HOUSEKEEPING MANUAL

Everything You Need to Know for Maintaining Your Home and Belongings

Includes Tips, Tricks, and Etiquette

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Links to Daily Routines

- Fly Lady's 11 Commandments http://www.flylady.net/d/getting-started/flying-lessons/flyladys-11-commandments/
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- Illustration on How to Clean a Electric Stove
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- Cleaning Stove Burners & Grates using Ammonia (The best, easiest, cheapest way EVER.) http://www.thevspotblog.com/2011/07/cleaning-stove-burners-grates-best.html
- How to Clean an Oven http://askannamoseley.com/2012/01/day-10-cleaning-the-oven/
- How to Clean Between Oven Window Glass http://askannamoseley.com/2013/01/how-to-clean-between-oven-glass/
- Illustration on How to Debugging You Home

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- Illustration on How to Clean a Bathroom
- Shower Cleaning Wand http://www.homemademamas.net/2013/01/shower-tub-cleaning-wand.html
- Getting Mold Out Of The Shower http://www.thisblessedlife.net/2012/02/getting-mold-out-of-showerbefore-after.html
- Tub Cleaner http://www.thecraftpatchblog.com/2012/05/pinterest-tested-tub-cleaner.html
- Cleaning A Bathtub Drain http://www.thisblessedlife.net/2012/02/getting-mold-out-of-showerbefore-after.html
- Sanitizing Sponges http://www.listotic.com/55-must-read-cleaning-tips-tricks/2/
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- Shop Vac Cleaning Tip http://www.listotic.com/55-must-read-cleaning-tips-tricks/12/
- Getting Rid Of Mildew Stink in Towels http://www.classyclutter.net/2013/04/how-to-freshen-your-towels-and-get-rid-of-that-mildew-stink-spring-cleaning-day-2.html
- Clean Fan Blades With A Pillow Case http://www.listotic.com/55-must-read-cleaning-tips-tricks/6/

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- Mr. Clean Magic Erasers http://www.listotic.com/55-must-read-cleaning-tips-tricks/33/
- New Life For Old Cookie Sheets . . . Again. http://www.listotic.com/55-must-read-cleaning-tips-tricks/5/
- Use Salt To Clean Your Iron http://www.listotic.com/55-must-read-cleaning-tips-tricks/9/
- Clean Small Toys In A Laundry Bag https://gettinby.wordpress.com/2012/03/21/wash-it-out/
- 2-Ingredient Homemade Kitchen Cabinet Gunk Remover http://www.listotic.com/55-must-read-cleaning-tips-tricks/3/
- The Secret to Easily Remove Labels with No Effort – Oxiclean! http://bornfreenorthernvirginia.blogspot.com/2012/11/the-secret-to-easily-remove-labels-with.html
- How To Clean A Microfiber Couch

http://www.classyclutter.net/2013/04/how-to-freshen-your-towels-and-get-rid-of-that-mildew-stink-spring-cleaning-day-2.html

ORGANIZATION

Contain Your Clutter

Newspapers:
Lightweight and attractive, wire mesh bins are ideal for back-door recycling. Handles make it easy to carry to the car or garage.

Newspapers:
Classic stackable bins are sized for newspapers but also work at the back door for recyclables such as bottles and cans.

Magazines and Catalogs:
Wire mesh bins with handles allow you to neatly store mail, magazines, and catalogs before sorting.

Magazines and Catalogs:
For items that you plan to keep for weeks or months, woven baskets provide neat and handsome storage.

Mail and Letters:
Busy households are neater with designated interim storage. Stash items that need weekly attention on a desk or counter.

Invoices and Receipts:
Upright organizers are for desk or counter storage. Use for papers that are kept for several weeks before filing, such as bills.

Whole-House Solutions

When storage and organization affect the enjoyment and function of your home, it's time to find answers. When space is tight and you have a lot to store, think creatively to tame your clutter. Use the following ideas for help.

USE OVERLOOKED STORAGE SPACE

At your feet: Build shallow drawers into the toe-kick space beneath base cabinets. Fitted with a touch-latch release, they can be opened with a tap of your toe.

In the wall: Carve out shallow display shelves between wall studs. This can be ideal for a kitchen or bath where many small items, such as spices or toiletries, are stored. Space flanking a fireplace also is a natural for storage.

Behind the wall: Cut a short stack of shelves, drawers, or even a closet into a wall backed by unfinished space, such as attics or dormers.

Under the stairs: This sometimes roomy space may be the most overlooked for home storage. Angled and deep, the space can be fitted with a series of pull-out, pantry-style shelving units that will swallow books, files, sporting equipment, games, and more.

Around a window or door: Take advantage of this wall space to build maximum decorative shelving for books and collectibles. To avoid sagging shelves, use ¾-inch plywood and restrict spans to no more than 24 inches between vertical supports. Have the top of a window seat built with hinges for concealed storage. In a young child's room, sliding panels are a safer alternative to avoid pinched little fingers.

In the built-in (banquette seating): Include built-in seating in compact dining areas. Have seating built with open space underneath to store books or have doors installed to conceal items stored under the seat. Another solution: Have seating built window-seat style with hinged tops to store larger items.

HOLD A GARAGE SALE

As you sort, clear, and organize, prepare for a garage sale. Designate a holding area, such as a corner of your basement or a closet shelf or two. Wash and neatly fold items. Keep masking tape and markers in the designated area. Price and identify each item before you store it. When the garage sale weekend arrives, you'll have a big task out of the way.

DONATE TO CHARITY

Declutter and do a good deed. Donate unwanted clothing and household items to a charitable organization. (Children's and infant's clothes are in particular demand.) Check to see if the organization will pick up large items, such as furniture. Some charities offer this

Over-the-Door Organizers

These handy products put the back of any door to use. Use them for items such as shoes and accessories in a bedroom, toys in a child's room, pantry items in the kitchen, and gift wrap and laundry supplies in a utility room.

service. It may also depend on the condition of the item. As an added benefit, any items donated to charitable organizations may be tax deductible. Keep a list of your donations, the condition of each item, and your receipt from the organization. If the item is valuable, take a snapshot or a digital photograph for your records. If you have an questions about what and how much is deductible, check with your tax preparer or the local office of the Internal Revenvue Service. For more information on charitable deductions, visit the IRS at www.irs.gov.

HIRE A PRO

If your time is limited and you have the money, get a grip on organization by hiring a professional. A professional organizer can offer advice and services tailored to you and your family. Areas normally covered are space and storage planning, managing paper, and busting clutter. Find a professional organizer in your area through the National Association of Professional Organizers at www.napo.net. Franchised or locally owned closet component firms also may offer space planning and storage advice along with installation fees for their products. Check with shops that sell closet organizing components.

Front Entries

This is the first peek visitors have into your home. While the goal is an attractive, uncluttered, functioning space, how it is set up depends on your residence and family. Don't allow this important part of your home to be even a temporary dumping ground.

DEFINING THE SITUATION

Organizing starts with the space. If the family uses a side or back door, mail and packages may be the main front-entry organizing issues. If this is the entry everyone uses, or if you live in an apartment or condominium unit with only one door to the outside, you'll need an aggressive corralling and controlling strategy. Realistically assess how much stuff enters and leaves your home through this area. Think about how long items need to be in the entry area before they can be stored.

SEASONAL CONCERNS

Because this is an entry from the outdoors, cold-weather and rain gear, such as coats, boots, slickers and umbrellas, may need to be stored nearby. In a snowy locale, a bench where you can take off or put on boots, with nearby storage for boots, gloves, and hats prevents tracking slush and outer wear through the house.

smart ideas

Sell Your Surplus

CONSIGNMENT SHOPS

Look into shops that resell clothing and home furnishings. Clothing should be clean, repaired, and in good condition. Furniture and home furnishings should be in salable condition. Expect to receive a percentage of the sales price without investing the time and energy of a garage sale.

TRADE-IN OPTIONS

Look into variations of trade-in policy for items such as infant's and children's clothing. Both types are often outgrown or are rarely worn before they wear out. Ask about policies for trading in infant furniture, such as cribs, or items such as baby carriers or car seats.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- If you buy or build a house, don't overlook the convenience of a coat closet near the front door. A bench for changing shoes, perhaps with a storage rack, encourages neatness.
- Control incoming and outgoing mail, keys, and small packages with a hall chest. Find a style—from traditional to contemporary—and a size that fits your space. Use the top drawer or a tray on the top for mail. If the family primarily uses this entry, school papers, books and tapes to be returned to the library or video rental store, and other transit items can be stored neatly in the chest.

QUICK FIXES

No room for a chest? Hang a shelf for mail and keys. Have a local carpenter craft one to your specifications or check with companies and local retailers.

No coat closet? Install a coat rack and rotate seasonal coats and rain gear to avoid clutter. An umbrella stand is an old-fashioned convenience that serves a practical purpose.

Front Door Organizers

Place a small chest or narrow table as near as possible to the front entry. Designate this as your transit area. Hang an attractive rack, pegboard, or shelf for additional organizing efforts. Hang a hat rack for shopping bags, jackets, and backpacks.

Family Entries

Depending on the layout of your home, you and your family may enter through a garage or carport or a side or back door. Whether this is a back-stoop space or part of the porch or kitchen, the family entry has the potential of becoming the family dumping ground. Because guests may not use this entry, it's tempting to let clutter pile up. Here are organizing ideas to control the stuff of life.

DEFINING YOUR NEEDS

Consider how you and your family use the entry—and what comes and goes each day. Use the space to keep the household running smoothly. Items should be needed daily or frequently. Pet owners find it convenient to keep leashes at this entry. Bottom line: The less unnecessary stuff you keep in this busy area, the better.

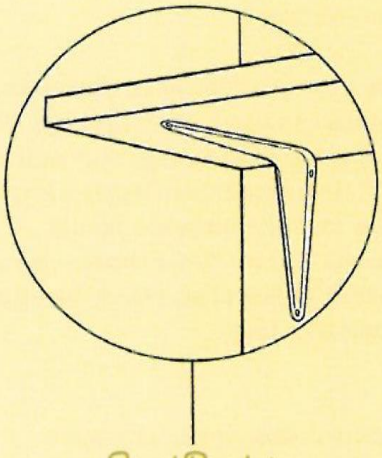
SEASONAL CONCERNS

The family entry stores rain and winter gear, such as slickers, umbrellas, hats, jackets, and boots. During the school year or special camp programs, sports equipment, book and athletic bags, and lunch boxes typically pass through this area.

IDEAS THAT WORK

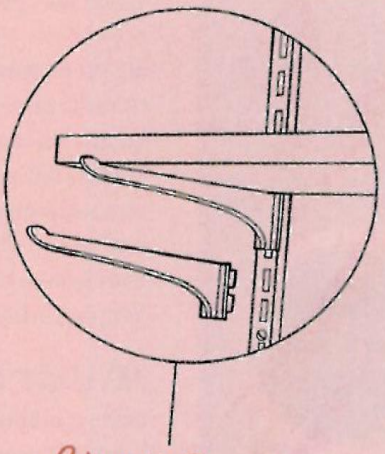
- If space allows, plan or redesign the family entry with built-ins. Designate one wall as a mini locker with a built-in unit for sports gear. Measure the sizes of key pieces of equipment, such as tennis rackets, baseball bats, and hockey sticks, and have shelves built to size. Purchase bins or buckets to corral smaller items such as tennis balls and baseballs. Use this area for sports gear in active use. Organize out-of-season gear in the garage or basement.
- Allow a separate shelf or two, preferably with racks for drying, for

Bookshelf Construction



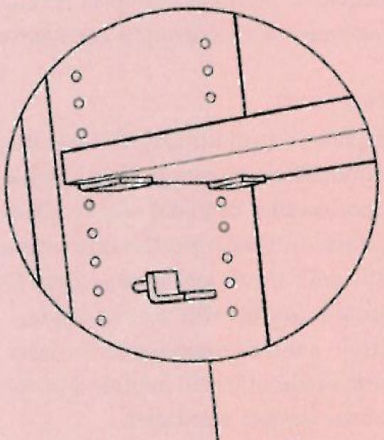
Fixed Bracket:

Simple construction turns a wall into a library. Use ¾-inch-thick plywood to avoid sagging; install supports every 30 to 36 inches. Support ½-inch plywood every 24 inches.



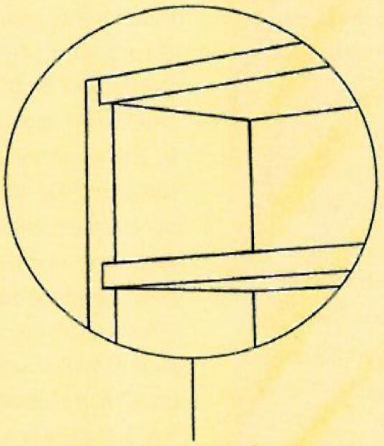
Adjustable Bracket:

Choose this construction if you own large or odd-size books or collectibles. Allow at least 18 inches between shelves and 10 to 12 inches for depth.



Adjustable with Pins:

This construction gives a finished look. Decorative edging trim can be added for reinforcement. Built-ins may be painted to match woodwork, such as moldings.



Fixed Dadoed Joints:

These handsome built-ins are designed and crafted as fine woodwork. Quality hardwoods, such as solid walnut, are often used if the shelves aren't painted.

dirty or muddy athletic shoes. If space permits, designate sections of the built-in for individual shelves or bins for each child or adult who plays a sport. A nearby bulletin board is a convenient way to keep game and practice times on the calendar.

QUICK FIXES

If you or your child needs a place to pull off boots or change from athletic shoes, add built-in seating with handy sports storage. With a simple plywood addition, perhaps crafted as window seat with a hinged lid, you'll have a place to neatly stash gear. Apply a tough enamel paint to stand up to daily life. Or, purchase a sturdy unfinished chest and add racks and bins inside for shoes or gear. Purchase a heavy-duty, wide bench and add bins below the seat to keep gear handy and out of family foot traffic.

Mudrooms

Once a common feature of country houses, mudrooms are a practical way to keep your house clean—especially if you live in a climate with months of wet or snowy weather. In traditional farmhouse design, the mudroom was the working entry from the outdoors into the house. In current design, country or country-style houses may be designed with a combination laundry and mudroom—or with a combination mudroom and potting area. A small bathroom, with a shower or at least a sink, may be included for cleanups. If space is tight, a mudroom can be an expanded back-entry area with storage for outdoor gear, a place to change and store shoes and boots and leave soiled outdoor clothing. Shelves, racks, hooks, and pegs provide storage and keep items from being strewn throughout the house.

DEFINING YOUR NEEDS

Decide what you need before you plan your mudroom. Do you live in the country and have outdoor animals or do you garden much of the year? Do you work in an occupation that requires you to clean up or store gear? Do you walk to work or walk from the bus stop or train and need a neat place to leave your boots and coat to dry? Do your children play a variety of outdoor sports? Will you combine your mudroom with another function, such as doubling as laundry room? Will a small bath or a sink for washing up be included in the plan? Each situation demands its own storage solutions.

SEASONAL CONCERNS

The name says it all. Mudrooms were originally designed to keep mud from the farmyard out of the house. There's still a good reason to designate such a space. In some climates, your concern may be dust and dirt or winter salt and sand from the city streets. If boot or shoe storage is only seasonal, consider placing shoe or boot racks in the mudroom when needed.

BUDGET STRETCHER

Quick Library Look

Buy matching, stackable retail storage units or line up matching bookcases to fill the width of at least one wall. Units often are sold in natural wood finishes. Stack painted cubes to create shelves. Or purchase unfinished bookcases and paint or stain them to match.

Living Areas

Whether you call this area a living room, family room, or great-room, the furnishings in this space are what make your residence a home. How do you organize and store family photographs, books, magazines, travel souvenirs, collections, musical instruments, electronic gear, and perhaps toys and games?

DEFINING YOUR NEEDS

Consider the type of living area you have. Do you have the traditional formal living room and a family room or den? Do you have only one living room, or a combination living area and dining room? If you have just one living area, how do you use it?

THE FORMAL LIVING ROOM

In homes with two or more living areas, the living room is usually used for conversation and entertaining rather than active family living. Storage is based on appearance and style rather than strictly utilitarian concerns. Some home styles, such as the bungalow, feature built-in shelves flanking the fireplace. Current home styles may include a small living room off the entry that doubles as a library. The addition of built-in bookshelves may be all it takes to convert a room into a dual-purpose library and formal sitting room. To add interest to a living room, paint the backs of the built-ins a dramatic color, such as red. If your budget allows, have the built-ins constructed with base cabinets that complement the room's woodwork for concealed storage. This can be an ideal solution if you want a television or other electronic equipment in the room.

THE FAMILY ROOM OR DEN

Second only to the kitchen in family activity, the family room has its own unique organization and storage needs. In open plans, the family room is usually part of the kitchen and close to a secondary entry. Whether that entry is a mudroom or a side or back door, clutter in the area must be controlled to preserve the appearance and functioning of the family's main living space. (See pages 16–18 for ideas.) Because this is where the family lives, the daily clutter of life—such as newspapers, magazines, mail, books, hobbies, projects, videos, and perhaps the computer—can take over. If clutter and stuff are problems for your family, hone in on the various cluttering activities and plan your storage accordingly.

The position of the television in the living room or den—tucked away or open and visible—dictates how much storage is open and

Home Remedies

OLD-FASHIONED FIXES

Organize with Pegs

Shaker-style pegs are an easy and attractive way to add back-door storage. Purchase a shelf unit with pegs to hang hats, gloves, and scarves. The shelf above provides room for open storage or for concealed storage in baskets and bins. Install two levels of pegs to double the available storage. Less used items stowed on the lower level will be covered by frequently used items on the top row.

Get Hooked on Hooks

Reduce time spent looking for misplaced items. Hang tiny hooks or a low shelf next to the peg rack to organize keys or catch sunglasses, garage door openers, and other often misplaced items.

how much is concealed. For many families, built-ins, wall-mounted bookshelves, or bookcases with bins or baskets are requirements for keeping things under control.

If children use the family room as a play area, a toy box and bins for blocks and other small items are essential. Large sturdy baskets for toys and books are another option. Window seats also add additional, accessible storage.

THE GREAT-ROOM

This combination room offers challenges and opportunities for organization. Because the space is open and visible, plan for concealed storage as well as open shelving. Built-in seating with storage can expand your options in the dining and living areas of a great-room. If built-ins aren't practical in your situation, purchase freestanding storage units that offer a combination of open shelves and concealed storage.

For additional concealed storage, use trunks or ottomans with hinged lids. Arrange baskets or bins inside these pieces to keep small items or crafts neat and organized. If you like a vintage look, shop for a bookrack and accent table combination that can add chair-side storage. Plan built-ins for electronic and computer equipment or purchase storage units geared to your needs. Computer cabinets designed to resemble armoires when the door or doors are closed are practical in open spaces.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

These valuable pieces deserve special care in your organization plan. Your piano will hold its tune much longer if it is placed against an interior wall. This instrument is sensitive even to overnight temperature swings through an outside wall. Pianos also need humidity. If the air in your home is dry from the climate or from indoor heating, compensate with a combination humidifier-sensor attachment available for pianos. (Check with a piano dealer for a source and proper installation.)

If you own brass, wind, or string instruments, keep them in their cases, which may have humidifier and sensor attachments. (If your instrument is old, check out the possibilities of a new case for safer storage.) If you are storing an instrument for use in years to come, such as an older child's band instrument for a younger sibling, store it in a climate-controlled part of your home, never an unheated attic or dank basement.

Remove all tuning slides and valves from brass instruments, such as trumpets and tubas; then wrap each piece in tissue paper or cloth. Don't use plastic because it retains moisture. Remove the reeds of a clarinet, oboe, and other woodwind instruments. For stringed instruments, such as violins and cello, turn the keys to release the pressure from the strings; store the instruments in their

Bar Keeping

Convert a vintage armoire or wardrobe into a liquor cabinet or bar. Reinforce shelves to store heavy bottles. Add a wine rack or two. Attach under-shelf, track-style hangers designed for footed glasses. Fill flat baskets with corkscrews, stirrers, cocktail napkins, and coasters.

Decorative Hooks and Pegs

Hall Hooks:
No coat closet? Install handsome chrome- or brass-plated hooks near the front door. Also hang on the back of your bathroom door for robes or extra towels.

Country Pegs:
Hang wherever you need extra storage. Pegs work well at the back door for everyday gear and shopping bags. Also add to your kitchen, children's room, or laundry.

Rustic Iron Hooks:
Need heavy-duty hooks for backpacks or book bags? Reminiscent of Early American ironwork, these sturdy hooks are just the ticket. Hang one for each family member.

Contemporary Chrome:
For modern style, look for sleek designs for your kitchen, bath, hall, or entry. Chrome hooks are a stylish solution for everything from coats to kitchen towels.

Instant Closet:
When one or two hangers won't do, add a multipronged hanger at your family entrance. This shapely, sturdy design organizes with two rows of staggered hooks.

Handy Cup Hooks:
Unbeatable for saving space and for organizing, cup hooks simply screw into the undersides of shelves for quick storage. Use for open shelves too.

cases, fitted with a humidifier and sensor to prevent cracking.

ENTERTAINING

Adapt vintage, secondhand, or reproduction wardrobes or armoires as television cabinets. Measure your television, including the depth, before shopping for such a piece. Some storage pieces are too shallow to hold a television. Normally, the back of the unit will have to be drilled or cut for wiring, and well-supported shelves added. These units are usually large enough to also house the video cassette recorder and tapes. As an alternative, use such a unit for a compact disc player, compact discs, and tapes.

A butler's tray is a classic solution for working a bar into a living room. If you use a butler's tray, pour liquors or sherry into decanters. Vintage tea carts on wheels or vintage or reproduction metal utility carts also serve the purpose.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- Install floor-to-ceiling metal shelving tracks on one or more walls in your family room or den. Have ¾-inch thick, 10- to 12-inch-deep plywood planks cut to fit the wall, and hang them from adjustable brackets. Support the shelves at least every 24 inches to prevent sagging. Use stock molding and other stock detailing to trim basic built-ins or freestanding storage pieces. Look for detailing at home centers and at specialty woodworking shops that carry reproduction trim, often based on 19th- and early-20th-century styles.
- Fit shelves to the slope of a vaulted ceiling. Use the centered wall space above the door for extra display. Build in sturdy shelves to display heavy collectibles. Use ¾-inch plywood rather than ½-inch and reinforce with edging strips. Vary heights and widths to accommodate your collectibles.
- Before anchoring shelves to the wall, check access to electrical outlets and wiring boxes. Be certain you have the number of outlets and electrical boxes you need now and in the future. When possible, divide shelving into groups of three—an odd number is more visually pleasing than an even number.
- Think beyond the obvious for storage and display. Look at a variety of pieces, such as metal baker's racks, for shelving options.

SPACE SAVERS

Hang a painting, print, or photograph from a vertical bookcase support for prominent display. The piece immediately takes on importance and conserves valuable wall space.

- Buy your display pieces ready-made and painted or stained. Accessory and decorating shops and home decorating catalogs sell shelves and brackets, including ledges for art and framed photography. Measure spaces and order to fit. Stack several shelves for the display you need. Shop for a ready-made wall-mounted cabinet or a hanging corner cupboard. These are ideal for organizing

Plate Racks For Storage

Three-tiered metal plate racks, available from home furnishings stores and catalogs, are ideal for quick storage. Use a plate rack to group potted plants in a sunny living or dining area, to organize soaps and towels in a bath, or for counter storage in a small kitchen.

a collection of small objects.

- Turn a closet into a library by removing the door, replacing the trim, and adding interior shelves. Measure a love seat or sofa and have shelves built on either side for a recessed nook.
- House a television in a cabinet to create a room divider between open living and dining areas. Maximize use of the space by incorporating bench seating with storage into the room divider. Have the bench crafted so the top lifts for magazines, videocassettes, table linens, or other items you like to keep handy.

Even rooms with 8-foot ceilings have enough space for a bookshelf over the door. The same idea can work with wide cased openings if you reinforce the spans every 24 inches. Have shelving built from floor to ceiling on the unbroken wall in a small den to create a library effect. Add handsome boxes or baskets with tops for concealed storage. Buy matching boxes or baskets in identical or in graduated sizes. If you save magazines, purchase specially sized containers for a neat appearance.

QUICK FIXES

Add a pair of étagères, freestanding open shelves, to a living room to display collectibles. Convert baskets or trunks into cocktail or coffee tables. Inside, store throws, magazines, or newspapers. If space is extremely limited, use trunks or baskets on stands for side tables.

If flea market is your style, stack vintage suitcases for side tables. Use the interiors to store games, magazines, or seasonal throws.

Purchase large flat baskets to store newspapers. If reading material takes over your living areas, add one or more magazine racks. Clear out newspapers daily and magazines every week or two. Move magazines you want to save to specially designed storage units or stack them neatly on bookshelves.

Seriously desperate for living room storage? Use the space under a skirted particleboard table to temporarily declutter a room of magazines or books. Purchase tables, such as glass-top patio tables, that include shelf-style bases. Place a console table behind a sofa or against the wall and add squared wicker baskets or trunks with tops. Stack magazines in flat baskets under a console table.

In informal living areas, think creatively to maximize storage. Add a shelf around the perimeter of your room for basket or bin storage. Purchase metal, European-style magazine bins and attach to the wall. Make books and magazines you plan to keep part of the decor by neatly stacking oversized books to serve as small tables. (Keep

TIP TAG No. 2

Paper Clutter

LETTERS AND BILLS:

- Buy flat baskets, wire bins, or wood boxes for in and out boxes.
- Use a metal vertical sorter and file folders to sort bills. Set aside 30 minutes each week for personal paperwork, including children's schoolwork and reports.
- Organize paperwork with a metal filing cabinet and tabbed folders. Store in a closet if space is tight.

NEWSPAPERS:

- Use a basket or magazine rack to keep daily papers handy.
- Buy a flat basket to organize newspapers for recycling. Designate a recycling spot.

coasters nearby to protect your books from glasses and cups in case anyone wants to use your stacked books as a handy side table.) Likewise, stacks of design or travel magazines can be attractive on the lower shelf of a bookcase.

Dining Areas

Whether your home has one dining area or both formal and informal dining spaces, storage in or near the dining area is the key to organization and function. Built-ins can be customized to your needs, but freestanding wardrobes, cupboards, and armoires adapt well and can add style to your setting.

SEASONAL CONCERNS

If you use some items, such as holiday china or serving pieces, only occasionally, consider storing them elsewhere. This will free up valuable space for the dinnerware and glasses you use frequently. When you entertain during the holiday, a bar cart may work better than keeping a bar set up year around.

SPACE SAVERS

Turn an interior wall of your dining room into a sideboard by installing floor-to-ceiling cabinets. Use the top cabinet to store little-used or seasonal items, such as holiday decorations. This arrangement provides much-needed storage in houses built without basements or attics. It's also better than garage storage for temperature and humidity control, especially in damp climates.

In a small dining room, build a wall of cabinets and open shelves around the window. Include a wine rack for handy storage. Find room for a built-in china cabinet by using space between wall studs. This shallow storage works for glasses and plate display. Fit a compact corner cupboard into a small dining area. Look for vintage pieces or paint or stain an unfinished one. Use the top of the cupboard for extra display or for plants that require little light.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- Maximize storage and function with a built-in sideboard or server for china, flatware, linens, and serving pieces. Measure your plates, trays, and serving pieces for a custom fit. Add a built-in china cabinet with glass doors on both sides to define a dining area without blocking light.

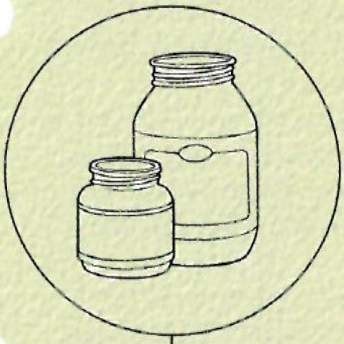
In an informal dining area, take advantage of the counter between the kitchen and dining room by attaching glass shelves with metal supports. Glass keeps the look open and adds display. If you have curved wood shelves, common in homes built in the 1940s and 1950s, replace them with glass.

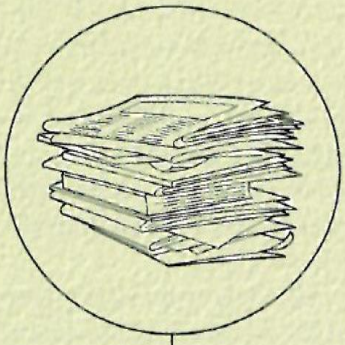
- Consider something other than a matching dining room suite. You can often get better buys on antique, vintage, reproduction, or contemporary sideboards sold separately. If stained pieces aren't

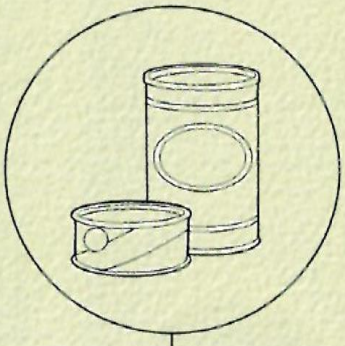
Create Your Own Server

No space for a conventional server or sideboard? Purchase a vintage or reproduction demilune (half-round) chest or other small chest. Line the drawers with special silver-storage cloth to slow tarnishing if you are storing sterling silver or silver-plated pieces.

What You Can Recycle







Glass:
Rinse food jars to avoid attracting pests to your recycling. Glass bottles, such as wine bottles, may be returnable to markets for deposit.

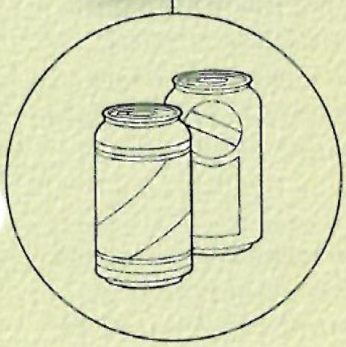
Newsprint:
Stack neatly in a box or bin to save space. In some areas, newspapers have to be tied with twine. Donate magazines to nonprofit groups.

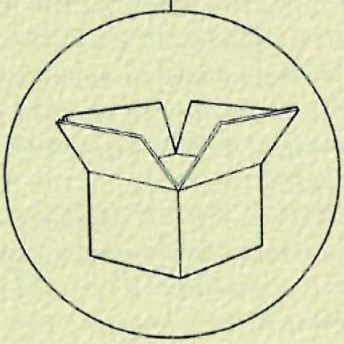
Metal Cans:
Rinse to avoid attracting pests. To save space, open the lids and flatten by stepping on them. Plastic lids may have to be sorted with plastics.

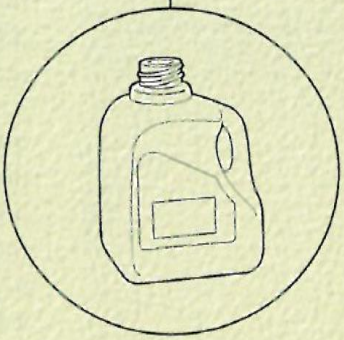
Drink Cans:
Beer and soft-drink cans are often returnable for deposit at grocers or recycling centers. Some cities require cans to be sorted from paper.

Boxes:
In areas that recycle boxes, flattening may be required. If recycling isn't an option, school and community groups often need sturdy, clean ones.

Plastics:
Depending on your area, plastic bottles may be returnable for deposits—or recyclable through city pick up. Rinse, as sugars and milk attract pests.







compatible, prime and paint the sideboard or detail with a decorative paint finish. Look for pieces that are compatible in scale and style. Use a narrow console table, such as a metal and glass piece, for a server in a small dining area. This type of piece takes up much less space than a conventional sideboard.

- Put your library to work with double duty. If you are a collector or have a home library, have floor-to-ceiling bookshelves installed on one or more walls of your dining room. Have shelves build around cased opening and flanking windows to create a library ambiance.

QUICK FIXES

Replace solid doors with glass-paned ones to update an old server. Have an old sideboard refinished with a combination of colors and finishes and updated hardware. Replace pulls on a built-in or freestanding server; look at some of the fun motifs on the market, such as knives and forks, stylized leaves, or animals. To stretch your dollar, mix these special pulls with plain ones from a home center. Or mix plain pulls of different colors.

Combine two metal or sturdy wood wine racks with a glass or painted plywood top for a server with storage. Place away from direct sun to avoid damage to your wine. Purchase a commercial serving stand from a restaurant supply company and top with a decorative, tole-type tray for a server.

Make a sideboard server by skirting a plywood base and having a plywood top cut to fit. Use a heavy cloth, such as tightly woven linen, for pleats or gathers. Take advantage of the space underneath—with baskets, a wicker trunk, or stackable plastic bins or boxes—for extra out-of-sight storage. For organizing, buy a pair of stacked, pullout vinyl bins on stands and place them underneath to organize linens and serving pieces.

BUDGET STRETCHER

Storage Specifics

Shop organizing stores or websites (see sources on pages 357-368) to find storage tailored to your needs. Items include dispensers for bread, pet food, canned drinks, paper plates, and plastic bags; stacked inserts to double drawer storage; and holders for liter-size bottles.

Butler's Pantry

Traditionally the butler's pantry is a small room between the dining room and kitchen used for storing china, silver, glassware, serving pieces, and linens. This arrangement works well for families who entertain and need extra storage and serving pieces. However, many of the convenient organizing ideas of the traditional butler's pantry also can be incorporated into dining rooms and informal dining areas. Although storage in a butler's pantry is often custom-built, stock pieces, such as plate and glass organizers and lazy Susans, can turn a closet or even a sideboard into your own version of this handy pantry.

DEFINING YOUR NEEDS

Before you plan a butler's pantry, determine exactly what you want to store. A combination of open and concealed storage provides accessibility and a convenient way to store more utilitarian objects.

If you are beginning to set up a household, plan storage space for future serving pieces, such as large trays and coffeemakers.

PANTRY POINTERS

Fit stock under-the-counter cabinets with easy-slide drawer glides and wood dividers sized to your china. (Check with a kitchen cabinet firm.) Put stock plastic or wire dividers into drawers, and line them with antitarnish cloth if you store silver pieces there. If you use easy-drawer glides for bar storage, reinforce the drawers to support the weight of liquor bottles.

Keep tablecloths, runners, place mats, and napkins neat and unwrinkled with a pullout unit constructed from oversize wooden dowels mounted inside a frame.

Adapt storage to specific needs: Have an upper shelf custom made for stemware storage, or install tracks (available at hardware stores) on the underside of a shelf. Use dowels from a home center or lumber store for vertical plate storage. Such cabinets often are open on both sides for easy access.

SPACE SAVERS

Construct your own butler's pantry by building shelving around a window in a back hall, laundry room, or kitchen. Choose adjustable shelves so you can store items of various heights.

If you have a closet in your dining room or nearby in a hall or kitchen, use the space for a butler's pantry. Purchase plastic stacking bins for dishes and glasses and hang tracks under shelves for wine glasses. Install old-fashioned cup hooks for cups and mugs. Use flat, lined baskets for stainless flatware. If you have silver or silver plate, store it in a chest to avoid tarnishing. Purchase racks, such as foldout racks used for tea towels, to hang table linens on the back of the door. Use the top shelf for large serving pieces, such as chafing dishes, or items that you use infrequently, such as coffee carafes and punch bowls.

QUICK FIXES

Add a baker's rack or cupboard to create a handy mini butler's pantry. Shop for a baker's rack with wide lower shelves for a convenient serving counter.

Home Remedies

KITCHEN FIXES

Creative Storage

Add style and personality to your kitchen as you find creative storage uses for interesting items. Use a new or vintage fish poacher to organize oils and condiments on the counter. Store rarely used items in large bowls or crocks arranged along cabinet tops. Collect pitchers and crocks to hold wooden spoons and serving utensils.

Handy Holders

Purchase a wooden expandable rack with pegs to hang mugs. Store spices in test tubes with corks, neatly in a rack. Organize small envelopes in berry baskets. Corral family flatware in a divided basket. Use one compartment for everyday cotton or paper napkins.

The Kitchen

DEFINING YOUR NEEDS

Storage is the key to how well your kitchen functions. No room in the house is more storage-oriented. How much and what kind of storage you need depends on the size of your family, how much you

cook, your lifestyle, and your cooking style. Before you get started, ask yourself:

- Do you need utensils and cookware for entertaining and trying out new cuisines and recipes? Do you have time for entertaining?
- Do you like to do a special type of cooking?
- Do you need cookbook storage? What appliances do you use?
- Do you like utensils, small appliances, mugs, and other items within easy reach? Do you prefer clean, uncluttered countertops?
- How frequently do you go to the grocery store? Do you cook primarily from the freezer or the pantry? Do you need space for refrigerated and unrefrigerated fresh produce?
- Where does your family eat most of its meals? Is it convenient to keep table linens, dinnerware, and flatware in the kitchen?

PANTRY POINTERS

Carve out a pantry from a sliver of wall space. When space is narrow but deep, fit the space with pullout shelving to put items at your fingertips; install shallow shelves between wall studs to store cans one row deep.

Store rice, beans, flour, cornmeal, cereal, and dry staples in sealed see-through containers. You'll keep pests away and always know supply levels. Also use containers for small packets of sauce mixes that can get lost in the pantry. Squared containers are more space-efficient than round containers.

CABINETS AND SHELVES

Consider options other than standard base cabinets. Standard cabinets are cheaper to build and install, but custom-made cabinets with both deep and shallow drawers may better organize kitchen items. Plates and bowls can be stored in drawers if you use dividers. Existing cabinets can be retrofitted with pullouts. Check with a local cabinet firm for options.

SPACE SAVERS

Maximize work space by keeping appliances on the counter that you use every day. Hang utensils from wall-mounted hooks or pegboards. Attach a magnetic timer to the rack.

If you have a blank wall and need storage, install a counter-to-ceiling metal grid and hang cookware and utensils from S-hooks. Mount a narrow shelf on the backsplash to keep salt and pepper, mugs, and frequently used items off the counter. Such storage might seem convenient for spices, but spices are better stored in a cabinet away from heat.

Hang a shelf over a window. A mesh metal shelf with S-hooks can hold items on its underside. Purchase a new or vintage hanging cabinet or corner cupboard for open storage in your kitchen. If an old piece has a timeworn finish, clean it up and enjoy the patina. Buy ready-made picture ledges, available from decorating shops and

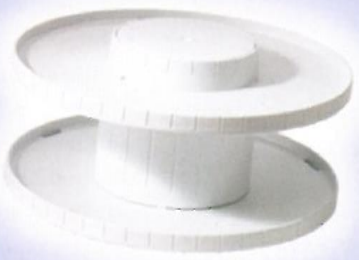
Cabinet Keepers

Fit cabinet doors with racks to easily find cookware lids and canned goods. This is also a good space-stretcher for a small pantry. Install a rack for trash bags. Organize shelves with revolving racks for spices and other staple ingredients.

Kitchen Storage Ideas

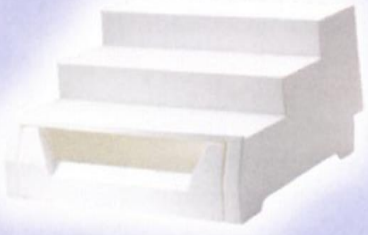
Drawer Divider:

Protect, sort, and organize everyday flatware with handy dividers. Laminate and wood divider boxes are sturdy and easy to clean. Double dividers fit deep drawers.



Double Lazy Susan:

Create accessibility and maximize cabinet storage with a lazy Susan. Models with an adjustable top shelf provide room for tall canned goods, spices, and condiments.



Spice Stairs:

Forget the aggravation of lost spices with staggered shelves that let you see what you have on hand. Sources for handy kitchen storage are on page 360.

Wire Produce Baskets:

Use attractive and durable baskets to neatly organize nonrefrigerated produce, such as bananas, potatoes, and onions. These baskets also store kitchen linens.

specialty catalogs, and have a frame shop rout grooves for plates. Hang them around your kitchen as plate racks.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- For the ultimate in accessible storage, use open wall storage and open under-the-counter storage in place of conventional cabinets. Vary the heights of shelves or install adjustable shelves to expand your options. Use sturdy decorative baskets for items such as produce.
- Retrofit existing base cabinets with pullout bins, racks, and lazy Susans for tight corners. Use baskets or color-coded plastic trays if you need to store easy-to-lose items. If you frequently use heavy kitchen equipment, such as a mixer or food processor, consider storing it on its own pullout and pull-up tray. Check with kitchen designers, custom dealers, or cabinetmakers for installation.
- Think recycling. A standard base cabinet is normally sized to hold two kitchen bins—an easy way to divide glass from plastic. For easy recycling, adapt one side with a pullout shelf and vinyl-coated racks.

Home centers, discount stores, and shops specializing in organizing offer a wide selection of products. If space allows, an antique or reproduction dresser or dry sink adds kitchen display and handy concealed storage. Install cup hooks for a neat look.

QUICK FIXES

Use drawer dividers for utensils instead of plastic organizers that quickly fill up with stuff. Visit a discount store, home center, or organizing specialty store to find ways to customize a kitchen. Add items such as lazy Susans to make corners accessible.

Find new uses for standard items. Stools, benches, and bookcases, all available from unfinished furniture stores, are ideal for attractive storage. (Remember, cookbooks need storage too.) Place a narrow table against a wall and arrange baskets underneath.

Products such as racks for glasses and hooks for cups and inside-the-door attachments utilize every bit of space.

Be neat and selective when concealed storage space is tight. As you buy cookware, collect only one or two types that display well together. This is more attractive than a hodgepodge of styles and materials. If you don't have a pantry, add shelves at the back of the kitchen door to store canned goods and seasonal items.

Forget custom. Buy and hang a decorative shelf for spices. Use large decorative jars to hold bulk quantities of foods. Before buying jars for this purpose, ask whether the finishes are safe for food.

Compensate for minimal storage. Purchase a multitiered plate rack to keep everyday plates handy. Use acrylic or natural woven baskets with several compartments, such as those designed for buffets, to store frequently used flatware and napkins. Tailor basket storage to your style. Use a chrome-plated steel basket with handles

Island Options

No island? Need temporary storage that can move with you? Buy a butcher-block cart on wheels from a specialty home-design catalog, kitchen shop, or import store. The carts are built with storage such as wine racks. Substitute a small work table for a vintage solution.

to keep fresh fruit neatly arranged, or store kitchen towels in a simple wire basket with wood handles. Collect baskets in one style and arrange on the top of cabinets—if space allows—to hold kitchen items, such as extra tools or napkins, when space is very tight.

Bedrooms

This is the most personal room of your home. Unless you constantly strive to be neat and tidy, it's easy to let down your guard and give in to clutter and chaos. When you get a handle on organization, however, you are on the way to creating a peaceful retreat. For more information on closet organization, see page 36.

DEFINING YOUR NEEDS

Normally a bedroom has at least a small closet, but beyond that, consider what you need and want for bedroom storage.

- Do you need storage space for clothing beyond the closet and conventional chest or dresser? (You may have a small closet, or two people may share a standard-size closet.)
- Do you have space for additional storage pieces?
- Do you have to store seasonal clothing and bedding in the bedroom?
- Do you use the bedroom for a home office, study, library, computer room, or hobby room?
- Do you need to store papers and records in your bedroom?

SPACE SAVERS

Choose perforated clothes hampers that are too handsome to hide. They keep dirty clothes out of sight and organized for the laundry. Buy two: one for washable clothing and one for dry cleaning only. In a country- or cottage-style bedroom, use white wicker hampers to keep clothes for the laundry or cleaners. Shop antiques stores or flea markets for vintage hampers.

In a bedroom with little or no storage, use decorative storage cubes with lift-off lids. These work well for matching bedside tables or at the foot of the bed in place of a more conventional blanket chest. Specialty home decorating stores and catalogs carry variations of the versatile storage wood cube.

Use the space under a bed for heavy duty plastic or cardboard storage boxes. (Purchase boxes with tight-fitting lids to keep out dust.) This space works well for out-of-season items, such as sweaters or blankets. Use it for belongings you don't need every day but that require climate control, such as photographs, books, and heirloom linens. Skirt a particleboard table and use the space

TIP TAG No. 3

Repurpose

RACKS AND PEGS:

- Install a plate rack and use it to display dishes and saucers.
- Hang an expandable wood or plastic wall-mounted hat rack for tool or basket storage. Hang a second to keep coffee mugs handy. Hang mesh shopping bags from the racks to store produce.
- Add Shaker pegs or a hat rack at the back door for shopping bags.

BASKETS:

- Hang a basket or two from your pot rack for kitchen linens, such as tea towels and cotton napkins.
- Fill flat baskets with everyday flatware and cooking utensils, such as wooden spoons.

underneath for stacked boxes. Some plywood table bases are made with a shelf for stacked boxes. Add a padded or wood bench and use the space underneath to stash out-of-season items in wicker suitcases or other decorative boxes.

IDEAS THAT WORK

If space allows, use the most classic storage of all—the desk. Choose one with the drawer space you need. A small writing table can work if you need minimum storage for supplies. Other ideas:

- Take advantage of bedroom walls with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves.
- Box in windows with shelves above and window seats below to use every bit of space for storage and display.
- Buy a bed with integral, under-the-mattress storage. Check with a full-service furniture store.
- Get double duty out of your nightstand by placing a decorative box from an import store on a stand. Such decorative hinged boxes, which work well as lamp tables, are easy to access and handy for tissues, glasses, reading material, and miscellaneous clutter.
- Get both storage and style from interesting mismatched vintage furniture. Try a burnished metal dresser or a 1930s dressing table with drawers for style. Look for a nicely shaped piece to paint.
- When you need maximum storage for items such as hats and bulky duvets or quilts, add a vintage or reproduction trunk or chest at the foot of the bed. Affordable wicker is easy to move.

QUICK FIXES

Hang fabric panels on wire line or a drapery rod suspended from the ceiling to add concealed storage in a room. Choose washable cotton fabrics that complement your decorating scheme.

Purchase matching bookshelf units to turn your bedroom into a reading nook. Choose a contemporary or traditional style and paint or stain for a look compatible with your decor.

Add storage to a traditional-style bedroom furnished with antiques. Shaker boxes in graduated sizes or wicker or wooden boxes enhance the look while hiding necessities and clutter. Use an antique steamer trunk or wood trunk for blankets, pillows, out-of-season clothing, or extra reading material.

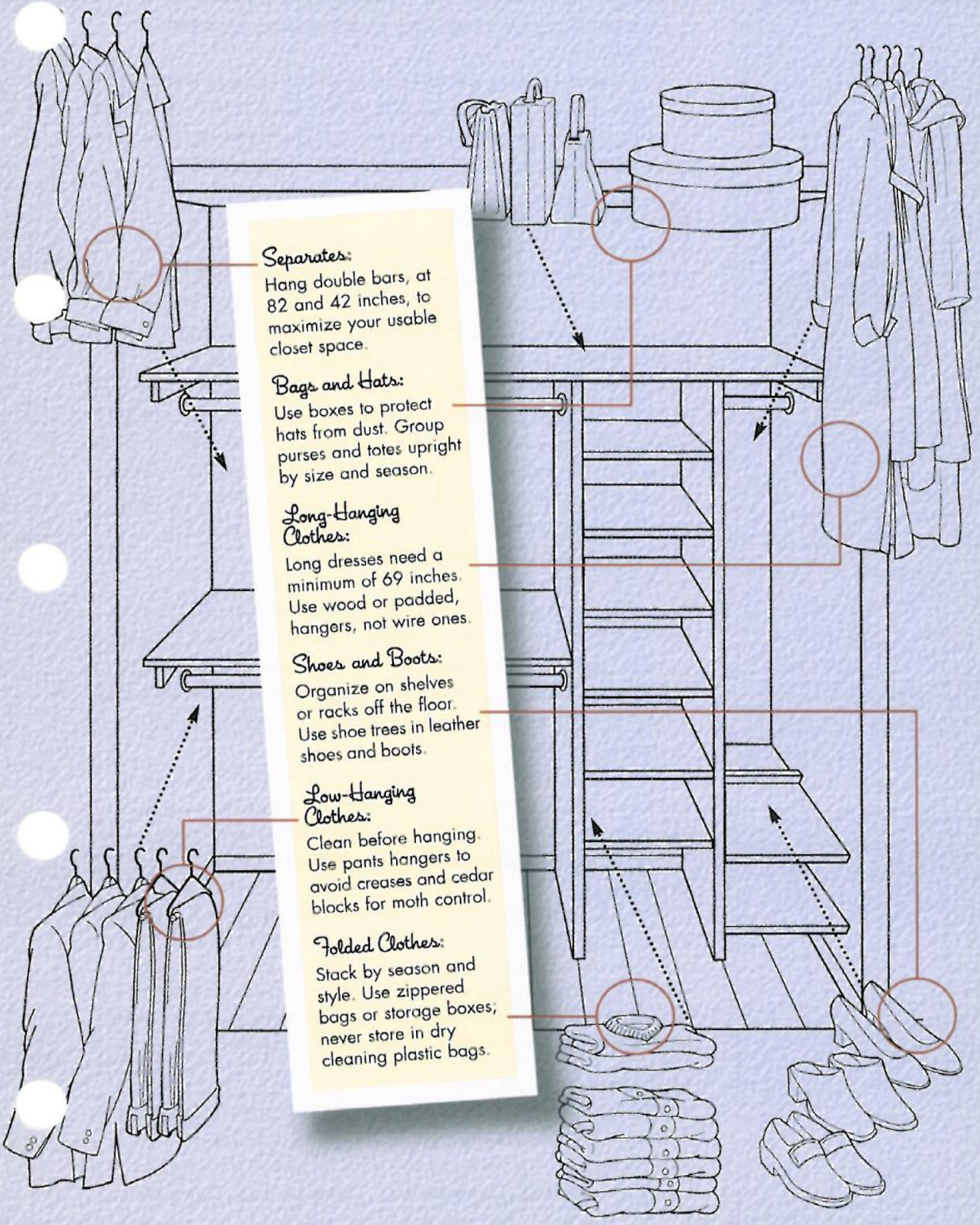
Be creative with specialized storage. Add wood, woven, or art-paper-clad decorative boxes to store papers, magazines, crafts projects, or mending supplies. Cover a plain cardboard box and its removable top with heavy gift paper, brown kraft paper, or colorful wallpaper scraps for affordable, attractive storage.

Use the space on your dresser or the top of a chest. Stack matching decorative boxes in graduated sizes to keep items such as earrings, costume jewelry, socks, tights, hose, or scarves handy for the morning rush. Control dresser-top clutter with colorful boxes in varying shapes, sizes, and materials to hold small pieces of jewelry.

Guest Room with Storage

Create a guest room and add storage to your home office, den, or living room with a fold-down bed unit. These modular units can be ordered with open shelving that doubles as side tables for guests, plus a desk and files. Units also can be installed between bookcases.

Organized Clothes Closet



Separates:
Hang double bars, at 82 and 42 inches, to maximize your usable closet space.

Bags and Hats:
Use boxes to protect hats from dust. Group purses and totes upright by size and season.

Long-Hanging Clothes:
Long dresses need a minimum of 69 inches. Use wood or padded, hangers, not wire ones.

Shoes and Boots:
Organize on shelves or racks off the floor. Use shoe trees in leather shoes and boots.

Low-Hanging Clothes:
Clean before hanging. Use pants hangers to avoid creases and cedar blocks for moth control.

Folded Clothes:
Stack by season and style. Use zippered bags or storage boxes; never store in dry cleaning plastic bags.

Create affordable dresser-top storage with a lipped serving tray from a gift shop or import store. Substitute a flat basket. If the bottom of the piece is rough, glue on felt squares to prevent scratching.

If clothes are spilling out of your closet, buy a freestanding clothes rack and angle it in a corner behind an attractive screen. Buy a new or vintage screen or make your own by hinging bifold doors from a home center and painting or covering them with wallpaper.

Kids' Rooms

Parents already know that children need lots of storage. Unless children have a playroom, the bedroom is the repository for their possessions. (Train your children from an early age not to store or leave toys, books, and school projects in the living or family rooms.)

DEFINING YOUR CHILDREN'S NEEDS

The ages of children are obvious factors, but also consider needs for schoolwork, projects, and hobbies. A small, low bookcase, storage cubes, and a toy box are sufficient for preschool-age children. When children enter elementary school, add shelves and a desk for basic school supplies. If your children have computers in their rooms, include storage for disks and games. When a room is shared, designate individual storage for each child.

SPACE SAVERS

Work with a carpenter or cabinetmaker to design and build a twin-size platform bed with drawer storage underneath. Pullout drawers are safer than toy boxes because they don't have the hinged lids that can pinch little fingers or trap young children inside. Drawers work well for older children's extra bedding, sweaters, sports equipment, projects, and collections.

Purchase a bed designed with storage. Check with stores that handle youth furniture. Consider modular furniture for a built-in look that's movable. Pair up storage pieces with a desk along a wall or in a closet. Incorporate a trunk on casters for clothes storage and a bedside table.

Install Shaker pegs or hooks near the bedroom door. To make and install a Shaker peg rack, cut a 1×3 inch pine board to length. Using wood glue, glue the board to the wall. Cut two pieces of ½-inch-wide decorative molding the same length; nail them flush to the top and bottom of the board with finishing nails. Drill holes for 3-inch-long Shaker pegs 5 inches apart; glue pegs into holes.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- Build a low, corner bookcase with smoothed edges for safe and accessible storage. Measure what you plan to store before you design and install shelves. Plan for adjustable sizes rather than standard symmetrical arrangements. (Measure some bigger toys to

Study Hall

Give your child an organized area to do homework and projects. Make a study table with a desktop and a three-tiered basket system with slide-out storage. Shop home organizing stores and mass-market retailers for similar products. (See source pages 357-368.)

ensure that the shelves are adequate size.) Avoid sharp angles and corners that can hurt children.

- Consider weight loads. Architects often specify ¾-inch-thick birch plywood for bookshelves; spans should be no more than 30 to 36 inches between supports. If you use a thinner plywood, such as ½-inch, reinforce it with supports every 24 inches.
- Think long-term storage needs. Children's bedrooms tend to be small; take advantage of every bit of space by building removable shelves in one end of the closet. Store everyday toys and games on low shelves.
- Look at material alternatives. Economical painted particleboard, rather than laminate or birch plywood, works fine for built-ins.
- Acquire storage pieces that can be used through the teen years, then placed in other rooms or settings. A dresser and armoire that are ideal for baby clothes and diapers will work equally well for jeans and sweaters. Buy sturdy storage pieces that grow with children. Check construction warranties before you purchase child-size versions of office furniture. As soon as children have homework, buy a desk with storage. As a budget-stretcher, shop for a vintage or unfinished desk to paint. Standard desks are 30 inches high; computer stands are usually about 26 inches high.
- Place the bed against the back of a freestanding wardrobe, making a walk-in dressing area behind the bed. If the piece isn't finished on the back, staple or glue fabric to cover rough edges.
- For children in upper elementary or middle school, look for chests to paint and use for storage. Add plastic drawer dividers or stackable storage so items don't get lost in a deep chest.

QUICK FIXES

Paint an unfinished chest or toy chest with blocks of color for color-coded organization. Make a sturdy desk from painted wood or metal filing cabinets. Paint or stain a 4-foot-long, 1-inch-thick wood plank or door that fits the depth of the cabinets.

Stack flea market suitcases to create a bedside or occasional table with storage. Buy sturdy large baskets, open or with tops, or large hampers for instant storage. Purchase plastic crates for a room divider with storage. Link two rows of plastic crates for a room divider that has access from both sides. Stack and tie two pairs of crates so there is knee space between. Lay a plywood top with rounded corners, sanded smooth and painted, across the crate pairs for a desk. Place heavy objects on the bottom for stability.

smart ideas

Tiny Toys

LOST AND FOUND

Building sets, games, crayons, puzzles, and assorted small items can be the bane of a parent's existence. Keep such easy-to-lose items out of the toy box, where they can be lost forever. Instead, purchase drawer organizers and caddies made for flatware and cleaning supplies. Store on shelves out of the reach of younger children.

COLOR CODING

Even the youngest child soon learns colors and shapes. Purchase bins and boxes in bright colors and tape pictures of items, such as toy cars or doll clothes, on the boxes to avoid confusion at cleanup time.

Nurseries

You'll be surprised at how much storage your baby needs. The basics are a chest for clothes and a changing table with open shelves to keep supplies handy. As your baby grows, organize the closet with double rods for hanging clothes and add bookshelves and a toy chest.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- Center the crib on the wall and add matching storage units on either side for a built-in look. In a tiny nursery, borrow space from a closet by removing sliding or bifold doors. Add a smaller baker's rack for easily accessible storage.
- When space is really tight, purchase a small corner cupboard for extra storage. (Bolt it to the wall so it can't tip over.) Purchase a crib or changing table with integral storage underneath. Stretch your budget by purchasing a secondhand chest or dresser and painting it bright colors.

QUICK FIXES

Buy a child-size coatrack to hang little outfits, or hang special dress up outfits from a decorative Shaker peg rack. Hang a small display cabinet or decorative shelves or brackets on the wall. Install an expandable rack with pegs for little jackets, mittens, and caps.

Closets

Closet space seems to be in perpetually short supply. This is especially true if you live in a pre-1960 house or apartment, both of which are notorious for small closets. If your closets are miserably small, add freestanding storage pieces, such as a wardrobe or armoire, for hanging clothes. With planning and myriad organizing products, you can maximize the storage in every closet. Double rods for hanging shirts, slacks, blouses, and suits are a first step. This works well for children's closets too. Plan for special items, such as hats, that are easily crushed on closet shelves.

SPACE SAVERS

Attach pegs, hooks, or racks to the insides of closet doors to make extra storage for hats, ties, scarves, and belts. Use hooks only for robes and belts because most clothing does not hang properly from hooks. The backs of closet doors also can hold racks or cloth pouches for shoes and small items. If you can't hang double rods and still need more storage, utilize the space under hanging shirts or blouses with a low chest, a wicker hamper for out-of-season clothes, or stackable storage units. Add clear plastic bins in children's closets to organize toys without concealing them from view.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- Get shoes, luggage, and other items off the floor. Use shoe racks, shelves, and hanging bags. Store little-used items, such as luggage,

Know Where You Store

Find the clothing you need quickly with common-sense grouping and organizers. Ties need at least 27 vertical inches; hanging shoe bags need 38 to 60 inches. For out-of-season clothing, allow 50 vertical inches for dress bags and 60 for garment bags.

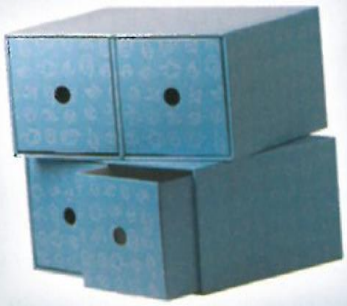
Dust-Free Storage Boxes

Sleek Plastic:

When you need to see what you have stored and labeled, use practical plastic boxes. The graduated sizes, which can also hold crafts supplies, fit on shelves.

Classic Cardboard:

Reinforced with metal corners, paper-covered cardboard boxes organize papers, documents, letters, and memorabilia. Use for a small home office or study center.



Budget Stretchers:

For quick storage or to organize a closet or dressing area, consider easy-to-assemble cardboard drawers to corral everything from compact discs to socks and hose.

Chic Canvas:

Clothing items, such as seasonal sweaters, or evening bags and shoes deserve a protected environment. Such boxes are ideal for all items you want to keep dust-free.

under the bed or in a utility area. Organize shelf space by stacking sweaters and storage boxes. Plan storage according to your needs and clothes.

- Organize your closet to streamline the morning routine. Group clothes by purpose. Business and dress clothes together, casual together, crossover in the middle. Arrange by color and style for new outfits. Line up shoes by purpose and color; keep standbys where they are easy to find. Keep small items in a central spot; keep jewelry in a shallow drawer.
- Maximize a walk-in closet by adding a small chest. Padded lingerie chests have traditionally been used in closets; any small chest will work as long as it fits the space.
- Take advantage of the variety of styles of closet organizers. Ready-made vinyl-coated shelving units in various configurations are sturdy and economical. Look for racks or shelves that attach to closet walls or doors or try freestanding units.
- Replace sliding closet doors, often found in houses built in the 1940s and 1950s, with easier-to-access bifold doors. Paint the doors to match the wood trim.
- Turn a spare room into a walk-in closet. Fit it with bookshelves for folded items, double-hung rods for short items, and large shallow drawers for jewelry and scarves. Add a freestanding clothes rack on wheels if more storage is needed. Put in stacks of shoe shelves. Install a bank of built-in closets across a room wall.
- Build shelving, drawers, or rod space into the dormer areas.

QUICK FIXES

Organize closet shelves with creative solutions such as reproductions of classic hat boxes. Look for thrift store boxes, small suitcases, or hat boxes. Place a comfortable chair near your closet to slip on shoes. Install decorative hooks to hang the day's clothes and a mirror to check your appearance.

If your bedroom closet is large, buy a cart for your portable television. Save bedroom floor space by rolling it out only when you want to watch it.

Remove your clothes from dry cleaner bags—humidity inside the bags can cause yellowing. Cedar blocks next to your clothes can have the same effect. Let your clothing air before hanging in the closet to allow body moisture to escape. The clothes will stay clean and fresh longer, require less dry cleaning, and last longer.

CEDAR CLOSETS

Cedar closets and chests can help protect your clothing and textiles from insects and mildew. The cedar closet or chest must be tightly fitted, and clothing and textiles must be freshly laundered before storage. To make a cedar closet effective, eliminate airflow under the door and through electrical outlet covers, open screw holes, or

Lower the Bar

Drop a closet rod to a height children can reach; use upper rods for out-of-season clothing. Use hanging closet organizers, such as shoe or sweater bags, to keep clothing at eye level. Install a few decorative hooks nearby for hanging robes and sweaters.

holes made by hooks. Cedar chests are often a good choice because they can be fitted with tight sides and heavy lids.

Line a closet with cedar by placing the cedar over existing dry wall or studs. Purchase ¼-inch tongue-and-groove boards or 4×8 panels featuring a cover of cedar chips. Panels are easy to install and budget-priced, and they boast as much fragrance as expensive boards. Don't use the cedar intended for decks; it doesn't have the same properties.

Maintain the cedar scent: Leave the cedar panels or boards unfinished to enjoy the aroma. If the cedar loses its fragrance or its surface becomes hard, sand lightly to restore. Cedar blocks and chips do not prevent moth damage.

If the closet is in a perpetually damp place, find an alternative location and solve the moisture problem. Common culprits include improper drainage around the house and improper appliance venting. Never attempt to cover damp walls with insulation and vapor barriers.

TIP TAG No. 4

Closet Space Guide

HOW HIGH TO HANG:

Closet components, including rods and plastic-coated wire shelving, are sold at discount stores and home centers. Use them to create the storage you need.

- Long dresses. . .69 inches
- Robes. . .52 inches
- Dresses. . .45 inches
- Pants (cuff hung). . .44 inches
- Men's suits. . .38 inches
- Skirts. . .35 inches
- Women's suits. . .29 inches
- Blouses or shirts. . .28 inches
- Pants (double hung). . .20 inches
- Double-hung rods. . .82 and 42 inches
- Single rods. . .66 and 72 inches

Baths & Powder Rooms

It's a rare bathroom that is equipped with just the storage space for your particular needs and supplies. To get a fresh start on organizing, clear the bath of linens, lotions, tools, and medications that you no longer use. Nearly every surface and space can be used to boost your bath's storage space and efficiency—walls, doors, corners, and nooks.

DEFINING YOUR NEEDS

Consider how you use the bath. If a couple or several family members share the bath, designate shared and separate zones. If guests also use this bath, plan for storage that declutters and keeps the bath neat and presentable. Also keep in mind what items you store in the bath and how the space functions. For example, if this is your makeup and hairstyling area, you'll need storage for the various items you use.

SPACE SAVERS

Think shelves and more shelves. Add a shelf with brackets over the tub. If storage needs are great, add a second shelf over the door. Make every inch count with shallow shelves between wall studs. For extra storage when the medicine cabinet is overflowing, install a clear acrylic shelf on brackets above the sink. Use plastic canisters or small pieces of vintage or contemporary pottery.

For freestanding storage, add a small cupboard, chest, or corner étagère (a freestanding shelving unit). If wall space allows, include a

hanging cupboard or other decorative shelving unit.

Hang hooks for towels and robes. If you have children, hang hooks at heights that encourage children to hang robes and towels. Sew fabric loops on towels that young children use so that towels are easier to hang on hooks. Remember to hang a hook on the back of the door too. Metal hooks, in a variety of styles and finishes, give a sleek, updated look. A door-hinge towel rack also works well and doubles as a robe or clothing hook.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- Skirt the sink vanity by sewing hook-and-loop tape to gathered fabric. For a lush look, measure the exposed sink with a tape measure and triple the measurement to determine yardage. Glue the loop attachment to the sink so that the skirt can be removed for laundering. Add a storage basket, wicker hamper, or stackable containers underneath for concealed storage. Never store cleaners or medicines in this under-the-sink area.
- Convert a chest or small sideboard into a vanity and have a marble or granite top cut to fit. Or start with a self-rimming sink to keep the water off the original wood top. To be sure your project will work in an existing bath, consult a plumber and a skilled carpenter. The top drawers of a chest may have to be reshaped if you want to retain them for storage.
- Install roll-out drawers—similar to those used in kitchen cabinetry—for deep storage at your fingertips. Mount racks on the inside of cabinet doors. Make cabinet space more accessible and convenient in a bath: Have cabinet doors removed and replace the lower shelf with a laundry bin.
- Clear the countertops by using wall-mounted hooks or pegs topped with shelving for blow dryers or curling irons.

QUICK FIXES

Declutter by boxing up the essentials that line the bath counter. A hair dryer can fit nicely in a decorative storage box. Use small boxes in complementary patterns and colors for easy-to-lose items such as earrings and pins.

In a powder room, use a dough bowl, wood bowl, or pottery piece for guest towels. Metal or wicker baskets also work well for towels. Use a vintage dish for guest soaps or a small plate rack with decorative plates to hold guest soaps.

Turn bathroom essentials, such as cotton balls and cotton swabs, into decorative accessories by storing them in sturdy clear plastic canisters topped by metal lids, arranged on a tray for neat storage.

Add a small butler's tray on a stand for towels and other essentials. Turn a metal basket, such as a vintage egg basket with a handle from a flea market, into a decorative container for rolled towels or extra rolls of toilet tissue.

HEALTHY HOME

Maximize the Medicine Cabinet

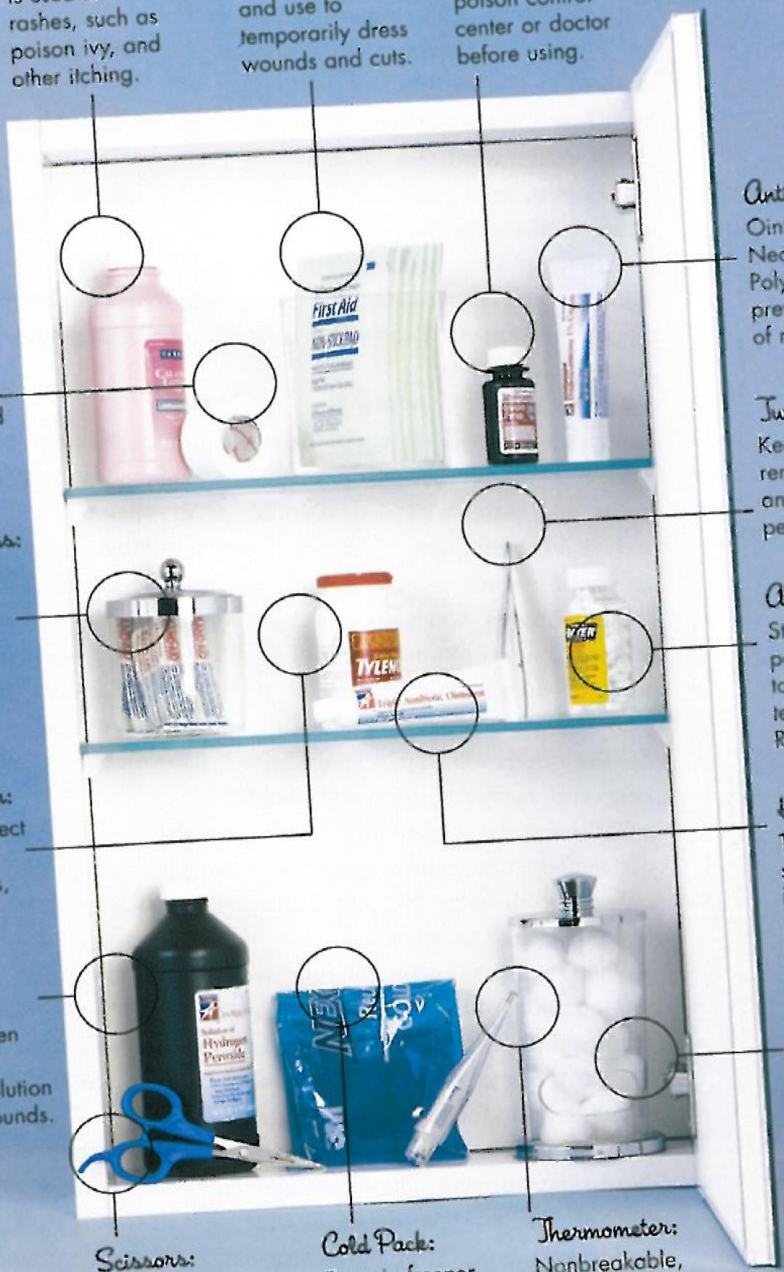
Replace a small mirror-front medicine cabinet with one that spans the width of the countertop. Choose one that has shelf space behind the entire mirror. Add small baskets to organize items such as nail clippers and tweezers.

Family Medicine Cabinet

Calamine: This mild lotion is used for rashes, such as poison ivy, and other itching.

Sterile Gauze: Keep pads or rolls wrapped and use to temporarily dress wounds and cuts.

Ipecac: Use to induce vomiting. Call poison control center or doctor before using.



Antibiotic: Ointment (such as Neosporin, Polysporin) prevents infection of minor wounds.

Tweezers: Keep a pair to remove splinters and stingers. A penlight will help.

Aspirin: Stock for adult pain. Don't give to children and teens; linked to Reye's Syndrome.

Hydrocortisone: This cream treats swelling, insect bites, and itching. It is sold under various brands.

Cotton Balls: Use for cleaning wounds safely and applying medicines. Keep covered.

Adhesive Tape: Use for bandages, compresses, and slings. Buy medical tape.

Bandage strips: Stock a variety of sizes for everyday cuts and scrapes. Keep sterile.

Nonaspirin Pain Reliever: Purchase correct strengths for adults, infants, or children.

Antiseptic Solutions: Use hydrogen peroxide or Betadine solution to clean wounds.

Scissors: To cut tape and gauze. Keep designated pair in cabinet so they aren't lost.

Cold Pack: Store in freezer for use on sprains or health problems that require ice.

Thermometer: Nonbreakable, digital style is the safest. Sterilize and return to cabinet after use.

Home Offices

Everyone needs an organized, dedicated home office. This can be a small nook used for paying bills and filing important papers or an entire room for a home-based business. The key to making the most of your space—however small or large—is paying attention to tasks.

SPACE SAVERS

Consider a computer table or storage unit that folds out from a freestanding wardrobe. Or if you like the appearance of a wardrobe or armoire, have a cabinetmaker convert the unit into your own mini office with sturdy, supported shelves.

When you hang open shelving, take advantage of the space over windows and doors. Use collected baskets to organize supplies and papers, mixing sizes and styles to meet your storage and organization needs.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- Include a built-in desk with drawers and built-in bookshelves in your designated work space. Such an arrangement allows the family room, bedroom, or kitchen to double as an office.
- Have a cabinetmaker design and craft a vertical pullout storage cabinet for office storage. Include plywood organizing dividers, open bulletin boards, and a small bulletin board for notes and reminders.
- Transform a window nook into an office with a pull-down, tambour-door built in (similar to the type used for rolltop desks). The door pulls down to conceal the computer and keyboard. Add file drawers below and, if space allows, floor-to-ceiling cabinets to keep papers and supplies out of sight.
- Get the greatest value for your money with well-planned, creative, concealed storage. Have cabinets constructed as plywood storage cubes. Install doors that slide back and forward to conceal equipment and supplies.
- When built-ins don't meet your needs, choose freestanding office unit components. Home decorating catalogs, office furniture stores, home supply warehouses, and discount and home center stores sell units in a range of prices and styles. A local carpenter may be able to build a unit for your specific needs.
- Purchase affordable cube-style shelving units from home furnishing stores or home product catalogs. Color-code by painting the interiors in a mix of your favorite vibrant colors. Add plastic bins and storage boxes from home organizing and discount stores. Use pottery, flowerpots, or decorative woven baskets to hold pens, pencils, and scissors.

QUICK FIXES

Organize desk drawers with plastic divider trays or boxes to store pens, paper, paper clips, tape, and stamps. Use file folders to keep

Ready the Bath For Guests

For each guest, set a handled basket filled with sample size toiletries, such as shampoo, toothpaste, and bath salts, and washcloths on the bathroom counter. Also make sure each guest has a towel rack or hook.

papers neat and organized.

Make your own desk with storage by using two contemporary-style filing cabinets to support a glass top. (Make sure the edges are beveled for safety.) Use the files rather than piling papers on the desk top. Stack clear or colored bins for dust-free storage.

Organize open storage with matching metal record bins—available from shops and catalogs that specialize in storage solutions and from some discount stores. Substitute flat baskets for in and out boxes. Use larger baskets for mail, magazines, and projects. Add baskets with handles, including the divided baskets designed for buffet flatware.

Conceal less-than-decorative items on open shelves by storing them inside wicker attaché cases, baskets with tops, well-made picnic baskets, or vintage suitcases.

Have fun with baskets old and new. As you visit crafts and antiques shows, shop for sturdy split oak or twig baskets made by folk artists or interesting Native American baskets.

Use wicker trunks and bins to store larger items. They are ideal under work counters or desks. Visit import or specialty gift stores for out-of-the-ordinary storage options. Footed boxes, stacked band boxes, and small leather trunks can neatly hold office supplies in style.

The Laundry

If you have a choice, floor plans with separate laundry rooms or combination laundry and mud or hobby rooms are ideal for storage and organization. However, a corner of the kitchen or a closet can work well if you add organizing shelves on brackets, racks, and durable baskets.

SPACE SAVERS

Convert a closet into a laundry room with stackable storage units. Install racks for laundry supplies on the back of the closet door. If your washer and dryer are closed off by louvered bifold doors, install racks and deep shelves above the appliances for supplies and laundry baskets. Vinyl-coated mesh shelving units, available at stores that specialize in organizing products and at some discount stores, are economical and sturdy.

Install a closet rod for clothes that drip dry or that you hang directly from the dryer. Use double rods if you hang primarily shirts and slacks. Add a rack for socks and similar items. Locate the rack as close to the washer as possible because socks notoriously disappear during washing. Hang a sturdy shelf behind the washer

smart ideas

Office Planning

ZONE YOUR STORAGE

Planning your office space will prevent pileups and inefficiency. Prime space is within 24 to 30 inches of your desk top. Assign this desktop, shelf, and drawer space to frequently used essentials, such as pens, pencils, notepads, dictionaries, and project files. Secondary space, a moderate distance from the desk top, should go to supplies and materials that are used frequently but not every day. A final zone, which can be in another room if space is tight, can go to rarely used files and books. Purchase a cart on wheels from an office supply store. Roll it out as needed; store in a closet.

and dryer for laundry supplies such as detergent and stain removers.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- Remember the basics. You'll be dealing with dirty and clean clothes and with wet, damp, and dry clothes. Plan storage accordingly.
- If space allows, build in a counter for folding and sorting. Include open shelves for sorting bins. Store an ironing board and iron in the laundry room. If the room doesn't have a storage closet, hang the ironing board from a heavy-duty storage hook. Add a utility shelf for items such as the iron and spray starch.

Attics & Basements

Your attic may have space to spare, but use it carefully. Heat and radical temperature swings make it unsuitable for many items. However, the attic is a fine place for storing items that aren't temperature sensitive, such as holiday decorations, pottery, and housewares. Clothes, blankets, and linens can be stored for a single season. (If you don't have closet space for furs or leather clothing, store them at the cleaners.)

ATTIC IDEAS THAT WORK

Clean clothing and textiles before storage. If insects have been a problem in the past, spray the baseboard with an all-purpose household insecticide. Fabrics need to breathe: Hang clothing and linens from a garment rack or rod hung from the rafters. Keep it dust-free by covering the rack with a clean cotton sheet. Store folded clothing in an acid-free cardboard box or one lined with a clean cotton sheet. Don't store clothing or textiles in plastic because moisture trapped inside can cause mildew. If you prefer, purchase garment bags designed for long-term clothing storage.

Alternative: If you have lots of clothing to store, purchase cardboard clothing boxes with hanging rods from moving companies.

Precaution: Don't risk storing valuable or heirloom clothing, such as a wedding gown, in an unfinished attic or basement. Wedding and christening gowns should be professionally cleaned and professionally packed. Store in a climate-controlled area, such as on a shelf of a bedroom closet.

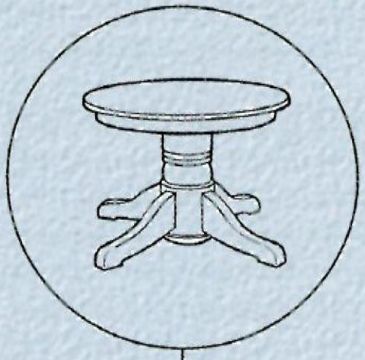
BASEMENT BASICS

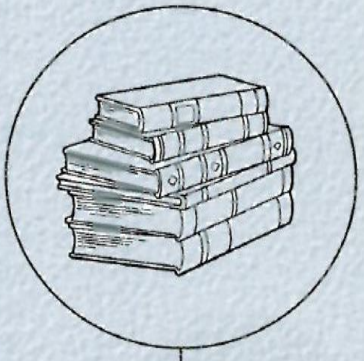
Moisture is the chief storage concern in a basement. Mildew can be a particular problem in climates with long or hot and humid summers. Keep flooding or excess moisture at bay with a sump pump, floor drain, dehumidifier, or a combination of these. Check to make sure they are working properly. (See page 281 for more on dehumidifiers.) With precautions, an unfinished basement without ventilation, heating, and cooling can be used for items that are

Storage That Organizes

Think accessibility and convenience when you plan garage storage. Install a pegboard or vinyl-coated metal grid system with hooks and hangers for small items and hand tools. Group by function and job. Install heavy-duty hooks for large shovels and rakes.

Not in Basement or Attic





Fur and Leather:
Heat, changes in temperatures and moisture levels, and pests can seriously damage expensive or vintage coats and wraps.

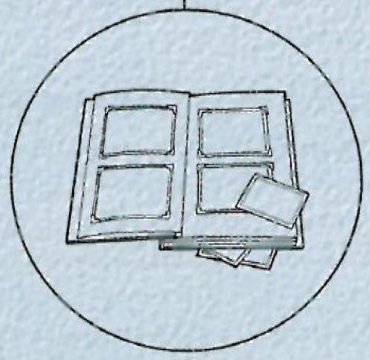
Wood Furniture:
Changes in humidity and temperature can cause wood to expand and contract, resulting in cracks and splits in solid and veneered pieces.

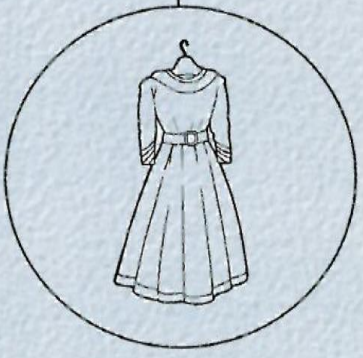
Books:
Mildew and dust are the chief villains here. But rodents can be harmful too. Changes in moisture are damaging to old leather-bound books.

Stuffed Toys:
Squirrels, chipmunks, and mice that find refuge in the attic love these toys. Humidity and moisture in the basement also cause damage.

Photographs:
Moisture, mildew, and temperature and humidity changes are harmful. Attic heat can destroy slides and photographic negatives.

Formal Dresses:
Basement moisture and mildew are the worst offenders, but dust and attic pests can be problems. Don't risk a wedding or formal dress.





unaffected by moisture, such as extra dishes, pottery, glassware, hand tools, and plastic or metal toys. Hang hand tools, such as saws and hammers, on pegboard or a rack to lessen the chances of rusting from the damp environment.

Garage & Storage Shed

The aboveground garage or carport is often used for storage. Sheds are similar in function, although they usually offer less square footage for storage. Tuck-under garages are like basements and should be treated as such for storage purposes. To get the most from your garage or shed, first clear it of unwanted items. Make a list of what you expect to store; then go to work setting up storage.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- Look up for overhead space. Tubular steel hooks can hang tools, sporting goods, ladders, lumber, and lawn furniture out of the way.
- Check out home centers and storage stores for bench kits—choose a system that can be expanded over time.
- Build a loft to store luggage, patio furniture, and other bulky items. Include a locked metal chest or cabinet for dangerous tools. Store pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals in this cabinet.
- If you have an open carport and space allows, add a locked closet area for secure storage. Open carports are unsuitable for storage because hazardous items are exposed; other items, such as tools or sports gear, may be tempting to thieves.
- Take advantage of the space under the deck if it is at least 4 feet off the ground. Use this space for items that can be safely exposed to the weather, such as the barbeque grill, wheelbarrow, or outdoor toys. For a neat appearance, screen the storage area with lattice or paneling from a home center or lumberyard.

QUICK FIXES

Install a pegboard and hooks for small items such as garden and hand tools. Group tools by function. Claim a couple of feet from the far end of a garage for a tool bench or workshop.

Install adjustable shelving against a wall. Use see-through plastic bins to store small items and keep them dust-free. Store fertilizers, bulb boosters, deicing chemicals, and other potentially hazardous items on top shelves.

Small Apartment or Condo

These efficient housing options often offer the amenities of convenient location and ready access to school, work, and cultural opportunities. Some units have extra storage in the basement or garage for out-of-season items. However, the downside can be small closets, minimum built-ins, no garages for extra storage, and little floor space for freestanding storage pieces.

FAMILY FRIENDLY

Create a Personal Sports Center

Instead of locking yourself into a system designed for a specific pursuit, purchase a long, deep grid that mounts on a garage or basement wall. Attach gear organizers, racks, and hooks that are economical and easy to change.

DEFINING YOUR NEEDS

Whether you live alone or share your space is the first determinant of storage needs. If your household includes an infant or small child, you'll need more storage. Other factors to consider:

- How much cooking do you do?
- Do you entertain at home and need storage for dinnerware, glasses, and flatware?
- Do you work at home? Are you a collector?
- Do you ever have overnight guests?

Your answers will help you decide what kind of storage you need to make the most of your space.

SPACE SAVERS

Choose every piece of furniture for its storage possibilities. For dining, use a writing table with a drawer. Depending on your needs, it can contain everything from flatware and linens to office supplies. Use trunks wherever you can. For the most versatility, choose one with a flat top rather than a domed top so that it can easily double as a table or even a bench. Wicker trunks are readily available and are budget-priced.

In a small bath, think creatively. Extend the vanity top over the toilet for maximum shelf space. Use shaped, bracket-type display shelves from home furnishings stores and catalogs to keep the essentials at hand.

IDEAS THAT WORK

- Take advantage of every square inch of available space with built-in shelves. Waste no window in a small apartment or condo. Seize the opportunity to design and construct a built-in shelving unit under a window for books, electronic equipment, and compact discs. Add a low freestanding storage unit or bench to hold books, plants, and favorite accessories. Have shelves built to flank a window or windows and to fit under the sills to maximize your storage. Include 24-inch-deep shelves for oversize books and electronic equipment.
- Open shelving is accessible and economical. Because different shelf heights are more interesting than a uniform arrangement, design lower shelves for larger volumes, such as college yearbooks and art books. Use upper shelves for standard-size items. If you have a collection of paperbacks, fit shelves 8 to 10 inches apart.

In a one-room apartment or when your living room doubles as the guest suite, create a sleeping nook. Buy a daybed, or use pillows and a tailored coverlet to transform a standard twin bed. Hang operable draperies from a ceiling-mounted rod that can close as needed.

TIP TAG No. 5

Office Space

IN THE CLOSET:

- Locate inside double bifold doors for accessibility.
- Outfit with a drawing board for a work surface, upper shelves, a lower bin with pullout baskets, a filing cabinet for papers and documents.
- Stock the upper shelves with see-through plastic boxes or bins so stored items are easy to find.
- Hang a bulletin board, pegboard, racks, or other wall-mounted storage on the side walls to organize tools or your office supplies.

ON WHEELS:

- If space is very tight, stock a small supply cart on wheels to roll in and out of the closet when needed.

QUICK FIXES

Choose handsome versions of necessary kitchen equipment, such as measuring spoons and cutting boards, so there's no need to store them out of sight.

Buy furniture that can serve dual functions. Substitute a small antique or vintage chest for a living room side table. As an alternative, shop thrift stores for 20th-century reproductions. Such pieces are good buys; they often emulate the lines and basic style of the original, without the price tags. If you use a chest to store silver, line with antitarnish cloth. Use dividers to keep items handy.

Sports and Outdoor Gear

Start with garage and basement walls for hooks, racks, and sport-specific organizers to get all your gear off the ground. A ski organizer, for example, may have slots for skis, boots, poles, goggles, and incidentals. An alternative that works well for basements with concrete-block walls is a sports bench or two. These are wire mesh boxes topped with a cushioned bench. They work well for items such as balls, helmets, and in-line skates.

OVERHEAD OPTIONS

A pulley-operated ceiling hoist is easy to use and lifts bikes, kayaks, surfboards, and sailboards up to overhead space, even above your car. Heavy-duty attachments allow a hoist to lift weightier items, such as canoes. You can also install simple ceiling-mounted racks and hooks to store gear, but you'll have to do your own hoisting. If space allows, a loft in the garage is an exceptional way to use often-wasted overhead space. A loft is ideal for sports gear as well as luggage, automobile roof boxes, and holiday ornaments.

Storage Safety

Unfortunately, the home environment can be a dangerous one. Never underestimate the importance of safe storage. When you bring home new fuels, oils, paints, and supplies, check to see if they're flammable or toxic or if they have special storage requirements. If they do, keep them away from children and pets and outside your home. Never store them them near the water heater or clothes dryer. Limit hazards by getting rid of excess. Call your city or county government to learn when and if hazardous waste disposal collections are held in your community. Here's how to handle a few dangerous materials:

GAS GRILLS

When the season is over, disconnect the propane cylinder from the grill, shut off the valve, and place the plug in the valve. Propane gas is volatile, and leaks are slow. Store outside in a protected area that is inaccessible to children, such as a toolshed near a rear fence.

Gun Safety

If you keep a firearm in your home, store it unloaded under lock and key in a secure, childproof place, such as in a metal lockbox or specially designed case. Store ammunition separately—also under lock and key. Trigger locks are available as an added precaution to prevent accidents.

Helpful Storage Shelving

Metal Wire Mesh:
Check the weight load. This style is easy to assemble and attractive enough to use in a storage-starved kitchen or bath.

Reinforced Metal:
These heavy-duty shelves are designed for utility rooms, workshops, or garages. Check stability and balance weights.

Lightweight Plastic:
Inexpensive and easy to assemble, these work best for light storage in a basement, laundry room, or garage.

Natural Wood:
These put-together shelves are strong enough for lightweight books or toys as well as basic kitchen or utility storage.

Utilize Your Storage Unit

Before you rent a storage unit, prepare a list of questions: Is rental by the month? Are discounts offered for longer leases? How are units secured and lit? Who has access? Do you have 24-hour access? What is the policy for lost, damaged, or stolen items?

LAWN MOWERS

If gas-powered, drain the gas at season's end. For mowers powered by a combination of gas and oil, drain the fuel into a container, mark it clearly, and set aside for the next local hazardous waste collection. Keep the mixture away from children.

FUEL

Whether it is intended for a lawn mower, snowblower, or boat, store in a metal or plastic Canadian or U.L. Standards Approved container with a vapor-proof cap. Metal containers that don't meet approved standards can leak if exposed to heat or frost.

PAINT

You can store paint for two years or more. Seal cans tightly; then turn them upside down. The paint will form a seal against oxygen and stay fresh longer. Keep latex paints from freezing. Find out how unwanted paint is disposed of in your community. Some cities have special cleanup days to handle paint and items that cannot be disposed of in regular household trash.

PAINT SOLVENTS

Their vapors are a fire hazard. Keep caps tight on turpentine and solvents; store them outside, inaccessible to children or pets, in sealed containers.

PESTICIDES

Buy just enough for the season. Keep them away from children and pets and away from food supplies. For organic alternatives to avoid storage problems, check gardening books, magazines, and your county extension service.

Renting Space

Now and then your storage needs may exceed your living space. Check local directories to assess storage options. (Real estate agents may be sources too.) Boat dealers can direct you to unadvertised off-season storage.

Climate-controlled units are more expensive, but they are safer for clothing, books, fine furniture, musical instruments, and art.

Be cautious about leaving furniture, plush toys, or personal papers in an unconditioned unit for more than a month or two. In hot, humid climates, upholstery may mildew or absorb moisture. Temperature changes can cause damage to wood furniture. Even if they provide climate control, units are typically bare boxes.

Be prepared to provide shelving so you can arrange items for access. Find out if you rent by the month or season. Check into security, fencing, lighting, access, and responsibility for theft or damage as well as insurance coverage. Find out who rents nearby storage space. Check with the local Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been filed against storage companies.

Setting Up Routines

GETTING STARTED

You won't find a magic solution to maintaining a clean, well-maintained, and organized home. But if you create a routine that works for your lifestyle and cleanliness requirements, you can stay on top of cleaning. When you do, chores don't get out of hand. If you keep your residence reasonably decluttered, clean, and neat, you'll avoid the necessity of marathon cleaning sessions.

Depending on your lifestyle, you may find it easier to perform the basic chores on a daily basis (see the following suggested schedules) and relegate the big chores to a weekend morning or afternoon. If you enjoy free weekends, tackle one room or one big chore every day, in addition to daily chores, to allow time for leisure.

When your lifestyle is extremely busy with long work days and/or family obligations, it pays to plan your week and plot your course. Your week will go more smoothly if you start each Monday (or the first day of your work week) with a clean, neat home, clean clothes and other laundry, and a stocked pantry, refrigerator, and freezer. Your weekends (or days off) will be more enjoyable if you don't have rooms to declutter, piled-up dishes, and mounds of laundry.

YOUR OWN CARE STYLE

Determine your comfort level of neat and clean: Some things, such as a clean kitchen and bathroom, are nonnegotiable, but shelves or door frames that don't always pass the white glove test may be acceptable. Likewise, keeping public rooms—living and dining rooms—neat may be important to you, while you may be less vigilant about your bedroom or hobby space.

Read through the suggested daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly, and seasonal chores in this chapter. Establish your own routines. You may find it helpful to make your own filing system or notebook with a similarly organized chore list.

smart ideas

Living Room Neat

NO DUMPING ALLOWED

Refrain from dumping and piling. Your home will feel more orderly and function better if at least the living and dining areas aren't cluttered with the debris of everyday living. Never pile up mail or projects on the dining room table or entry table, coffee table, or shelf.

BEDTIME ROUTINES

Resolve to declutter the living and dining areas every night. If you have small children, teach them to return toys and books to their bedrooms. If you keep toys and children's books in the living area, buy baskets for attractive storage. Diligent decluttering works. Practice it every day.

Cleaning Frequency

DAILY

Perform these basic chores every day:

- Make the beds
- Put away clothes and children's toys
- Wash dishes, spray and wipe off counters and cooktop or range
- Take out trash and recycling

- Clean cat litter boxes
- Wipe out bathroom sinks and spray shower doors

If you work long days or have after-work pursuits, such as continuing education or children's activities, basic chores and meal preparation, and some laundry may be all you manage in one day.

WEEKLY

Weekly chores include the laundry, ironing, and dry-cleaning delivery and pickup. Also complete the following to stay on top of your housework:

- Clean the kitchen and bathrooms
- Dust furniture and shelves
- Shake or vacuum area rugs
- Vacuum living areas
- Mop hard surface (not wood) floors
- Change bed linens
- Sweep front entry and steps
- Buy groceries

Clean the kitchen first and the bathroom or bathrooms second to get the hardest jobs out of the way first.

EVERY TWO WEEKS

- Sweep the garage
- Shake out area rugs and doormats outdoors before vacuuming
- Vacuum furniture (underneath the cushions too)

MONTHLY

These are the chores to keep your home looking neat and clean. Block out time so they don't slip by.

- Clean inside window surfaces; clean decorative mirrors
- Wash out kitchen trash container and surrounding area (Stash three or four trash bags at the bottom of the container before putting in a fresh bag to make it convenient to replace a bag when the trash is taken out.)
- Clean the stove; wipe the interior of the refrigerator
- Clean baseboards, dust miniblinds, and vacuum curtains
- Dust, sweep, and vacuum before washing surfaces to rid rooms of as much loose dirt and debris as possible
- Change or clean filters on heating and cooling systems

Clean Quick

In 30 minutes you can sweep the kitchen floor and wipe the cooktop; wipe the sink, mirror, and toilet in guest bath; and dust the dining or living room table. Two hours to clean: kitchen and bath basics; vacuum living area floors and dust major furniture; declutter throughout house.

Cleaning Shortcuts

PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

Create a place for everything throughout the house by following these suggestions:

Kitchen: Store cookware near the range or cooktop. Store utensils either in a drawer next to the range or cooktop or in an attractive container on the counter; store all wooden spoons in one container, and all stainless steel and plastic in another. Keep a spray

Spring Cleaning Checklist

Bed Linens:

Pick a dry, warm day and treat your pillows (minus covers) and blankets to the warm spring sunshine. If that's impractical, check with cleaners that freshen pillows.

Chandeliers:

Remove the bulbs and glass base. Wash the base in warm soapy water. Dust the arms with soft cloth and clean feather duster. Wipe lightbulbs with damp cloth and dry.

Windows:

Choose a warm, dry day. Remove screens and storm windows and wash windows inside and out with a commercial cleaner or vinegar-and-water solution.

Upholstery:

Remove cushions and vacuum with the crevice and dusting attachments. Use a pet-hair tape if needed. If soiled, call a commercial upholstery cleaner for best results.

bottle with a solution of 1 part bleach to 4 parts water or an all-purpose spray cleaner in the kitchen for quick cleanup. Keep a broom and dustpan in the kitchen for sweeping after meals.

Bathroom: Stash a spray bottle with all-in-one window and surface cleaner and an extra roll of paper towels under each sink for surface cleanups.

Hall closet: Install storage bins with separate drawers for gloves, hats, scarves. Stock up on stackable see-through plastic containers to store lightbulbs, batteries, and emergency candles.

Laundry room: Hang the iron and ironing board on a wall caddy. Keep all laundry supplies together in a basket. Store sewing supplies in a container with multiple compartments. Find buttons quickly with a sewing center book: Fill a three-ring binder with blank pages, and staple on the little envelopes of extra buttons and thread that come with clothing purchases. Under each envelope note where the buttons belong.

Cleaning central: Store all cleaning implements and products in one place for easy retrieval. A closet works fine. If you have a laundry room or laundry corner, the space is ideal because soiled or used cloths can go directly into the washing machine. Wherever you store cleaning supplies, keep them out of the reach of small children, even if you have only an occasional young visitor. Post daily, weekly, and monthly chores on a small bulletin board in the cleaning center.

To make your cleaning center efficient, buy a wall rack to hang brooms, mops, and dustpans in one place. Use baskets, bins, and caddies to store products and supplies. Make sure all supplies are stored out of the reach of children. Create a customized, computer-generated supply checklist. Make photocopies on colored paper to post in the cleaning center. When a product is running low, note it on the list before the next shopping trip.

Double Time

Minor chores to do while talking on a portable telephone:

- Unload the dishwasher
- Sweep the kitchen floor
- Fold or wash a load of laundry
- Pick up around the house
- Iron two or three garments
- Polish silver
- Clean out the catchall drawer

Seasonal Cleaning

Seasonal cleaning can be a daunting task: Projects seem to build up, even when you are persistent about daily, weekly, and monthly chores. To make the projects manageable, start with the right tools and products for the job. For general seasonal cleaning, you'll need:

- Broom, dustpan, scrub brush, mop, vacuum cleaner, supply of vacuum cleaner bags
- Cleaning rags (old white T-shirts work well)
- 2- or 3-gallon bucket, sponges, an extended duster (for cleaning blinds and ceiling fans)
- Stepladder, latex gloves, and paper towels

Rather than have a cleaning product for every task, select a product for multiple uses and use it for many cleaning projects.

SPRING CLEANING

Be organized to save time and energy. Go through the inside and around the outside of the house to make a list of necessary projects. Prioritize the projects on three sheets of paper using these headings:

- Large projects (a half day or more)
- Medium projects (two to three hours)
- Small projects (chores that are easy to accomplish when you find yourself with a small block of time)

Map a cleaning route: Start with a room at the top corner of your home (two-story house) or a corner room (one-story house or apartment) and work inward and downward. Clean rooms from the top down (see Tab 3 for cleaning techniques and products). Completely clean each room before moving on to the next to save walking back and forth. Think about your own time and energy level, help from family members, and the state of your house before you start a cleaning marathon.

Instead of spending an entire day or weekend cleaning, clean half the house or one story of a two-story on one day or afternoon; clean the other half or other story on another weekend afternoon. Reserve a block of time for the attic, basement, or garage.

Some household projects are worth the exchange of money for time because professionals have the expertise and equipment to efficiently do the job. Consider hiring a professional window cleaner once a year, especially if you have a two-story house or storm windows. Hire a gutter- and/or roof-cleaning service in late fall. Choose services that are bonded and insured and get at least three references. Depending on your time and house size, rent the necessary carpet-cleaning equipment or hire a service. If you are renting equipment, steam-clean all carpets at the same time to save money. Some companies offer discounts to clean three or more rooms.

TIP TAG No. 8

Calendar of Kitchen Chores

DAILY CLEANING:

- Spray and wipe countertops, range top, and vent hood.
- Sweep floor.
- Scrub sink with a general-purpose cleaner; wipe dry.

WEEKLY CLEANING:

- Mop floor (more often if young children or pets are in household).
- Clean exteriors of appliances.
- Wipe refrigerator door.
- Scour and polish sink.

MONTHLY CLEANING:

- Wipe off cabinet doors.
- Clean oven and refrigerator; sanitize refrigerator drip pan.

SPRING CLEANING: INDOORS

Chore list: Declutter, sort, and store before you start. (See Tab 1 for ideas on organizing and storing.) Pick up and eliminate clutter in each room before you start cleaning. Place a cardboard box and two or three garbage bags in each room that you are decluttering. Fill them as you sort through your shelves, cabinets, and clothes closets.

Donate old books, magazines, toys, and clothes that you don't wear to charity or fill a box for your next garage sale. (If you can't bear to give away old magazines and books, box them up and store them out of the way.) Have winter clothes cleaned.

Consider storing them (a service offered by some dry cleaners) if space is tight. Put away gloves, winter clothing items, and boots. Bring out spring clothing.

Freshen all the bedrooms. Rotate and flip mattresses. Wash blankets or comforters or take them to be cleaned. Wash the mattress pad and bed skirt. Have pillows professionally cleaned or hang them outside in the fresh air, or freshen with the air (no heat) cycle of your clothes dryer. Wash or dry-clean rugs.

Wash and/or wax floors, depending on their material. Deep-clean rugs or have professionally cleaned. Wash baseboards. Vacuum upholstery and draperies. Dust and wax wood furniture. Flip sofa and chair cushions.

Clean light fixtures, ceiling fans, and mirrors. Dust or wash window blinds. Replace bent or worn miniblinds. Wash and iron curtains or have cleaned.

Clean heating and cooling vents. Change air filters in central units.

Thoroughly clean all bathrooms. Go through medicine cabinets and safely discard any outdated products. Replace worn bath mats, shower curtains, and liners. Or wash and dry shower curtains and liners.

Clear out pantry, kitchen cabinets, and drawers. Wipe out, and install fresh shelf paper. Store or donate equipment you don't use, such as small appliances or cookware. Discard stale spices or dated items such as baking powder. Clean the refrigerator and freezer. Vacuum the cooling coils under or behind the refrigerator.

Wash windows inside and outside, including storm windows and screens. Assess the state of your storage areas, whether you use an attic, basement, garage, carport, or storage shed. Add shelving units and containers to create order.

Bring out garden tools and potting supplies. Store shovels, salt, scrapers, and other winter items. Thoroughly sweep floors in storage areas to remove debris. Invest in pegboards, shelving units, and plastic storage bins to keep storage areas clean and organized.

Check the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors when the time switches to daylight saving time. Perform all required safety checks. If you don't own a fire extinguisher, purchase one and learn how to use it; keep it in the kitchen. If you use a humidifier during the winter, clean and store it. Make sure the dehumidifier is in working order.

SPRING CLEANING: OUTDOORS

Enjoy the first warm days of spring with a morning or afternoon of fresh-air chores. Chores vary with climate and locale, but in any location you'll need to determine how well exterior siding and

Cleaning On the Cheap

Hire a reliable neighborhood teenager, such as your regular baby-sitter, to come in and baby-sit for a whole day while you or you and your spouse clean the house. It's more economical to pay a baby-sitter than a housekeeper.

Stocked Cleaning Caddy

Window Cleaner:
Use for windows, glass tops, mirrors. Also use to polish chrome fixtures and to clean cooktops.

Floors and Walls:
Mop and scrub with nonsudsing household ammonia or formulated cleaners. Check if safe for sealed vinyl floors.

Cleanser:
Choose nonabrasive for general cleaning. Buy a heavy-duty cleanser for tough stains and rust.

General Purpose:
Buy a kitchen-and-bath spray product (and refills for spray bottles) or make your own with diluted vinegar.

Chlorine Bleach:
Dilute with 4 parts water to 1 part bleach for general cleaning and disinfecting (including toilet bowl).

Feather Duster:
Safely dust lampshades, light fixtures, art, and delicate collectibles with this handy tool.

Oil Soap:
Clean wood-stain cabinets, paneling, and other woods with this liquid soap made for use on wood; several brands on the market.

Latex Gloves:
Protect your hands from chemicals with household rubber gloves. Use for washing dishes too.

roofing survived the winter (use binoculars).

Clean out gutters and drainpipes before the spring rains. Wash windows and screens, replace storm windows with screens, and bring out, clean, and touch up or repair deck, porch, or patio furniture, if stored in winter. Use outdoor spray enamel to touch up chips on painted outdoor furniture.

Service the snowblower before you store it for spring. When the weather warms, scrub your deck or porch and decide if you'll need to reseal or paint it in summer.

FALL CLEANING: INDOORS

Life moves inside in the winter. Repeat the spring cleaning chores that your time and schedule allow. Light is precious in the winter months, so maximize it by washing interior windows and light fixtures. Clean chandeliers in preparation for holiday entertaining. Check the condition of lampshades, and update lamps with new shades if needed. Clean windowsills and window wells.

Bring your winter rugs out of storage and have sisal-type rugs cleaned before storing. Clean carpets or have them professionally cleaned. Replace doormats as needed to reduce tracked-in dirt and snow.

Flip and rotate mattresses and launder all bedding such as bed skirts, mattress pads, comforters, and quilts. Air and sun pillows and blankets. Clean out closets; launder all spring and summer clothing before storing. Bring out fall and winter clothing. Install pegs and racks for convenient back-door winter storage.

FALL CLEANING: OUTDOORS

Clean and store patio furniture, garden pots and planters, and tools. Clean outdoor furniture cushions before storing to prevent mildew. Drain and store garden hoses; store clay pots. Drain and service the lawn mower according to manufacturer's guidelines. Check caulk around doors and windows and recaulk as needed to help keep heat in and water and cold out.

For energy efficiency, install weatherstripping around outside doors. Check gutters and downspouts and clear debris, or hire a professional gutter service. Remove lint from outdoor dryer exhaust tubes. If you use a snow blowing service, schedule it in advance. If you remove snow yourself, check to see that your snowblower is in working order. Stock up on deicing products.

Laundry Routine

Gear your laundry routine to your lifestyle and family size. If you regularly use a professional laundry for dress shirts and dry cleaning, establish a regular day to drop off and pick up.

Two-person household: Doing the laundry once a week is generally sufficient unless you wash uniforms, work clothes, or gym

Winter Holidays

Spend an afternoon cleaning before you decorate. Vacuum living and dining room draperies and upholstery; dust and wax major furniture pieces. Clean light fixtures, including chandelier. Wash baseboards and indoor windows and polish mirrors.

clothes. If dress shirts and suits are part of your attire, add a weekly trip to the dry cleaners.

Three or more in household: Keep laundry from piling up by doing one load of laundry every morning (or every other morning) and folding clothes before or after dinner.

Train all family members to put dirty clothing in hampers. Place a basket or hamper in each bedroom closet and in each bath if space allows. Place three additional hampers in the laundry area—for dark clothes, light clothes, and special-care items. In households with teens, delegate a laundry responsibility to each family member. Delegate simple laundry chores, such as folding socks, to younger children.

Hiring Help

Hiring a housekeeper was once considered a luxury or solution for a difficult family situation. With changing family dynamics and fewer full-time homemakers, the decision to hire household help is a practical one based on cost versus time. Cleaning services that hire and manage professional house cleaners are proliferating.

Service personnel are normally bonded and insured, and the service firms handle the paperwork of Social Security and tax forms. However, don't automatically take the word of a cleaning service. To protect your possessions and to protect yourself from any potential liability, ask the cleaning service to provide written documentation of bonding and insurance.

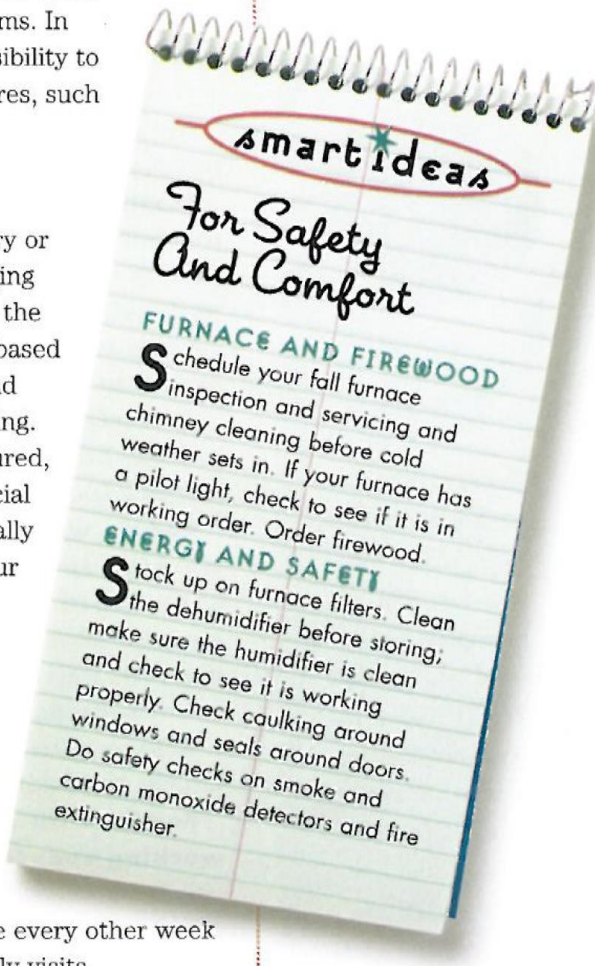
Whether you hire an individual or a service, keep in mind that household help can be tailored to meet your needs, lifestyle, and budget. For example, you may only need a cleaning service every other week or only once a month to clean floors and surfaces. You may only need the service every other week and require extra help before the holidays or family visits.

Keep a notebook or file of monthly or occasional chores, such as cleaning the refrigerator, dusting and cleaning blinds, or changing shelf paper. Before you hire a housekeeper or cleaning service, discuss how to handle such occasional chores on a rotating basis.

If you plan to schedule extra services, particularly before major holidays, schedule the services at least two months in advance. Likewise, if you need extra help for a limited period, such as a new baby in the household, schedule well in advance.

HOUSEHOLD SITUATIONS

Here are examples of typical family situations with basic guidelines.



Single person, no children: When you aren't home during the day, the opportunities for creating messes are minimal. A cleaning service every other week or even once a month is usually workable. Basic laundry is minimal; you probably can handle it.

Housekeeper frequency: Twice a month.

Responsibilities: Cleaning kitchen and bathroom, dusting, vacuuming, ironing.

Two-career couple, no children: If both work, especially if you commute fairly long distances, you don't have the time or want to spend your days off cleaning the house.

Housekeeper frequency: Once a week.

Responsibilities: Basic weekly cleaning throughout the house, possibly grocery shopping or other similar errands.

Family with one or two preschool children and stay-at-home spouse: A stay-at-home spouse can take care of the basic laundry and cleaning chores, with help from the partner after work and on weekends. It may make sense to have a housekeeper or cleaning service come in once a month. Cleaning services are more likely than individuals to agree to contract for such an arrangement.

Housekeeper frequency: Once a month.

Responsibilities: Deep cleaning in bathrooms and kitchen, mopping floors, washing baseboards.

Family with three or more children, plus pets; one working spouse, one-stay-at-home spouse: The at-home spouse has more than a full-time job. If one or more of the children are preschoolers, it is worthwhile to hire a housekeeper to come in every two weeks to catch up on the cleaning and laundry.

Housekeeper frequency: Twice a month.

Responsibilities: Cleaning kitchen and bathrooms, laundry, ironing, general household assistance.

Family with school-age or teenage children, one working spouse, one spouse with part-time job: With children in school, the spouse with a part-time job will be busy with chauffeuring and after-school activities. Even when the children are part of the cleaning team, there are some household jobs, such as floor cleaning, that are more efficiently delegated to paid help. As the children grow up, household responsibilities, such as doing their laundry and cleaning their rooms, should be shifted to them.

Housekeeper frequency: Twice a month.

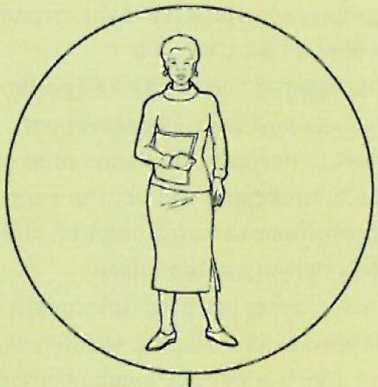
Responsibilities: Thorough kitchen and bathroom cleaning, ironing, and mending clothes.

Family with school-age or teenage children; two working spouses or single working parent: In addition to cleaning the house, the housekeeper can be responsible for family errands such as picking up dry cleaning and grocery shopping.

Target Your Search

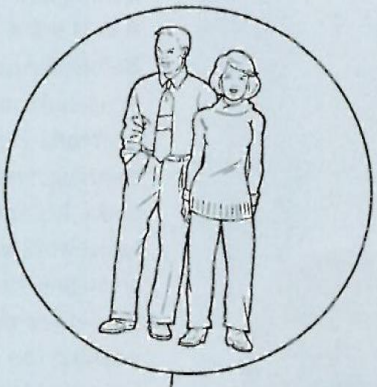
When you place an advertisement for help, define the situation, days of employment, duties, and location: "Couple, Glenwood area, no children, three cats, seeks housekeeper twice a week for light housework and laundry. References required."

Tailor Help to Your Needs



Single

Unless you have several pets or entertain frequently, a cleaning service once or twice a month works. Key chores: kitchen, bathroom, dusting, vacuuming, ironing.

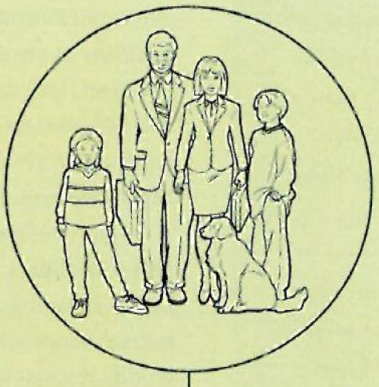


Couple

Hire a service or housekeeper for basic weekly cleaning, laundry, ironing, and possibly grocery shopping or errands. Clarify whether errands are part of the job.

Family: One Working Adult

If your family has infants or three or more children, hire cleaning help once a month for heavy-duty jobs, such as deep cleaning the kitchen and bathrooms, and mopping.



Family: Two Working Adults

If the budget allows, hire at least weekly help for cleaning, laundry, and errands. If school-age children need transportation, consider hiring help during the week.

Additional Chapters are a Work In Progress:

Updates Coming Soon!

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