

Maximize Your Home Storage

As summer approaches and people shed their layers of clothing from the cooler months, many want to also lighten the load their homes are carrying—or at least make it look neater. Before you toss the tools in a garage corner or stuff the down jackets into a box and toss it in the attic, why not evaluate your needs and make your storage both effective and attractive?

The first thing you should do is make a list of everything you want to store. This list will both help you determine how much storage space you need and ensure that nothing gets lost once you start putting things away.

Shelving is one of the easiest ways to create more storage. It can be portable in the form of free-standing units, or permanent that is attached to your walls. Easy-to-install, heavy-duty shelving can be purchased at just about any major home supply store. Many of these units are designed so that you can leave as much room between the shelves as you like, making it easy to get larger and smaller items onto the same unit and saving you space.

Heavy winter clothing can take up lots of closet space, leaving you with little room for your entire four-season wardrobe. One solution for storing out-of-season clothing is under the bed. Under-the-bed storage containers come in a variety of sizes and styles, including ones with wheels for easy access and to protect hardwood floors from scratches when you pull them out. You can also buy simple risers that elevate your bed off the floor additional inches to create even more space.

Garage storage has also gotten much more efficient. You can get built-in storage cabinets with doors so the space looks clean and orderly. There are also modular systems that enable you to choose what features are best for your needs; including hanging racks for sports equipment, hooks for tools, and more.

Most garages have pitched roofs to keep rainwater or snow from collecting on top, and this space is ideal for items you don't use on a daily or weekly basis. Store these things on platforms or

racks that lower and raise either electronically at the touch of a button, or with an easy-to-use pulley system.

In newer or renovated homes, a mudroom or drop zone is a popular feature. This area often has built-in benches, hooks and bins to neatly tuck away boots, jackets, gardening equipment and other items your family uses frequently.

Finally, if your family is as tied to their portable internet and communications devices as many modern families, get rid of the tangle of charger cords on your counters by buying or building a home charging station with multiple outlets and pockets for storing and charging cell phones, tablets, laptops and more.

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