



The Ugly Challenge
 1. Wear a clunky fitness watch.
 2. Try not to look like a troll. **D11**

OFF DUTY

Give Me a Ring
 Sorry, you have to buy it yourself. But here's how to shop wisely. **D4**



FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR

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So Long, Wash-Day Blues

Though automated clothes-folders didn't pan out, doing laundry's never been easier. And we're not just talking AI-enabled dryers. A steam-cleaning closet, anyone?



RICHAUD ROSE

By SOPHIA BENOTT

GEOERGE JETSON only works two hours a week. Jane Jetson presses a button to fix her hair. In the animated TV series' dreamy, halcyon world of 2026, basically all chores have been automated. Even Rosey, the family's robotic maid, has better things to do than laundry and dry-cleaning. Both are handled by arms that emerge from walls. That's the future I want. I hate doing laundry. I'm terrified I'll ruin my clothes, so I wash everything on delicate. If I get rich, you better believe I am installing a laundry arm.

Though we haven't quite reached the future that "The Jetsons" promised, humankind has made many attempts to automate the steps required to do laundry. A machine called the Laundroid, for example, could passably fold clothes. Unfortunately, the startup went bankrupt in 2019.

Other advances have changed the laundry landscape, integrating AI into machines, increasing energy efficiency, even innovating ways to pop a dingy throw pillow or squidish teddy bear into a "closet" and steam-clean them to a refreshed, sanitary state. It has never been easier to do one's laundry.

Newer two-in-one washer-dryer combinations, for instance, represent a small success. Historically, these machines were too compact for full-sized

loads, ran slowly and broke down frequently. A recent, \$2,899 release from GE aims to solve these issues. The GE Profile Combo Washer/Dryer promises to wash and dry a load in two hours, and even accommodate king-size bedding. Of course, if you're laundering any items that must be line-dried, you need to run a wash-only cycle, remove anything that must be hung, then spin the rest through a dry-only cycle.

Then you have gadgets like the Laundry Jet, a vacuum-powered laundry chute that eliminates the need for laundry baskets and can be installed in many homes by a professional contractor. The system functions like a pneumatic bank deposit tube, quickly sucking your dirty clothes off to your laundromat.

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DESIGN & DECORATING

15-MINUTE FIX

Shelf Help

In a quarter of an hour, turn your artless stash of books into a collection that mixes objects with the best of your personal library

By Allison Duncan

FIRST, MAKE room in your shelves, says Elise Nicpon, director of business-customer experience at furnishings retailer Room & Board. Fill a box with also-ran books to donate or sell at a local reseller like Half Price Books, which has locations nationwide and offers cash for pre-loved reads. Or put them out on your stoop.

Go beyond bindings. "A good mix of books, objects and art makes for successful shelves that look authentic and not overstyled," said New York interior designer David Frazier.

To keep shelves from looking like an "object museum," add greenery, said Homa Persad, an interior designer in Los Angeles. Snip a few flowers from the garden and pop them in a vase or relocate an indoor plant.

Avoid lining up similar objects in a vertical row from shelf to shelf, said Nicpon. "Aim for a zigzag pattern." And pay attention to negative space, says Persad. If you have three items on one shelf, the adjacent shelves

Add a diminutive rechargeable table lamp on a low shelf.

should have two items or even just one in the center, she advised.

Reorient some of your books. "Having some horizontal and some upright is perceived as more interesting to the eye," said Nicpon. Volumes stacked horizontally become bookends or pedestals for accessories.

And elevated tchotchkes will feel anchored, says Frazier.

Try this sample formula from Taylor Tuttleman, merchandising manager for furnishings retailer Serena & Lily, for a balanced but varied result—

► **Shelf one:** Place a large stack of books on the left with a few family photos to the right.

► **Shelf two:** Set a vase with flowers on the left, a grouping of books vertically in the center, with two to three books on their side as a bookend.

For a bit of "glow and ambience," add a small rechargeable table lamp on a lower shelf, said Atlanta interior designer Jessica Davis.

Many designers recommend maxing out real estate by hanging wall art on the bookcase between shelves. "Taking five minutes to center and hang the frame, rather than just resting art on the shelf, gives the shelf an organized depth," said Nicpon. Velcro strips or Command hooks won't leave holes in woodwork.

Don't forget to peek behind the slipcover of your books. "This will often reveal a completely different surface, color, and texture," said Kristen Millar, a creative director at NoMad Hotels based in London. Andrea Goldman, an interior designer in Chicago, recommends displaying only hard-



CASE STUDY Arrange a combination of knickknacks, plants and books so that the eye moves.

covers. "The bindings are far more attractive."

Place an oversized bowl or vase on a shelf to "create a still-life moment," said Millar. Or pull out a piece of china or an heirloom dish that's been hidden away, and give it new life on a shelf with a picture easel, said designer Claire Staszak of Chicago's Centered by Design.

Pull from your closet, too. "A beautiful shoe, purse, hat or even a fun lipstick from your makeup bag or bottle of perfume can liven up a shelf," said Millar.

Combine photo frames of the same material family—metals or woods—suggests Ben Koren, founder of online framing service Frameology. And remember the rule of thirds, said Tuttleman. "Placing objects in sets of three creates a dynamic composition that draws the eye."

If your bookshelf is small, remove its contents, and start from scratch. "I first add back my more substantial styling items, including larger stacks of books and vessels," said Staszak. "Then I take a step back and look

at whether the weight of these heavier items feels evenly dispersed and balanced across the shelves. Last, I think about smaller items and how they can be grouped together or propped up so they appear bigger."

Include many textures and finishes to keep things visually interesting. "Try a brass candlestick next to a linen picture frame," said Ms. Olson.

And while obvious, "a good dusting and cleaning will go a long way," said Chicago decorator Brynn Olson.



A simple cleaning will do much for the aesthetic of your shelf.

CULT FOLLOWING

Nice Legs

How a funky junk-shop find inspired a modern design icon

History In the early 1970s, San Francisco designer John Dickinson (1920–1982) stumbled on a carved wooden stool from Uganda in a Bay Area thrift shop. In homage to its organic form, he crafted the African table, a fanciful plaster stand perched on splayed, duck-footed feet. First installed in his own Pacific Heights home in 1975, the table took off and now graces the collections of international tastemakers like erstwhile Warhol model Jane Holzer and New York art adviser Heidi McWilliams.

Allure Due to their delicate plaster construction, few originals still exist—but scarcity only adds to their cachet. In



2019, an African table prototype—direct from Dickinson's estate—sold at auction for a staggering \$87,500. Furniture maker Sutherland now offers limited-edition reproductions to the trade (priced from \$2,700), cast from Dickinson's molds. "I've used them mixed with antique chairs and midcentury chaises," said Los Angeles designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard. "But their sculptural shape and texture make them art in their own right."

Fans French fashion entrepreneur Laure Henriard Dubreuil tucked a Sutherland model onto the patio of her midcentury modern abode in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Cult Moments Spot African tables on the Hulu reality series "The Kardashians" (several Kardashians and Jenners own versions). Mr. Bullard gave one pride of place in his own bedroom—and in the home of TV personality RuPaul.

—Allison Duncan



CULT FOLLOWING

A Stately Seat

For millennia, this stylish throne has signaled power and prestige

History The curule chair's signature arched X-leg profile is so familiar it feels as though it's been around forever. Which is nearly true: The name derives from the Latin word *currus*, or chariot—and versions have been

used as a seat of power by rulers since the days of ancient Egypt. When Julius Caesar became Rome's *dictator perpetuo* he commissioned a golden curule for the occasion.

Allure "The curule's skeletal quality is really appealing, especially in a room filled with solid furniture," said Los Angeles interior designer Oliver Furth. It's also extremely versatile. Among the curule's diverse direct-descendants are Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona chair (created as seating for the king and queen of Spain at the 1929 International Exhibition in Barcelona) and the classic director's chair.

Fans In the '30s, Parisian designer Serge Roche created a mirrored curule that became a favorite of famed decorator Elsie de Wolfe. Nowadays another offshoot, the upholstered X bench, remains a staple of contemporary designers like Jonathan Adler.

Cult Moments Curule chairs make regular cameos in movies and shows set in ancient Rome, such as Cleopatra (1963) and the HBO series "Rome." Recently, royal-watchers may have spied a pair during the 2023 coronation of King Charles III. Luxe embroidered versions served as throne chairs for the King and Queen Consort post-crowning. —Jessica Ritz

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