

Homeowner's Guide

Storage Design Ideas and Solutions for Every Room



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Forward



Brian Ciota, Vice President & Co-Owner

When we speak to customers for the first time or meet with people at the [CNY Home and Garden Show](#) we are often asked, “What do I need to do to prepare for my remodeling project?” This is such a common question that we decided to draw on our 30-plus years of experience and publish free guides to help homeowners start their remodeling and renovation projects.

“Homeowner’s Guide: Storage Solutions for Every Room” is the fourth in a series of guides we have developed to help answer your basic questions about home remodeling and renovation, and to share information to help make your project a great success.

Storage is always a concern for homeowners and one of the primary reasons for remodeling. This guide discusses storage problems room-by-room and provides solutions that will add both function and value to your home. If you are planning a remodeling project, you will find ideas that will help you determine how to optimize storage for the items you use and display.

We have included online links in each chapter so that you can browse for some of the best products on the market as well as more information and ideas about current trends in designing functional storage space.

And please download our other free homeowner’s guides:

- [“10 Things You Must Know BEFORE Hiring a Remodeling Contractor”](#)
- [“How to Plan a Kitchen Remodeling Project”](#)
- [“How to Start Your Bathroom Remodeling Project”](#)

We hope you find the information in this guide helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brian Ciota'.

Brian Ciota
Vice President & Co-Owner

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1. How to Organize Kitchen Storage

Homeowners we work with demand more and better storage space. When planning kitchen storage, think about the way you and your family use the kitchen and the items you need to store. Traditional kitchen “work zones” are areas designated for:

- Food Prep
- Cooking
- Baking
- Food storage
- Dining/Entertaining
- Clean-up

Here are some basic kitchen storage tips:

- 1. Create easy access.** Deep full-extension drawers for storing pots, pans and dishes make it easy to find cookware and dinnerware. Add dividers to help keep contents organized. Full extension mounts may cost more but are well worth the investment.
- 2. Control cabinet clutter.** Equip under-counter cabinets with sliding shelves and full extension glides. Sliding shelves can move independently or in tandem, where everything slides at once. Sliding shelves make storage work more efficiently and the height of the shelves can be adjusted.
- 3. Add some spice to your life.** Keep staples organized by adding a narrow pullout shelf unit near a stove or on an island to store spices, oils, vinegars and other cooking essentials. Spice drawers and carousels (on a counter or in a cupboard) located near the food prep area are other options for storing these items. A slim cabinet at the end of an island or peninsula will also provide convenient storage
- 4. Extend your counter space.** If your kitchen has limited counter space, add a pullout table or cutting board to expand your food prep area.



1. How to Organize Kitchen Storage

5. **Create space for hard to store items.** Baking sheet pans do not fit well into cabinets or drawers. A tall narrow cabinet with a divider installed near a stove or oven can provide convenient storage for cookie sheets and muffin tins. Mixers are also hard to store and often end up on a countertop. If your counter is deep enough you can add appliance garages for mixers, blenders and food processors. There are also special under-counter cabinets designed for small appliances that would fit into an island, peninsula or base cabinet area.
6. **Pantry space is a “must-have”.** A pantry can be a tall floor-to-ceiling cabinet with narrow shelves placed next to a refrigerator or a narrow counter-depth pullout where you can see the contents in a glance. A closet can be turned into a pantry with wood or wire shelving. If you use base cabinets to store food items, add sliding shelf systems to ease access. Pantry cabinet units with multi-layered swing-out shelves provide maximum storage. In a butler’s pantry, open shelving is an affordable option. Pantries of old were freestanding cabinets or armoires. A freestanding cabinet can serve as a pantry in a kitchen with limited space or when working with a limited budget.
7. **Store on the door.** Narrow wire or wood shelves can be installed on the back of cupboard or closet doors to add storage space. Backs of cabinet doors are a great place to store food in small packages, small jars and cans. Spice racks and narrow storage shelves can be hung on the back of a cupboard door. Backs of cabinet and closet doors are ideal for storing cleaning supplies.
8. **Allocate space for knife storage.** Knives should not be stored without sheaths in utensil drawers because they get dull when nicked and should be stored where children can’t reach them. Add knife blocks and trays to your kitchen. Knife block accessories are made for drawers and knife blocks can be mounted on walls or sit on a counter.
9. **Divide and conquer.** Efficient kitchen storage minimizes clutter. Add dividers to drawers to organize flatware and utensils. Pots and pans are difficult to store and stack. Use dividers in drawers to keep contents organized. There are specially designed pullout shelves with dividers to hold items like frying pans, pot lids and sheet pans. Base cabinet pullouts with vertical dividers simplify storage of baking pans and muffin tins.

1. How to Organize Kitchen Storage

- 10. Think strategically about open shelving.** Open shelving can work aesthetically in a kitchen to display dishes and serving pieces. In terms of function, open shelving can provide quick access to every day dishware and cookbooks if placed in a convenient spot.
- 11. Put 'Lazy Susans' to work for you.** Lazy Susans make storage in kitchen corners accessible. Many kitchens have carousels in base cabinets but they are also useful in cupboards. Consider placing one under the sink to store cleaning supplies.
- 12. Entertain with ease.** Many kitchens feature wine storage racks built into islands, integrated into cabinets, and even installed under upper cabinets. If your space is limited, add an armoire fitted to house wine bottles, glasses and other items you use for entertaining. Beverage bars have become popular with homeowners. Essentials of beverage bars are under-counter refrigeration, cabinet storage for glassware and a bar sink. Add cubbies or built-in racks for wine storage. Beverage bars can be set up to serve wine, a mix of drinks, tea and coffee. Include storage space for a coffee maker, electric teapot, blender or juicer.
- 13. Create a home office space.** A desk is a convenient space for planning menus, paying bills and for homework. A built-in kitchen desk doesn't require much space but must have electrical wiring and outlets to connect a computer and a charging station for cell phones and small electronics. Open shelves work well when installed with a desk for books and office supplies. Desk drawers contain the clutter of paperwork. Add base cabinets if you need storage for files.
- 14. Don't forget the pets.** Pets are important to many homeowners. Create a space for your pet's feeding dishes under a counter or under an overhang of a kitchen island. Store food nearby. Put collars and leashes on the back of a closet door or on a hook near an exit.
- 15. Organize your cleaning supplies and trash.** Broom closets are a practical addition to a kitchen. Equip the closet with shelves to store batteries and light bulbs. Include an electrical outlet if possible to charge cordless sweepers and hand vacuums. Hang a rack on the door to hold mops and dustpans. Add hooks for rags or plastic bag storage. Place pullout storage units near a sink for cleaning supplies, garbage and recyclables.

1. How to Organize Kitchen Storage

For more kitchen storage ideas, check out these sources:

- [Jim Bishop Cabinets](#)
- Better Homes and Gardens Special Interest Publications “Kitchen and Bath Ideas”
- [Better Homes and Gardens on-line](#)
- [HGTV “Kitchen Storage with Style”](#)



2. Universal Design – Kitchen Storage Ideas

Are you a “Baby Boomer” who plans to live in the house you own for another twenty years? Has a parent moved in with you recently who may need special accommodations to access the work areas of your kitchen? Does a member of your household have impaired mobility or use a wheelchair? Are you concerned about installing any “accessibility” features that might affect the resale value of your home?

If you can relate to these situations and are planning to remodel your kitchen, consider applying [“Universal Design” ideas](#) to enhance the function, safety and value of your home.

Kitchen Cabinetry

1. Install multi-height, **rounded edge countertops** over cabinets so household members can work either standing or sitting.
2. Install cabinets with **pullout shelves**, carousels and adjustable height shelving to keep users off their knees and from stretching on their toes and losing balance when reaching into the back of upper cabinets for stored goods and dishware.
3. Use D or C shaped or pull-style **cabinet and drawer pulls**.
4. Install **built-in storage space** for recyclables and trash. Built-ins have glides for easy access and conserve floor space.
5. For food storage, install a **pullout pantry**. The height and placement of these pullout units can be adjusted for a person who uses a wheelchair. Adjustable shelves can be added to the pantry doors to make small items accessible.
6. **Open shelving** provides easy access to stored items stored in a kitchen.
7. **Glass doors on cabinets** are not only attractive but allow those who use your kitchen to easily identify contents.

Appliance Selection and Placement

1. When selecting a **refrigerator**, consider an easy access side-by-side model or an under-counter drawer-style unit for food and beverage storage.

2. Universal Design – Kitchen Storage Ideas

2. A drawer-style **dishwasher** will reduce the need for bending. Consider adding two drawer dishwashers for rotation of everyday items. One can be used for dirty dishes, while the other stores dishes and cookware that are used daily after the items are cleaned.

Before you remodel, consult a kitchen designer or a [Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist](#) about your needs and options. They are knowledgeable about aesthetics and details that you may not have considered. More information about “Universal Design” ideas for kitchens is available on the [American Association of Retired Persons](#) website.



This attractive kitchen has some Universal Design elements. Note the wide entryways, uniform flooring, multi-level work areas, self-closing drawers and counter-level placement of the oven.

3. Create More Bathroom Storage Space

No matter the size, it seems that bathrooms always fail to adequately accommodate the items we want to have in there. Clutter is a challenge too, especially with the many small and oddly shaped items we tend to keep.

What's the solution? We've found that more and better bathroom storage space can solve most homeowner's bathroom storage problems.

Here are **9 ideas** that may help you.

1. **Vanities.** Vanities are the central storage unit in most bathrooms. The [National Kitchen and Bath Association](#) recommends vanities be 32 to 43 inches high depending on the user's needs (seated or standing). Most vanities contain at least one sink and require plumbing that may be hidden behind a cabinet door. If you're shopping for a vanity consider:
 - Pullout shelves to make it easy to access contents.
 - Drawer dividers to store cosmetics, jewelry and other small bathroom items.
 - In a small bathroom consider cabinets that are 16 to 18 inches deep instead of the usual 21 inches.
 - Tilt-out drawers for hair brushes, combs or tooth brushes.
 - A hamper for dirty clothes.
2. **Storage for Cosmetics.** Countertop level cabinets, like appliance "garages" in a kitchen, are ideal for storing make-up and grooming products. The packaging of many cosmetic items (i.e. mascara, lipstick, facial make up, lotions and fragrances) makes it difficult to store these products on shelves. Small cosmetics can be stored in vanity drawers with dividers to keep items from jamming drawers and creating clutter. Baskets and caddies can be used to store cosmetics in cabinets or be placed on shelves.
3. **Medicine Cabinets.** Medicine cabinets are common fixtures in most bathrooms and are often a narrow depth cabinet hidden by a mirror. The narrow depth makes it easy to find medications. When storing pharmaceuticals in a bathroom, read the drug information you receive at the pharmacy to learn if the medication is affected by temperature or humidity.

3. Create More Bathroom Storage Space

4. **Linen Closets.** Built-in linen closets with shelves are the ideal place to store towels and bed linens. As a general rule, each household member should have four bath towels, four hand towels and six washcloths. If your space is limited use fewer towels but launder them more frequently. In small bathroom “linen towers” (tall narrow shelving with doors) can provide needed storage. For more efficient shelf storage, add wire organizers and baskets to neatly store items. If your space is really small, try storing towels in a wine rack. Simply roll them up and place them in bottle slots.



5. **Wall Storage.** Open shelves affixed to a wall can also provide a solution for storing towels and grooming products. Use multiple towel bars mounted to walls to hold items other than towels by adding hook-on caddies for magazines, cotton balls and swabs, lotions, bath salts, bubble bath etc. Add shelves above a toilet to extend storage space.

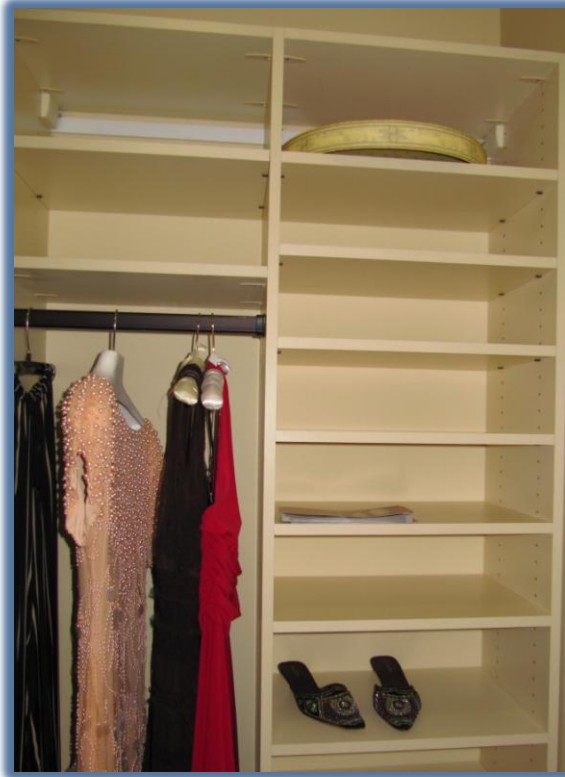
3. Create More Bathroom Storage Space

6. **Door Storage.** The back of a bathroom door can provide much needed storage in a small bathroom. Hooks placed on a door can hold robes and towels. A door can also accommodate a shelf or towel bars. Don't forget the backs of cabinet doors. Narrow shelves can be added to hold hair dryers, cotton swabs, soap bars, hair brushes and other small items.
7. **Shower storage.** Shower storage was once limited to in-the-wall soap dishes, awkward wire shower caddies, pole shelves that would break easily and the rim of a tub. Today's shower units feature easy to clean built-in shelves and shower seats, look for these features if you're remodeling your bathroom.
8. **Freestanding Storage.** Freestanding furniture pieces and cabinets are another way to add storage space to your bathroom, especially if you have a pedestal sink and don't want to install a vanity. Étagères work well for storing towels and baskets filled with bathroom essentials. Storage benches provide both a place to sit when you are grooming and a place to store bath linens and other items. A narrow table with one or two lower shelves can be utilized as a vanity if you hang a mirror above or place a make-up/shaving mirror on it.
9. **Baskets and caddies.** Baskets and caddies are a great way to organize and store "the stuff" that we use daily. Provide a basket or caddy for each user of the bathroom to store their personal items.

For more ideas, visit [HGTV Bathroom Storage](#) and [Better Homes and Gardens: 22 Bathroom Storage Ideas](#).

4. Bedroom Storage and Closet Organization

The bedroom is where we store our personal “stuff”. Clothes, shoes, accessories and jewelry are the obvious things. Then there are the “other” things that may include books, magazines, trophies, toys, family photos, luggage, souvenirs, etc. The more we keep and save, the more it becomes a struggle to keep order in the bedroom.



To tackle the clutter, take a quick inventory of the items that you store in the bedroom. Start with the clothes and organize like-items. Count things that hang in your closet, jackets, pants, shirts, dresses skirts, belts, ties, scarves, purses and coats. Do the same for shoes and clothing items that you store in dressers. Set aside clothes that are out of fashion or that you won't wear again. Make a list of these items for donation to a charity.

If you store books in your bedroom, edit the collection. After you've pulled out items for donation look at what you have left to store. Is your space adequate? Do you need better organization or extra capacity?

If you need to reorganize, here are some ideas for taming clutter:

- Keep large drawers neat by adding dividers. Dividers can be added to dresser drawers to store ties, belts, and jewelry.
- When planning closet space, allow 2 inches of space for every shirt you hang.
- Double up on rods in closets. [Better Homes and Gardens](#) recommends installing a full-height rod 76-84 inches above the floor and a lower rod 36 to 42 inches above the floor. Rods should be 12-14 inches from the back wall to allow for hangers.
- Use heavy-duty clips attached to a standard closet rod to hang purses.

4. Bedroom Storage and Closet Organization

- Keep a 2 step folding ladder in the back of your closet so that you can access top shelves.
- Reconfigure your existing closet space by adding shelving and drawers. Install [do-it-yourself closet organization inserts](#) or [closet systems](#) made for reach-in and walk-in closets. If you're not handy, call a professional.
- Add hooks on the back of the door or on the wall for jackets, gym bags or towels. Wall hooks are great for storing kids' toys and sports equipment. Add colorful drawstring mesh bags to gather items and hang the bags on a hook.
- Store items [under the bed in special storage containers with wheels](#). These containers are great for seasonal items like sweaters.
- Add a hamper for dirty clothes. Hampers now come in a variety of styles that actually look attractive in a bedroom or bathroom space. Some closet inserts include a pullout hamper, which is great if you have the space.



4. Bedroom Storage and Closet Organization

If you need extra capacity, consider buying freestanding storage units or add built-in storage.

- Add an armoire. Armoires are ideal for storing a television or for sweaters and bed linens.
- Add a storage bench. Storage benches can be placed at the end of a bed or near a window to provide both seating and extra storage space.
- Add cubbies for shoes.
- Built-in bedroom storage can solve many problems.
 - Built-in bookcases can keep books in order and display family photos and personal collections.
 - Built-in cubbies equipped with a door are a place to store toys when built into a child's room. Later, the cubbies can be used to store items your young adult child will use in college.
 - Built-ins are not confined to wall units. Built-in storage under a bed will hold several dressers full of items. Built-in storage benches add to the aesthetics of a bedroom by providing comfortable seating and out-of-sight storage space. Built-in drawers and shelving in a closet will help keep contents organized and out of sight.

5. Storage Ideas for a Welcoming Entryway

Who hasn't had snow, salt, rain, mud and leaves dragged into their home at some point? Entryways or "[mudrooms](#)" should provide a barrier to keep unwanted elements out of the rest of your home. It begins with having adequate storage for necessities like coats, hats, gloves, mittens, umbrellas and, most importantly, boots and muddy shoes. Homes with school-age children may need a place to store lunchboxes, backpacks and books. Entryways may also be a drop-off point for keys, spare change, mail and even cell phones.

Your entryway should be equipped according to the way you use your home. If possible, consider providing a storage space for each person in the home. Even if you live in an older home or one without a large entryway, there are many ways to address storage needs.



Here are **six** [design tips](#) that can [make your home entryway welcoming and functional](#):

- 1. Storage benches.** Built-in benches with hinged seats that open for storage do double duty in an entryway. Items can be stored out of sight and the bench can seat people as they put on or take shoes and boots. Benches can be built over cubbies for boot storage. A freestanding storage bench can be placed in an entryway if it fits the space.

5. Storage Ideas for a Welcoming Entryway

- 2. Well-planned cabinetry.** Cabinets can provide useful storage space but can also contribute to the décor of a home. Doors and drawers can be used to hide unsightly clutter and keep an entryway tidy. Attractive woods and moldings can be used to add architectural interest to a home.
- 3. Vertical shelving with hooks.** Vertical shelves are the perfect place for coats and jackets, sports equipment and backpacks. To maximize storage, install hooks on the back and sides of shelving at various heights to accommodate both users and the types of items stored.
- 4. Cubbies.** Cubbies can solve many storage problems. Cubbies are shelves with dividers designed specifically for storage. Short cubbies can be used for sports equipment like game balls and skates, shoes and handbags, backpacks, books hats and gloves, water bottles and items that contribute to clutter. Longer cubbies provide space for hanging coats. Cubbies can be installed under bench seating to organize boots and shoes.
- 5. Hall closets.** Hall closets can be fitted with shelves and dual rods to maximize storage and minimize clutter. Baskets can be placed on shelves to hold hats, gloves and scarves.
- 6. Hooks, hooks and more hooks.** If you have limited space and a limited budget you can reduce clutter in your entryway by adding hooks. Hooks can hold coats, jackets, bags, hats, and sports equipment. Use double hooks for hanging coats and outerwear. Stagger the hooks at varying levels to maximize use. Try mounting hooks on a board and screw the board into a wall to create coat storage. Check out “shaker pegs.” They are wood pegs with rounded ends that won’t poke through fabric.

6. Storage Ideas for Families On-the-Go

If you have school-age children you know keeping them organized during the school year is a challenge. There are backpacks, lunch boxes, books, papers, athletic equipment and, of course, jackets, coats, shoes, boots, gloves and hats. Where do you keep it all so that your child doesn't miss the bus because he/she can't find something?

The family entrance to your home is the place to start. That's the place where everyone slips off shoes, drops a backpack or whatever they have in hand at the end of the day.

Built-in Cubbies

Built-in [cubbies](#) are a great solution for organizing entryway clutter and keep it from migrating to other areas of your home.



A cubby is a small, deep storage space. Schools have been smart about cubbies for decades. What better way to help kids stay organized? In classrooms, cubbies have trays or baskets for storage with the name of the student on them. Why not apply this same principle at home?

Take a moment to assess your entryway space. What are the dimensions? Do you have room for shelving or a bench? What do you need to store? How many people will be using the space? The objective here is to give each person their own space for their stuff, just like at school. For effective storage, a cubby should be at least 12 inches deep.

What are your options for building cubbies? Custom-built cubbies will

make the best use of you space. Since your entryway experiences a lot of traffic it may be well worth the expense. If you are a "do-it-yourselfer" [you can build cubbies](#) but keep in mind that the project involves a moderate level of difficulty.

6. Storage Ideas for Families On-the-Go

You can find hall storage systems with cubbies at [Target](#), [Home Depot](#), [Lowe's](#) or [Pottery Barn](#). Cubbies can be built into a hall closet to better organize the space.

Lockers

Entryway [lockers](#) provide a place for larger items like coats, jackets, backpacks and athletic gear. Lockers can be a long, narrow cubby with hooks or units with doors.

- **Locker design.** Lockers should be designed so that users can access them. If you have small children you will want to be sure that the locker and hooks are placed at an appropriate height for the child to hang items. Lockers should be about 18 inches deep. Height can vary depending on users and storage needs although an optimal height is about 70 inches. Width can vary depending on the space and number of users.
- **How to install lockers.** You can [build lockers](#). You will need a circular saw and plywood to do the job and it is a moderately difficult project. If you don't have the tools or skills, you could hire a contractor to custom build the unit. There are also [modular locker units](#) that you can purchase. These units require some assembly but will save work on cutting and finishing. You can find modular lockers in wood, metal and plastic.

Storage Benches

Benches are great for entryways. You can find ready-made benches online, in local department stores such as [JC Penney](#), [Sears](#) or [Pottery Barn](#) or in home improvement stores. You can also [build your own storage bench](#) or have one custom made for your entryway.

Simple Entryway Storage Solutions

If lack of time and money are factors in organizing your entryway, consider these easy cost effective solutions:

- **Build a wall-mounted coat rack.** [Building a coat rack](#) is an easy project. It requires a 1" by 4" piece of plywood cut to the appropriate length for your wall and coat hooks or pegs.
- **Add an umbrella stand.**
- **Provide trays for boots and shoes.**
- **Provide a bin or basket for each family member to drop off hats, gloves and other small items.**
- **Add a hook or two for dog leashes.**

7. Family Room Storage Ideas

Because we spend so much time in our family room, we want it to store all the things we use there including our TV, audio and cable equipment, games, books, etc. As you might imagine, keeping this room neat is a challenge. But, with a little planning and creativity, we created a very comfortable family room that neatly houses all of our “toys.”

Here are a few tips and storage solutions ideas for creating an indoor retreat in your living or family room:

Television Placement

When organizing a living room or family room, one of the first questions to ask is “[where should the TV go](#)”? You need to consider the size of your TV and the distance it will require for optimal viewing. The size of a television screen is measured diagonally. For example, a 30-inch diagonal digital screen should be 6 feet from where you’ll be sitting. For larger TVs, add 2 feet of viewing distance for every 10 inches diagonal. Place your TV so that the center of the screen is at eye level – 38-to-42 inches from the floor. The next dimension to consider is the depth of the TV. Flat screen LCD and plasma TVs are generally 3-to-5 inches deep. They are lightweight and can be hung on a wall or will fit on a cabinet or shelf. Rear-projection and picture tube HDTVs have screens that range from 47-to-70 inches and a depth of 15-to-24 or more inches. They are heavy and require a shelf or cabinet that can support 200 or more pounds. Covering these TVs can be difficult because doors that swing can take up too much space. Consider sliding doors, tambour doors or custom cabinetry.

If you’re considering replacing an older TV with a flat screen, you’ll notice a big space change especially if you wall-mount your new unit. Such a change may require a different storage solution for your other equipment and give you more options for configuring the use of your room.

Audio and Video Gear

Many people want to integrate surround sound systems with their TVs for a [home theatre](#) experience. To create a surround sound effect, the room will need at least 5 speakers. Speakers can be camouflaged behind a fabric screen or integrated into the room by the color choice you select. AV storage space should include ventilation so that electrical components such as DVRs, DVD players, cable boxes and satellite receivers don’t get too hot. Don’t stack components. Space them on shelves a few inches apart. If you are placing these items in cabinets, there should be vents in the back for airflow.

7. Family Room Storage Ideas

Fireplace Storage

More people are placing [flat screen televisions over the fireplace](#) because it is often the focal point of a room. Built-in shelving next to a hearth can be used to store electronics, books, collectibles or firewood. If you have a wood burning fireplace or stove, consider using a freestanding rack to store wood in small quantities to have on hand and minimize the mess and bringing insects indoors.

Collectibles

[Storing collectibles](#) can be a creative challenge. Collectibles are those things that reflect our lifestyle and passions. Collectibles can either create clutter or be an item of interest to those who visit your home. Organize your collections and display them in groups. Collectibles look best displayed in open shelves, étagères, open armoires and cabinets with glass doors.

Books, Magazines and Games

Books can be stored on shelves, on and under coffee tables and in cabinets. If you're storing books on open shelves, try stacking them in small piles and display photos, pottery, artwork and other collectibles with them. Store board games near areas where you use them. Magazines can be stored in baskets. Don't forget to cull them out every now and then to keep clutter under control.



8. Taming the Laundry Room

A laundry room can be one of the most cluttered and active rooms of a home. In addition to washing clothes, folding, ironing and sewing, a laundry room can be a space for crafts and hobbies or a home office. It can also be part of an entryway or housed in a closet. A laundry room should be organized to make it as efficient as possible.

Organize your laundry room the way you would a kitchen. Think about the way you use the space. Note the location of your washer, dryer and sink. Are there areas for ironing, air drying, folding clothes and storing supplies?

Consider the following storage solutions to control clutter and [organize your laundry room](#):

- 1. Washer and dryer with pedestal storage.** [Manufacturers of washers and dryers](#) have responded to consumers' storage needs by offering bases that include storage drawers. Pedestal units raise the machines to enable the user to load and unload laundry with ease and feature pullout drawers for storing laundry supplies.
- 2. Stackable washers and dryers.** Stackable front-loading washers and dryers can save space in your laundry area.
- 3. Energy efficient front-loading washers and dryers with controls on the face.** These washer/dryer combos fit under a counter to provide a space for folding clothes and storage.
- 4. Custom cabinets.** Base cabinets, cupboards and drawers in a laundry to contain supplies and clutter. Customize storage for an ironing board and iron to store them out of sight. Add pullout hampers to sort clothes by color or baskets on sliding shelves to provide ready access to cleaning products. Pullouts can be installed for sewing machines and ironing boards.
- 5. Desk area.** A desk in a laundry room can serve many functions. It can be a place for mail, bill paying and organizing other household activities. A desk can also provide a surface for sewing, crafts, flat drying and folding clothes.
- 6. Create and island.** If you have the space, add a table to your laundry room or better yet, an island with base cabinet and drawer storage, or a place for a stool.

8. Taming the Laundry Room

7. **Open shelves.** Open shelving provides quick access to laundry supplies and other essentials.
8. **Closet rod or door hanger.** A closet rod can be installed in a small space for hanging clothes when you need to iron or air dry clothes. If you don't have the space to install a rod, try a door clothes rod that will hold clothing on hangers or hooks on the back of cabinets.
9. **Add a towel bar.** Towel bars can be mounted on a cabinet over a sink for drying hand washed items or on the side of cabinets to hang hand towels and rags used for clean up. If you are placing a towel bar under a cabinet, try to allow space for hangers so that you can dry several items at once.
10. **Wall organizers.** Wall organizers are available for storing ironing boards, paper towels, mops and brooms.



9. Basement Storage Ideas

You may find [a solution to your storage problems in your basement](#). If your basement is finished, or you are considering finishing your basement, identify the items you want to store and assess the available space in your basement. Is there a closet? How are you using the space near the stairs? Is there space in the utility room? Are you using your basement for laundry? Is there a door to the outdoors or to a garage in your basement?

If you're planning on [remodeling your basement](#) or organizing the items you store there, here are **10 ideas for creating basement storage space**:

- 1. Storage near the Stairs.** The space *near* the stairs is a great place to store items. You could build storage into the wall, or use graduated shelves to optimize storage. Narrow shelving can be mounted on landings to hold books or decorative items.

Consider using the space *under* the stairs for storage. Small shelving units can be mounted under steps. Wire racks and baskets work well in small spaces. Hooks can be hung under stairs.

- 2. Closets.** Basements often have alcove areas that can be framed as closets and used for storage. Make the most of these “nook and crannies”. Depending on the size, some of these alcoves can be converted into craft areas and could accommodate a narrow table or desk for sewing or working on craft projects. Add doors to contain the clutter of unfinished projects. Use the backside of a door for storage by adding hooks or narrow shelves.

Closets can be organized with shelving inserts to store infrequently used items such as Christmas decorations or holiday cookware and china. Be sure that shelves are deep enough to hold bins and boxes. Don't forget to label bins or boxes.

Use your space wisely. Closets can be built in the corners of a basement or under stairs to keep the contents out of sight.

- 3. Alcoves.** Alcoves in a basement are perfect places for shelving. Create a place for book storage or for collections. An alcove can also be a space for a home office. Add a desk shelf and some overhead shelves for books and files and you will have a space to work that can be hidden by doors “on your day off”.

9. Basement Storage Ideas

- 4. Built-in Storage.** Basements are generally “activity areas” and built-in shelving can optimize the space to either hide or display contents. Use cabinets around the perimeter of the space for books or add built-in seating where items can be stored under the seats or in a storage bench. More homeowners are installing fireplaces when they finish a basement. If a fireplace is in your plans, consider framing it with built-in shelving.



- 5. Laundry Room.** If your laundry is located in your basement consider adding cabinets to store supplies. Be sure to install a closet rod for hanging clothes. Use jars for storing detergent and dry bleach. Add a bulletin board, -a great place for socks that get separated in the dryer. Tack the sock to the board until you can locate the match.
- 6. Media Center.** Big screen TVs, speakers, DVD players, cable boxes and stereos and their accessories - DVDs, CDs, computer games, all require space. Built-in media units are the best for storing electronics and hiding wires. Doors can be used to protect and hide a TV when not in use. Pullout drawers will keep small items and components organized and accessible.

9. Basement Storage Ideas

7. **Work Room.** Freestanding utility shelving can be built or purchased inexpensively to hold tools, materials and supplies.
8. **Walkout Basement Exit.** Add hooks for hanging coats, jackets and pet leashes near the exit and cubbies for shoes, hats and gloves. A storage bench is an asset in this area to sit on when taking off footwear and for storing toys and games used outdoors.
9. **Toy Storage.** Storage for children's toys should be designed from the child's perspective. Make it easy for children to access toys and put them away. Open shelving with bright baskets will make cleanup time more fun. Shelves should be hung low so a child does not need to stand on a stool or chair to reach them. If you provide a toy chest, be sure to use one with [safety hinges](#) or better yet, remove the lid.



10. **Wine Cellar.** If you plan to [store wine in your basement](#) look for a space where light and heat will not disrupt the wine as it matures. Find a place where the cool temperature of a basement wall or floor can be transferred to the wine bottles. Select strong shelving to hold the bottles. Shelving should be 12 inches deep for storage of bottles. Secure it to the wall so that it will not tip when wine bottles are added. You can create a microclimate by using a heavy curtain around the storage area to keep light out and temperatures cool.

10. Garage Storage Solutions

For many homeowners, a garage becomes a catchall for items that are used seasonally. We use our garages to store garden supplies, bicycles, athletic gear, lawn maintenance equipment, outdoor furniture, tools and even holiday decorations.

How do you [organize your garage or add storage units](#) for all the items you keep there? Here are **12 ideas** to [control garage clutter](#) and efficiently organize your garage storage space:

- 1. Clear out and sort the contents of your garage.** Create piles and categorize the items you need to store such as garden supplies, toys, sports equipment, all of those holiday decorations, tools, paints and paint gear, firewood – list goes on. Donate items that you haven't used for a while or no longer need to a local charity. If they can't be donated, make arrangements for their proper disposal. This is the often most difficult step in getting organized.
- 2. Survey your space and determine if you need to make repairs or convert areas for storage.** Once the clutter has been sorted, carefully look at the space in your garage. What is the condition of the walls and floor? If you are staring at studs when you look at the walls, consider installing drywall to create a surface for hanging cabinets and storage systems. Is the floor cracked or crumbling? Is there a loft area that could be converted for overhead storage? Make a list repairs and areas that can be used for storage.
- 3. Start at the bottom and clean the floor.** Seal the floor to keep dust down. If a floor is sealed during the initial setting of the concrete it will last for years, after the fact it will need to be maintained annually especially since we drive our cars on salt covered roads in the winter. Good floor drainage is especially important since we park cars that may be wet or snow covered in a garage. Cracks can be filled or repaired. You can repair small cracks, but consult a professional if you need to repair major cracks or to replace the floor. **We prefer not to use paints, epoxies or flooring in garages because we have yet to find anything that holds up to road salt.** If you do **NOT** use your garage in winter to store your cars, then we recommend [commercial grade PVC or rubber flooring](#) or [masonry](#) and [epoxy](#) products from Benjamin Moore.
- 4. Spruce up your garage.** Create a bright space that people like to be in and it will be easier to stay organized. Sheetrock the walls and finish out the trim on windows and doors. Paint the walls and trim, and don't be afraid to add color.

10. Garage Storage Solutions

- 5. Insulate the exterior-exposed walls and ceiling to keep out cold and add some type of heat.** Your [options for heating a garage](#) include adding an electric space heater or a professionally installed gas heater. A warm garage gives you a space that can be used for projects and access to stored items year-round.
- 6. Update garage lighting.** Replace overhead single bulb porcelain fixtures with large florescent lights. New florescent technology has solved the problem of turning the lights on in cold weather. Use florescent lights to illuminate the work area of your garage.
- 7. Need extra space for food storage?** If you have a large family, buy food in bulk or need food storage for entertaining a refrigerator or freezer in your garage will provide that extra storage space. Place the unit near the entry door for easy access.
- 8. Does your garage have a pump room for a well?** Use that room for some of your storage needs. Because these rooms require that the temperature be kept above freezing year-round and are often without windows and kept dark, you may have the perfect spot for storing garden chemicals, paints or even wine.
- 9. Add a utility sink in the garage.** Homeowners often ask us to add a garage sink. A utility sink is great for cleaning up after painting, cleaning tools, cleaning mops, filling buckets to wash the car, spraying off mud or giving the dog a bath.
- 10. Add a generator or generator hook up.** Central New Yorkers know that a power outage can occur at anytime. Those of us who experienced the Labor Day Storm of 1998 know firsthand the importance of having back-up power. Permanent generators are great but a less expensive alternative is a portable generator, which can be stored in your garage with a hook-up on the garage.
- 11. Add loft storage.** If your garage has a high ceiling, add storage by building a loft. Lofts can be accessed by a pull-down ladder. You can also add ceiling hooks and create overhead storage space by installing a [loft shelf](#).

10. Garage Storage Solutions

12. Use the vertical space in your garage for storage. Remember those [piles you organized](#)? Take an inventory and [consider how you want to store those items](#). Make a rough sketch of the space noting where you want to store items.

- You can add cabinets specifically designed for garages. [Home Depot](#) and [Lowe's](#) offer a number of ideas for garage storage cabinets, shelves and tool storage units.
- [Garden tools and supplies should have their own area of the garage.](#)
- Add wall storage systems to your garage. A great resource where you can view a variety of systems online is ["Bing Shopping"](#). Also, check out [Sears](#), which for decades has sold tools and supplies for home workshops and now offers garage storage systems and more.
- Use clear bins for storage so that you can easily see the items inside.
- Pegboards will hold a variety of items that can be hung on hooks.

Most store-bought storage cabinets and storage systems require assembly. We have helped homeowners install these units in their garages and advise them on how to optimize their storage space.



11. Useful Attic Storage Ideas

Attics can be an upper story to a home, a loft over a garage or a small space between the rafters for roof insulation. While not all attic spaces are suitable for storage, if you have a way to access the space an attic can be an asset.

Moving around in an attic can be difficult and can make organization a challenge. That's why it's important to have a plan for organizing the items you want to store there.

Here are **9 ideas to help you make your attic storage space more efficient:**

- 1. Assess your attic space.** We recommend that you consult a professional if you're considering using your attic for storage or converting it to add living space. Before you start storing things you should determine if the space can hold weight and if the area is structurally sound. Access to an attic can be problematic and the sloping walls and ceilings present challenges. A professional can give you the best advice for using the space.
- 2. Be sure the floor of your attic can hold the weight of items you plan to store.** Your existing attic floor may be able to handle storage the way it is built. It may need only ¾-inch plywood reinforcement or it may require installing a floor system designed to carry the weight of attic storage. A professional can evaluate your current attic structure and make recommendations to ensure your attic is designed to safely use as a storage area.
- 3. Make repairs to the attic.** Look around for signs of a leaky roof, holes in walls, rodent droppings, bird nests or exposed or frayed wires. Rodents will often chew on wires so be [sure to check for damage](#).
- 4. Use shelves, ceiling hooks and rods for attic storage.** Since an unfinished attic is usually completely exposed, it should be easy to find places to install these fixtures.
- 5. Build shelves around gable windows and between rafters.** Custom shelves work best in these spaces because of the angle of the roof. Items you store in attics tend to get pushed to the back and cannot be stacked very high. Use plywood, particle board, plastic or metal shelving for attic storage. Shelving will create a separation between boxes and allow you to more easily view and slide out contents.
- 6. Use plastic storage bins rather than cardboard boxes to store items.** Paper boxes may attract rodents.

11. Useful Attic Storage Ideas

- 7. When finishing an attic to create more living space, use the unique nooks and crannies created by the sloping walls and ceiling for storage.** Kneewalls are ideal areas to create built-in shelf storage or closets. If you're designing the space for a [child's play area](#) or [bedroom](#), space up against a sloped wall can be used for a bed nook or seating nook that does not require much vertical space. Build in a drawer under the bed or seat frame to store clothing or toys.
- 8. An unfinished attic could be converted into additional closet space.** If your attic is small but there is adequate access it may be the ideal space to [add an extra closet to your home](#).
- 9. Be mindful of what you store in an attic.** While attic storage can be useful, there are changes in temperature and humidity in an attic that could cause damage to items stored. If you are storing holiday decorations, remove candles and store them somewhere else. Photos, books, paintings and other paper items can be ruined in an attic. Plastics like dolls and children's toys may also be damaged by high and low temperatures and humidity. Be particularly careful with antiques.

Check out these [photo ideas](#), too.



12. Adding An Outdoor Storage Shed

Outdoor storage sheds are a great solution for storing your lawn mower, outdoor furniture, grill, pool equipment or garden supplies. Sheds can be built in a variety of forms, sizes and materials. A [lean-to storage shed](#) built on the side of a garage is a simple structure that will hold the overflow. A large [garden shed](#) will contain lawn and garden supplies and equipment in one spot. If you are storing firewood, an open-sided “[woodshed](#)” will keep elements off of the wood as it “seasons” and provide space to easily load and retrieve the wood. If you have kids, a shed can be converted to [create a playhouse or fort](#).



Here are **6 things you should do before adding an outdoor storage shed**:

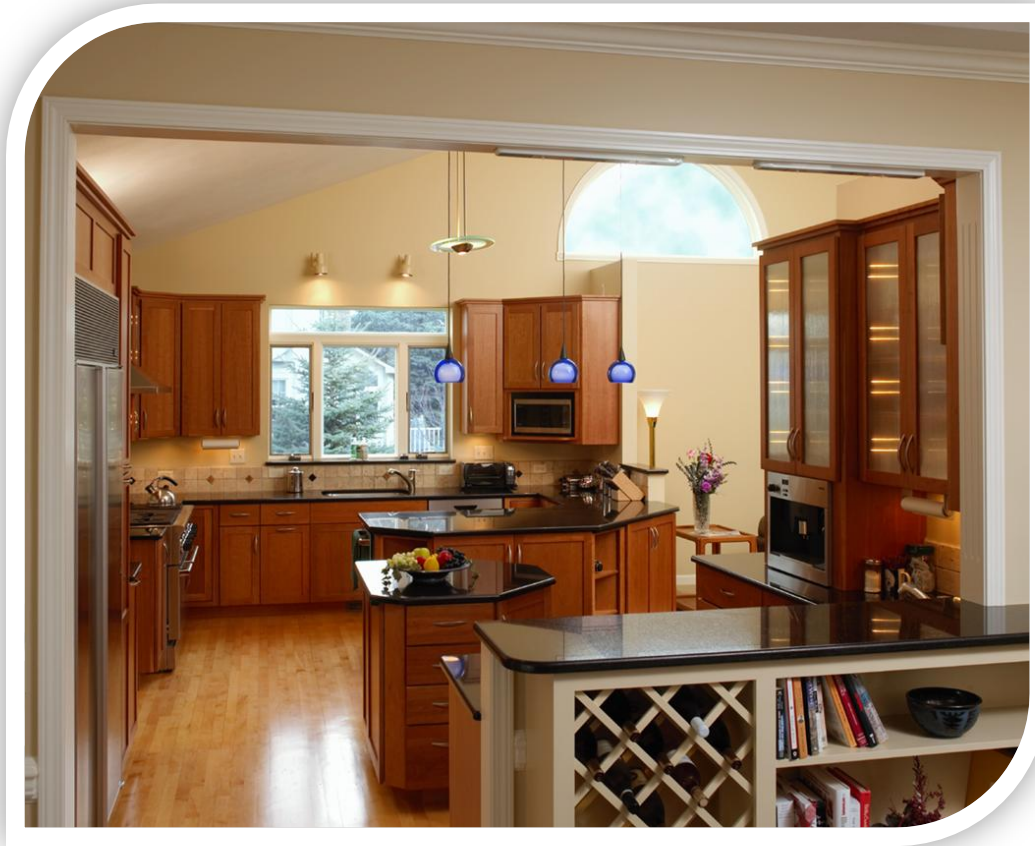
- 1. Identify the items you want to store in an outdoor shed.** In planning your project be sure the items you store will not be affected by temperature changes. For example, some garden supplies should not be stored in an outdoor shed. Anything with liquid that freezes (i.e. liquid fertilizers, acrylic paints) should not be stored outside. Wood furniture or other woods that will warp, items susceptible to rust or items composed of paper that would react to both changes in temperature and humidity should not be stored in a shed. Consider the size and quantity of items you want to store.

12. Adding An Outdoor Storage Shed

2. **Determine the space required for storage.** To determine the square footage needed, first consider equipment and other items you'll need to store on the floor. Make a rough sketch of the shed illustrating the dimensions, height and entryway. That will also give you some idea of the wall space available for shelving, modular wall storage units, pegboards and hooks.
3. **Determine where to place the shed.** The shed should be built on dry level ground and in a location that allows you to have easy access to the contents. If you are planning to build a shed some distance from the house, refer to the land survey of your home to assure that you are not crossing property lines. You should also consult with your town about building codes that could affect where you can build the shed.
4. **Check with your town about building permit requirements and discuss your plans with your next-door neighbors.** Towns have building codes that must be considered before you can build a shed on your property. For example, you may need a permit to build the shed if the dimensions exceed 10' x 10'. You may also have to file plans for the shed with your town for approval. The building codes often require an allowance of space between your home and your neighbors. If a contractor is building the shed for you, he may be required by the town to show proof of Workers Compensation Insurance. Take the time to talk with your neighbors about your planned project and ask if they have any concerns, especially if they will have a view of the shed.
5. **Consider your options.** There are a variety of options for adding a shed to your home. Among the most popular are:
 - **Plastic Sheds.** If you don't require a lot of extra storage space, you can find a [pre-formed plastic shed](#) at home improvement stores. Simple to put together and relatively inexpensive, these sheds are durable and will keep the contents dry.
 - **Pre-fabricated sheds:** [Pre-fabricated sheds come in kits](#) that you will have to put together. You should first determine the size and then choose a style. The kits come in vinyl, which is the most durable, wood and metal. Metal sheds heat up in summer and would not be a good place to store gasoline, flammable chemicals, gas grills, lawnmowers or power tools requiring gasoline. Read the description of the kits to determine if it includes flooring, shingles and doors. Also read the instructions about how to assemble the shed **before** purchasing a kit.

12. Adding An Outdoor Storage Shed

- **Pre-made sheds.** You can find pre-made sheds in home improvement stores and specialty suppliers. Things to consider include the type of flooring used for the shed, wood plank vs. concrete, insulation, electrical outlets and how the shed will be delivered. Pre-made sheds may require professional installation.
 - **Custom-built sheds.** Custom-built sheds are the best way to ensure that you'll get what you want. You'll want to consult a contractor with experience building sheds. Discuss what you plan to store and how you want to integrate the shed with your home. Your contractor could save you headaches when it comes to building a shed. A professional will advise you about the design, placement, the appropriate materials to use, how to get the best use out of the shed and will obtain permits required for the project.
6. **Plan to decorate the shed.** [A shed should enhance the value of your home](#) so pay attention to its appearance. When selecting roofing for the shed, try matching the roof of your house. Paint the shed so that it will match or complement the home. Create a border garden or plant some shrubs near the shed. Make a pathway of pavers, slate, landscaping mulch or chips to connect the shed to the house.



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