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SHOPPING WITH ANN SULLIVAN

Try to Contain Yourself

By JULIE SCELFO

FOR many professional organizers, the end of summer is a time for visiting clients' homes to switch out summer clothes for fall wardrobes and to pack up pool toys and outdoor cushions.

Whether or not you have a professional organizer, though, storing out-of-season clothing and gear with care is something Ann Sullivan, a professional organizer in Manhattan, recommends as an alternative to creating "a black hole" in the back of a closet or under a bed.

"People need to be responsible for what they own," said Ms. Sullivan, who recently began a blog offering organizing tips on her Web site, <u>annsullivan.com</u>. "If you don't know what you have and where it is, you end up buying duplicates or not using your things, which is nuts."

During a shopping trip in Lower Manhattan and online, Ms. Sullivan offered some basic advice on storage: containers don't have to cost a lot, she said, and stacking labeled plastic bins on shelves is a practical system, no matter the budget. "Even our gazillion-dollar clients use the same stuff," she said.

Another tip: attractive containers can help motivate you to keep using them.

"Organizing should be fun," she said. "The more inviting you make the system, the more people are likely to use it."

At the Surprise! Surprise! home-organization store in the East Village, Ms. Sullivan found Yaffa Bubble crates, brightly colored plastic milk crates with playful bubble-like cutouts on the sides. They're ideal, she said, for storing beach gear. "Using the same containers year-round simplifies the organizing process," she said.

She also liked a collapsible barrel-shaped hamper that she thought would be "really great for balls."

Across town at the Container Store in Chelsea, she chose the tinted stacking drawers, plastic lidded bins in fruity colors. They could be used in an entry closet, she said, to keep track of small items like sunglasses, swim caps or sunscreen.

A more elegant option, she said, would be the store's Baroque fabric storage boxes, in a brown-and-white floral design. The bins, with zippered and Velcro openings, are attractive enough to be kept on display year-round for easy access, she said. "Some people travel a lot during winter, and they want to be able to grab their snorkel stuff."

A few blocks away at Paragon Sports in Union Square, Ms. Sullivan turned her attention to a bigger storage problem: what to do with a bicycle. She recommended lifting it off the floor with the Leonardo wall-mounted bike storage hook and Da Vinci tire tray, a kit that hangs a bike vertically.

A metal hook-shaped attachment secures the base of the front tire to the wall, while a plastic tray holds the rear wheel in place below it, "so it's not angling out," she said — freeing up floor space and, of course, more room for storage.

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