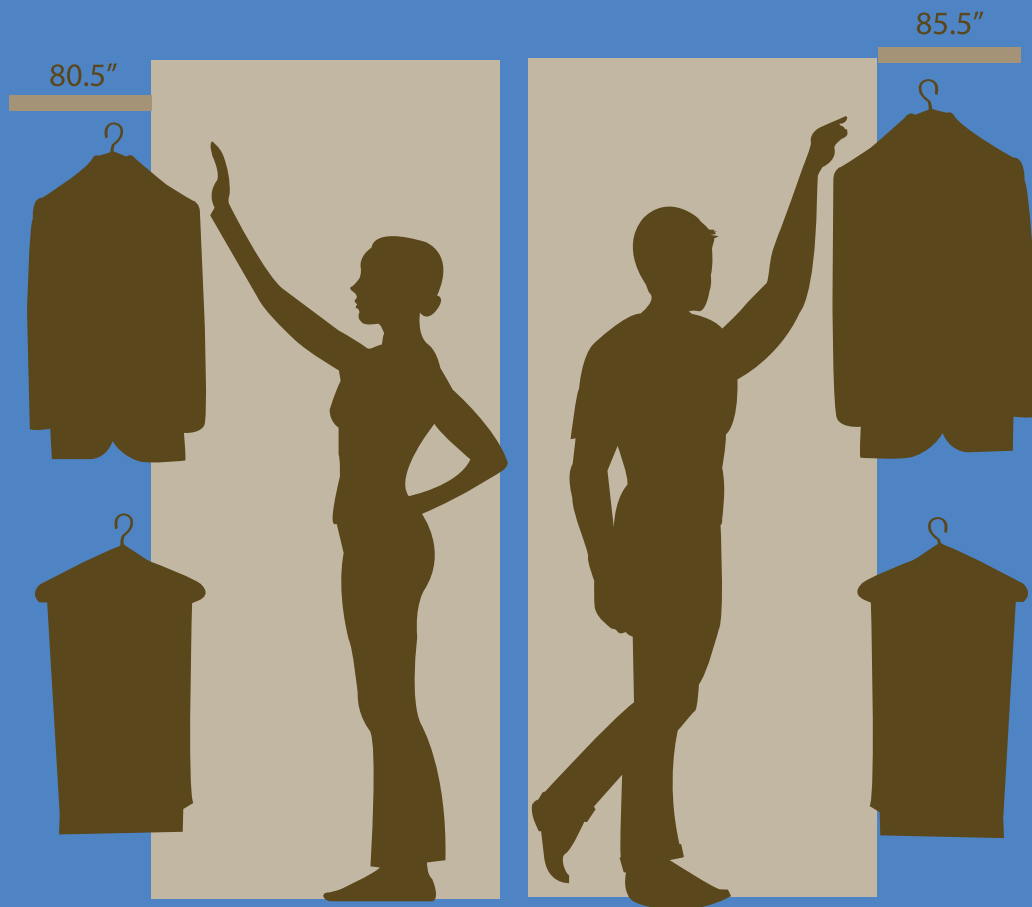


# Closet Design Guide for New Construction



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## Introduction

This guide, developed and presented by Organized Living, will help you specify closets that minimize your costs and maximize the home buyer's storage. By putting these ideas into practice, your home buyers will have storage in their new homes that they can enjoy several times everyday—giving you a great opportunity to receive higher home buyer satisfaction scores.

You're probably aware that today's home buyers are more sophisticated and demand more from available space. By using this manual, you can make storage changes at the design stage, which allows you to benefit from the effective use of space at no additional cost. Storage areas that are designed and specified properly are more functional and add value to any new home.

In addition, through the following pages, you'll see recommendations, tips and best practices for when you construct a house—room by room and storage area by storage area. By the end of this guide, you'll know several ways to "create free storage space" by maximizing every wall.

Keep your eyes on category trends by [OrganizedLiving.com](http://OrganizedLiving.com) on a regular basis.

Thanks!

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## Industry Trends

The home storage and organization industry is growing.

- \$1.5 billion dollars a year is spent in the industry after-market and 56 percent of it is spent on homes less than five years old.
- Closets were listed as the second most desired feature in a dream home in a national study by Roper Research – second only to a state-of-the-art kitchen.
- Closets are used twice a day, every day.
- Home buyers are unhappy. A National Association of Home Builders survey uncovered that 64% of home buyers say they don't have adequate storage space.
- A model home study, administered by Merillat, indicates that the master bedroom and kitchen are where home shoppers spend most of their time.
- Surveys show that model home shoppers will look inside the master closet.
- Average price of a professionally-installed closet upgrade after move-in is \$4,400 according to a study by Vance Publishing Corporation.
- Now more magazines devoted to organization – *Real Simple*, *Organized*, *CLOSETS*
- Popular TV programs devoted to organization – *Mission: Organization*, *Clean House*
- National tradeshow dedicated to home storage and organization.
- Retail stores are doubling and tripling the amount of shelf space dedicated to home storage and organization products.
- Trade associations such as National Association of Professional Organizers and Association of Closet and Storage Professionals.

Home buyers are smart—they want to be organized and they are aware of current trends.

- Home buyers understand the benefits of being organized.
  - Save time – according to the Association of Professional Organizers Society, the average American spends 140 hours per year looking for lost objects.
- Home buyers need a place for everything and everything in its place.
  - Keep everything associated with an activity in one place – work out clothes, ski apparel, Christmas decorations, hobby materials.
- Home buyers currently spend \$22 billion to rent storage space according to the Self Storage Association.

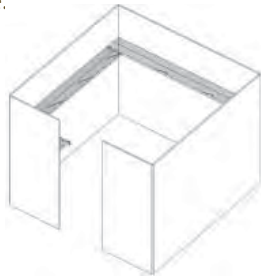
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## Maximize Value of Storage Space

There are several ways to maximize the value of the storage spaces in your floor plans. Look at the following examples and keep these helpful tips in mind.

1. A larger closet doesn't replace a properly designed closet.
2. Larger closets may waste space.
3. Larger closets may waste your money and the home buyer's money.

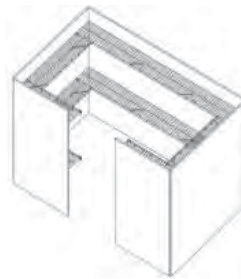
For example:



10' x 10' closet with 34' of shelving will cost  
100 square feet @ \$120 per = \$12,000  
34' shelving @ \$5 per = \$170

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Total = \$12,170\*



6' x 10' closet with 52' of shelving will cost  
60 square feet @ \$120 per = \$7,200  
52' shelving @ \$5 per = \$260

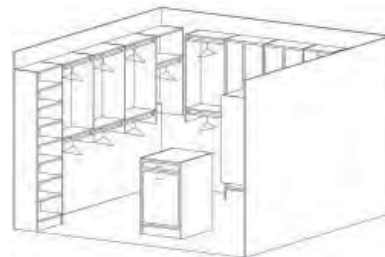
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Total = \$7,460\*

*\*Estimated cost of closet components + builder's construction costs per square foot. The builder pays approximately \$120 per square foot for construction costs.*

### Lessons learned:

- A larger closet doesn't replace a properly designed closet – The 6' x 10' closet is a more effective use of space and gives the home buyer 53 percent more storage space.
- A larger closet may waste space – there are 16 square feet in the middle of the closet that can't be used for anything.
- Closets that aren't designed well may waste your money and the home buyer's money – the builder saves nearly \$5,000 by building the 6' x 10' closet and, at the same time, increases home buyer satisfaction because there is increased storage space.
- Large closets can be designed to efficiently and effectively use space. For example, in a 12' x 12' closet you can install storage on all walls and add a center island.



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## Specify Storage Areas – Room by Room

### Room Layout and Storage Space Requirements

#### Step-in closets

##### Dimensions

- Minimum of 3' x 3'. Shelf on side wall or back wall
- Use other walls for optimal hanging storage
- Common for pantry, linen or entry way

#### Reach-in closets

##### Dimensions

- Should be a minimum of 24" deep
- Side returns (door casing to side walls) should be 12" or less for easy access (e.g. a 96" wide closet should have a centered 72" wide door opening)
- Storage on walls above 96" is very difficult to access.



#### Walk-in closets

Walk-ins come in a variety of shapes and sizes but should be a minimum of 4' x 4' and have a 24" minimum clear passage aisle.

##### 4' back wall

Specify two walls in an L-shape.



##### 5' back wall

Specify shelves on two opposite walls.



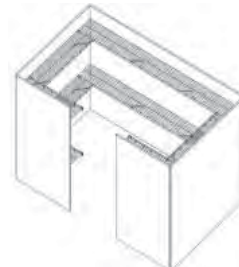
##### 6' back wall

Specify shelving on all three walls.



##### 10' back wall

Specify shelving on all three walls and an island or seating in the closet.



## Walk-in Closets with an Island

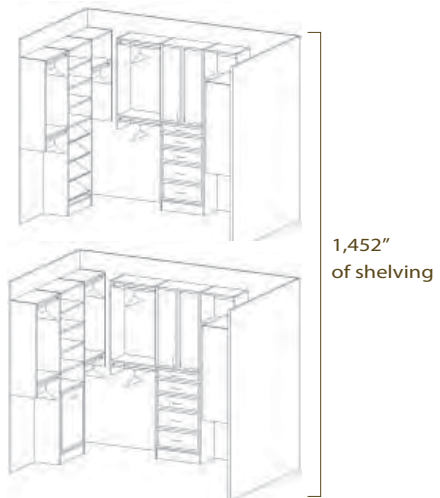


Description	Detail
Closet dimensions (inches) minimum	121.5" x 127.5"
Closet dimensions (feet) minimum	10" x 11"
Around island	2' clearance all the way around

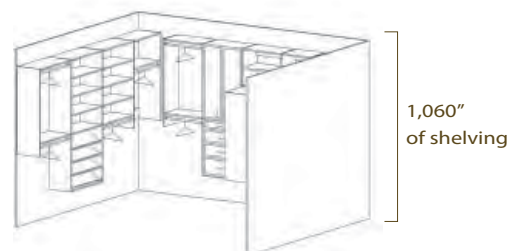
## Bedroom Walk-In Closet

- Give them both what they want in the master bedroom by building a his and a her walk-in. Two smaller walk-ins provide more wall space for storage than one large closet.
- Place walk-ins near the bathroom for easy access.
- Allow space for a chair, a small couch or an island unit in the closet's dressing area.
- Design
  - Top shelf should be at least 14" to 16" inches in depth so large items can be stored overhead.
  - Make accessories such as drawers and shelving the first thing you see when you open the closet door to give the closet an open feel.
  - Standard: specify 25% single hang, 75% double hang.
  - First upgrade: specify 15% single hang, 60% double hang and 25% shelving.
  - Second upgrade: specify 15% single hang, 50% double hang and 35% drawers, shoe cubbies and other accessories.

Two 6' x 10' Walk-in Closets



One 12' x 10' Walk-in Closet



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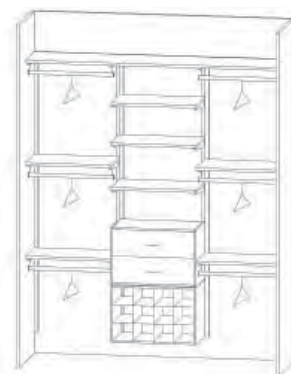
### Bedroom Reach-In Closet

- Top shelf should be 14" to 16" deep if the soffit allows.
- Top shelves should be butted to allow maximum storage.
- Standard: specify 15% long hang and 85% double hang.
- First upgrade: specify 15% long hang, 60% double hang and 25% shelving.
- Second upgrade: specify 10% long hang, 60% double hang and 30% for shelving, shoe shelves and other accessories.



### Child's Reach-In Closet

- Standard: Double hang entire closet (84" for top shelf and 42" for bottom shelf).
- First upgrade: specify all shelving and hanging to be adjustable. Provide three shelves to accommodate triple hang.
- Second upgrade: specify 25% wire baskets or wood drawers, 75% shelves with hanging. Provide triple hang with adjustable shelving so it can be changed as the child grows.



### Linen Closet

- Standard: specify five ventilated shelves.
- Specify tight mesh shelves for ventilation.
- First upgrade: specify 14" to 16" deep adjustable shelves (20" deep shelves if space allows).
- Second upgrade: specify adjustable shelves with wire baskets.

### Laundry Storage

- Standard: specify one shelf at 84" high and one hanging shelf at 70" (both extending beyond washer/dryer if space allows).
- First upgrade: specify adjustable shelving and one 30" x 20" x 14" cabinet with doors.
- Second upgrade: specify all 30" x 20" x 14" cabinets with hanging shelf below.



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## Pantry

- Be sure a reach-in pantry is no less than 18" deep.
- A pantry should be no more than 24" deep (unless it is a walk-in).
- If the pantry is a walk-in, specify that all shelves are butted at corners.
- Standard: specify six tight mesh 16" deep shelves.
- First upgrade: specify 16" deep adjustable shelves.
- Second upgrade: specify wood shelves and accessories such as drawers and wire baskets.

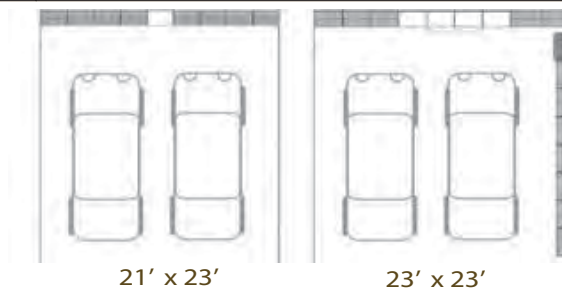
### Storage considerations

- Windows in storage areas should be tinted so that clothes aren't damaged by the sun.
- Keep obstructions to a minimum, such as attic access, windows, switches, electrical boxes, vents, control panels, medicine cabinets, etc.
- Keep as much plumbing away from the walls where shelves will be mounted as possible.
- Be sure all plumbing is to specification – shelf installation might interfere with pipes that are not spaced properly.
- Communicate all hidden obstructions to the closet dealer before they install. This will save possible damage and trips back to the shop for the installer to retrieve proper hardware.
- Have the closet dealer pre-draw all the base product offerings to establish your standard specifications and costs. This will allow you to compare future bids.
- Have your dealer pre-draw all upgrade offerings to establish specifications and costs. It also will allow home buyers to add the cost of the closets into their mortgage.
- When dealing with multi-family and high rise properties, use adjustable storage. In a high rise, consider products that are easy to transport and stage.

## Garage Storage

Typical garage dimensions:

	Typical Size <i>(allows for storage 9" deep)</i>	Size with storage on one wall	Size with storage on two walls
Two car garage	21' x 21'	21' x 23'	23' x 23'
Three car garage	21' x 32'	21' x 34'	23' x 34'



- Walkway space needed around vehicles: 24"
- Height to allow walkway space under a shelf: 78"

**Remember, home buyers spend \$22 billion dollars to rent storage spaces. Building the right garage can save them money, add to your profits and increase your home buyer satisfaction.**

Garage walls can be divided into major or minor storage walls. Major and minor storage walls are defined by the amount of space available to use for storage.

**Major wall:** A major storage wall accommodates storage from ceiling to floor and across the span of the wall, even when cars are parked in the garage. This is typically the wall in front of the vehicles. Since most of the wall is available for storage, items that are used regularly should be stored on a major wall.

**Minor wall:** A minor storage wall is a wall where storage space is limited, typically because you need to allow room for car doors opening and walkway space. The bottom half of a minor wall is not available for storage. Since items stored along minor walls are stored higher, a minor wall is a good place for seasonal items because they're not used as frequently.

There's a lot of variety in what's stored in the garage. Using this booklet as a guide will give the garage designer room to design the space appropriately for all home buyers.

### More garage storage tips

- Mix it up. A complete garage storage solution includes shelving, cabinetry and accessories. A garage that features 30 percent cabinetry, 50 percent shelving and 20 percent accessories will hold anything and everything you need to store in the garage – including those bulkier, odd-shaped items.

- 
- Designate the major wall for things used regularly. Garbage cans, recycling bins, coolers and lawn care supplies fit nicely in a mixture of shelving and cabinetry along the major wall. Typically, this is the best place for cabinetry so when the cabinet doors open, they don't bump into the vehicles.

## Common Storage Dos and Don'ts

### Don't

- If it is a small storage space, don't impede the interior space by installing a door that swings inward.
- Don't use bi-folds that only allow 67 percent access to storage space or by-pass (sliding) doors that only allow 50 percent access.
- Don't put the light switch inside the closet; it takes up space on the return wall that could be used for storage.
- Do not place a receptacle, cable connection, phone jack, speaker wire, alarm box, computer cable or other feature in an area where it will interfere with the storage system. If they need to go in the closet, place them very high or very low, where they will not affect the storage installation.

### Do

- Do use pocket doors that allow 100 percent access to storage space. Notify the installer if there are pocket doors on a wall that storage is being installed on.
- Do use bi-swing hinged doors that allow up to 90 percent access to storage space.
- Do frame closet doors toward the center of the entry wall to create more usable space along both return walls.
- Do use space below windows for seats, shelving or drawer units depending on the height and width dimensions of the window and clearance from adjacent walls.
- Do install the attic access as close to the center of the closet ceiling as possible – clearance from the opening to any wall should be at least 22".
- Do install ceiling or floor-mounted HVAC supply vents and returns 24" from walls, so that they don't interfere with closet components installed along the walls. When return vents are required, ceiling mounted is suggested or wall mounted above 84" high.
- Do use metal shields on outer edges of studs where plumbing, wiring or HVAC lines are present to protect them from screw penetration during storage installation.

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## Irregular Shaped Storage Spaces

### Curved Walls:

Curved walls are generally due to architectural considerations on the other side such as circular staircases or curved hallways. The curve inside the closet, whether concave or convex, makes it difficult to efficiently use the space. Squaring off the closet side of these walls during the framing process is less costly and it improves the space efficiency.

### Niches and Alcoves:

These areas may seem like a good use of space but generally are not because they usually do not allow enough space for storage. It also takes the installer more time and usually requires customized product. If you do put a niche or alcove in, make it at least 14" deep for storage and 24" deep for hanging and 24" wide. Framing across these areas squares off the useful space and the cavity can be utilized for HVAC chase-ways or a shelf stack.

### Bump-Outs:

Corners in closets framed out for HVAC ductwork (or otherwise) should be deep enough to accommodate closet components on adjacent sides, which is 14" for storage and 24" for hanging.

## Sequence of Storage Installations

### When do I order product?

Involve your dealer as soon as the floor plan is confirmed. They can design the upgrades well in advance. Standard product typical lead time is one week and upgrade product typical lead time is two to three weeks.

### When do I schedule storage installation?

Although it depends on the method of installation, storage systems are typically installed after finished drywall, door, window and access-hole trim, and final painting.

Floor-based systems can be installed after final flooring is in place. Baseboard can be installed after the closet installation for a cleaner look. If baseboard is installed during trim-out, the trim carpenter will be required to notch the baseboard.

Wall hung systems can be installed at any time after final painting.

Have the closet dealer sweep and clean up after installation is complete, including discarding all cartons and packaging.

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### How long does installation take?

Base product typical installation time is a few hours. Upgrade typical installation time varies but is seldom more than one day. Installation should be scheduled during a time when there will be little to no interference from other contractors such as painting and flooring. Be sure to share designs with the installer prior to installation. They will be able to determine if the installation will take longer than one day.

## Increase Profits – Add Closets to Upgrade Packages

Upgrades are an easy way to put more profit in your pocket. This list outlines a few of the reasons why upgrades are a good selling opportunity.

1. Typical mark-ups for closet upgrades are 30 percent. So, if a home buyer purchases a \$2,000 closet upgrade, you receive \$600 profit.
2. New technology and software make closet designing easy and allow closet dealers to finalize designs well in advance of move-in. Home buyers get to see what their closet will look like in advance.
3. Upgrades install within the same production schedule as standard product.
4. Builders don't have to worry about installation delaying the closing.
5. Home buyers move into a home that is personalized for them.
6. Home buyers want to incorporate the storage upgrade in their mortgage – storage costs as little as a cup of coffee per day when included in a mortgage.
7. Home buyers will save by installing upgraded closets before they move in because of the efficiencies in the selling and installation processes. Closet dealers installing in new homes have a streamlined selling and installation process.

### Capture Rates on Upgrades

If you offer closet upgrades, your program should 'capture' a significant percent of your home buyers. Match the cost to the price level of the home (.005% of base price). Match the products to the buyer's lifestyle. See cost of closet upgrades on page 17.

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## Which Closet Product is Right for My Homes?

### Ventilated Wire

Ventilated wire offers many advantages to builders.

- Most cost-effective closet system – it even costs less than “plank and pole.”
- Complete after paint installation and you deal with only one supplier.
- Makes closet look larger.
- Newer product designs allow for continuous hanger movement, even around corners.
- Tight mesh shelves provide storage space for smaller items and keep everything upright.
- When adding double hang and shelf stacks, shelving becomes even more cost effective because of the simple but strong installation hardware.
- Very production-oriented. For example, whole homes can be installed in a matter of hours.

*Perfect for:* value conscious home buyer, maintenance free, strong, durable

### Melamine

Melamine is the generic name for closet systems using particle board with a melamine finish.

- Melamine closets provide a custom-built appearance.
- There are many accessories that work with melamine systems – from shoe cubbies to valet rods.
- Most melamine closets need to be pre-drawn and discussed with the home buyer. Once installed, melamine systems are not very adjustable and cannot be easily added on later.
- New mounting systems allow most melamine designs to be installed in less than a day using a one-man crew.

*Perfect for:* traditional home buyer who wants the look of built-in furniture. This storage system offers limited adjustability and is ideal for the home buyer who has unchanging storage needs.

### Adjustable Systems

The newest and fastest growing storage systems are adjustable and utilize wire and wood shelving with various accessories.

- Adjustable system can change as needs change, or as home owners change, adding to the home's resale value.
- Adjustable system can adapt even from the original design.
- Adaptable system can be added to at any time.
- Designs can be simple and cost effective or very elaborate.
- Installation is production-oriented, taking only a matter of hours for a whole house.

*Perfect for:* home buyers who like to be organized and want their storage system to adjust to the needs of their active family.

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## The Cost of Closet Upgrades

As a general rule, the cost of closet systems should follow these guidelines.

**Standard:** no more than 0.25% of the base price of the home

**First upgrade:** 0.35% of the base price of the home

**Second upgrade:** 0.5% of the base price of the home

Here are some estimates to help you achieve a high capture rate. Remember to keep the process simple and easy – offer controlled choice with only two upgrade options.

Home Selling Price	Standard	First Upgrade (master closet)	Second Upgrade (master closet)
\$150,000	\$375	\$525	N/A
\$250,000	\$375	\$875	\$1,250
\$400,000	\$450	\$1,400	\$2,000
\$600,000	\$550	\$2,100	\$3,000

*Note: These costs do not include builder mark-up.*

Most home buyers upgrade the master closet first, pantry second and garage third.

### Best Practices for Presenting Closets to Home Buyers

- Have your storage supplier train the design center and/or sales staff – the more they know the better they can sell the upgrades.
- Know your audience – women are the primary influence in the purchase decision.
- The support materials should be easy to use and ready to go and should include upgrade options that are easy to understand. Home buyers should be able to choose an upgrade within five minutes.
- The support materials also should make it easy for the home buyer to visualize the closet and to understand their cost.
- Install a product vignette in your design center so that home buyers can experience the product first hand.
- Train staff on the most important distinctive features of the storage upgrade.
  - Make sure that all sales people know that closet upgrades are available.

- 
- Give storage priority on the selection sheet. Get options on the contract checklist.
  - Allow home buyers the option of including it in their mortgage.
  - Match home buyer profile to storage solutions (see below).
  - Get product into model home and market/spec homes. Train your staff to qualify home buyers for storage upgrades. Upgraded closets are a great way to efficiently sell your market homes.

## Match Upgrades to Buyer Profiles

**Baby Boomers** need homes that are accessible – where everything is in its place and is easy to get to. They want to live and play with ease. They want to stay fully engaged with friends and their homes are hubs of activity. How does this translate to storage? Their homes are permanent – they know what they want and they want stability.

- Specify a melamine closet that is beautiful enough to show off to their frequent visitors and that organizes their busy lives.

**Generation X** is at an age where they have active families and want to eradicate clutter and chaos. At the same time, they are very tuned into style and design. They want quality and won't settle for less.

- Specify an adjustable storage system that gives them the flexibility they need at the same time that it organizes their busy lives.

Those included in **Generation Y** want lots of options, from colors to quality. They want to live in hip, unique and even offbeat spaces. They focus on affordability and want to spend a little to get a lot.








- Specify an adjustable system that can meet their high demands and that can change to fit their changing lifestyle.





## Quality Check List

After the product is installed, there are particular points that a home builder should pay attention to. Use these check lists, organized by product type, to be sure that the highest quality products are installed.

### Ventilated Wire Systems

Feature		Benefit
Epoxy powder coated – hardest coating in the industry		Does not discolor, will not tear or leave hanger indentations, provides a smooth hanger glide
Back clips every 11"		Prevents bowing and stops tearing from wall
Center supports every 36" to 42" and on open ends		Prevents bowing and pulling out of the wall
Shelves should end no more than 0.5" from any side		Provides finished look, prevents items from falling between shelf and wall
Down back clips above open ends a support braces		Prevents shelf from popping out. Holds 75 pounds per linear foot. No need to find studs
End caps covering all cut ends on the ends of the shelf		Prevents articles of clothing from snagging
Any shelving blemish is touched up		Finished shelf looks clean and new
Open/continuous slide hanging shelves		Hangers can travel the length of the shelf freely, even around corners.
Tight mesh shelving (deck wires at less than 5/8")		Smaller items can be stored and there is less chance of wire impressions on clothing.
Lifetime warranty		Increased home buyer confidence

## Melamine Systems

Feature	Benefit
¾" thick, 45 pound melamine, furniture-grade board and finish	Provides a scratch resistant surface that is strong and won't sag. The board is long lasting and the finish is affordable. The mounting hardware also will tighten properly into board
Thick radius edge band (25 mil or more)	Provides a softer, quality look with edges that are more durable. It doesn't chip or tear.
Cam lock type fasteners 	Provide for fast installation. Make the system stronger by giving secure holding power.
Cleat-based installation 	System stays in place so drawers and doors do not come out of alignment even if bumped. Do not allow L-brackets that can come loose over time.
Full extension, ball bearing drawer glides	Makes everything in the drawer easily visible. Operates smoothly and quietly.
Wood boxes	Provides a matching, complimentary wood grain pattern with the shelves. Decreases warehouse space and increases profit.
Toe kicks used on floor mounted systems	Protects front of panel. Provides a clean front with a furniture look.
All vertical panels are single piece	Provides thick, strong panels. The continuous panel offers superior strength and holding power. Multiple heights of panels available to fit a variety of needs, only need single panels, no need to double up.
Cabinet hardware	When combined with furniture grade board, will not loosen over time.

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## Adjustable Systems

Feature	Benefit
Uprights made with extra steel	Provides extra strength so that they do not require mounting to wall. Allows for further adjustability without patching and painting walls to reattach uprights.
Wire and wood shelves that span 36"	Use fewer uprights and brackets. Makes it easy to design.
Wood shelves and cabinets with furniture-grade board and finish	The finish resists scratches and stains and provides many years of use.
Cabinetry assembled with concealed cam lock fasteners	Assures secure assembly capable of meeting the most demanding storage needs.
Brackets should have anti-knock down design feature	Protects closet owners from falling shelves. Provides sturdy frame for shelving.
Wire shelving locks into brackets both front and back of shelves	Shelving is sturdy, secure and locked into place. It also provides a more finished look.
Hardware to securely lock wood shelving into brackets	Provides sturdy, secure shelves that can lock into place.
System includes wood cabinetry	Offers a more complete storage solution.
Rails made with extra steel	Doesn't require finding studs to install.

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## Glossary

### General Closet Design Parameters

Sixty to 75 percent of an average wardrobe closet is allocated for hanging space – Of that 75 percent, 50 percent is for double hang and 25 percent is for long hang.

The remaining 25 percent of space is allocated to non-hanging storage, such as drawers, shelves, baskets, hampers and other accessories.

### Definitions:

Height: Vertical height measurement

Depth: Front to rear edge measurement

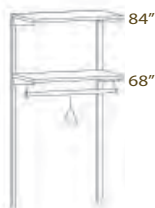
Width: Horizontal, side-to-side measurement

Closets: This phrase is used throughout this booklet, but can mean other storage spaces or rooms such as home offices, pantries, linen spaces, garage storage, entertainment centers, hobby rooms, mudrooms.

### Hanging Definitions:

#### Long Hang

Long hang is two shelves and one chrome hanging rod below the lowest shelf. Use long hang for formal dresses and trench coats.



#### Medium Hang

Medium hang is three shelves and one chrome hanging rod below the lowest shelf. Use medium hang for shorter dresses, coats and pants hanging from the cuff.



#### Double Hang

Double hang can be used in any closet to maximize space. Double hang includes two shelves with chrome hanging rods. Double hang is ideal for shirts, folded pants and suits.



### Short Hang

Short hang includes five shelves and one chrome hanging rod. Short hang is ideal to store folded items on the shelves and to hang shirts, folded pants and suits below.



### Shelves

Shelves can be used in any closet to store items such as folded clothing, accessories and shoes.

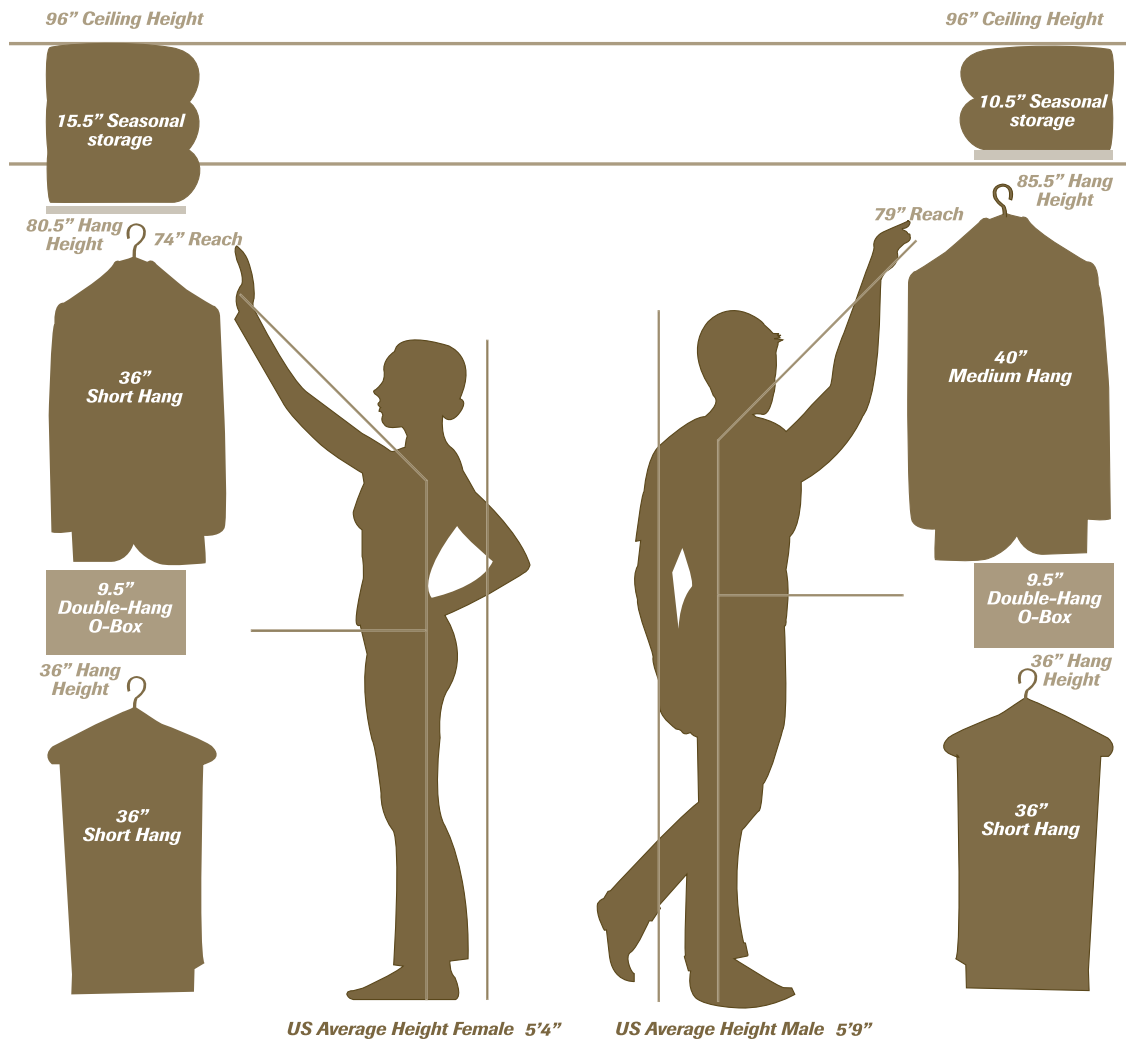


### Installation Methods

Floor-based: vertical supports rest on the floor and the system is fastened to the walls.

Wall-hung: vertical supports are suspended from a horizontal wall rail (which can be fastened to the studs for weight support). An alternate wall-hung system utilizes cleats fastened to fixed upper shelves between vertical panels and fastened through sheetrock to studs.

## Optimizing reach and maximizing every inch of storage space



*\*Innovative storage products such as the Double Hang O-Box®, make total space more efficient. Historical standard dimensions shift to adjust for the Double Hang O-Box as well as for the difference between men's and women's reach.*



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