

How To Create a Hobby or Game Room

By Alice Kelly

Most homes have at least one room that is begging to be made over into a more functional space. It might be a small bedroom once used for a nursery, or it could be a utility room adjacent to the garage.

In years past, when an adult child left home, mom converted the abandoned bedroom into a sewing room. Today a spare room might be transformed into a fully equipped hobby or game room. The key to making the room work for its intended use is adequate storage for supplies and equipment. Instead of having to run around the house looking for tools, or trying to find space to work on a project at the kitchen table, you can have easy access to everything you need in one convenient place. And if you start a project and haven't finished, you can leave it on the worktable to come back to later without worrying about it being in anyone's way.

Your main priority in a hobby room should be a worktable with sufficient space. You may need more than one table for different uses. In a hobby area it is important to have room to spread out. Make sure you choose a table that has enough height and width to accommodate your needs. For storage, it's a good idea to use a combination of open and closed cabinets.

Browse around local furniture and office supply stores for cabinets, shelves, countertops and drawers with interior storage nooks that best suit your needs. Look for cabinets and desks that are multifunctional with slide-out trays, different sized drawers, and bins. You can also take a chest or desk that you already own and add plastic dividers to keep items neatly organized. Remember that cabinetry, drawers, and storage systems designed for kitchens or bathrooms can also work great in a hobby room.

To add more visual interest store some items in colorful plastic bins or handsome baskets. Stack books and magazines in built-in shelves or use magazine racks attached to the wall. Large, flat items like mats and artwork can be placed in dividers and stored in a cabinet with wide drawers.

Shop at any craft supply or major discount store and you'll find many containers perfect for storing all sorts of small items like beads, screws, buttons, etc. A cabinet or two for holding poster board, patterns, stencils, and project directions will also help you keep everything organized and easy to find.

To save money and help the environment use recycled containers from your kitchen to hold small screws, beads, sequins, and other loose parts. Some people like to nail baby food or pasta sauce jar lids to the underside of a shelf, fill the jar with small parts, and screw the jar onto the lid. Using this method, everything

is easily visible and accessible. A pegboard or other wall mountable board with clips or magnetic strips comes in handy for keeping small tools like glue guns, scissors, and pliers within quick reach.

Depending on how messy your hobby may be a kitchen island with a sink can be very practical. Otherwise you might want to keep sponges, moist towelettes, and a bucket of water nearby.

If your hobby room is very small, or doubles as a guestroom, you might want to install a foldout table that attaches easily to a wall. Most tables of this type fold flat against the wall when not in use but offer plenty of space for hobbies when needed. For those who like to sew or frequently use fabrics for crafts, a foldout ironing board is also practical.

Those who like to play board games, video games, or both, can also tailor a room to suit their needs. Comfortable seating is a priority in a game room since playing games may span several hours. You will also want to have plenty of storage bins or shelves for CDs, DVDs, board games, memory cards, instruction books, etc. Depending on the size of the room, you might consider adding a compact refrigerator and a cabinet for storing crackers, cookies, popcorn, etc. If the game room will also be used for viewing movies, adding a convertible sofa, loveseat, or daybed will provide comfortable lounging and a bed for overnight guests.

If the room has a closet with one clothes rod and shelf, try removing them and adding more shelves and organizers that better suit your particular needs. A closet in a game room works well for storing board games, extra game controllers, folding chairs, cushions, snacks, and other supplies.

Most people find more time for hobbies and games if a special area is set up for that purpose. Allow yourself to be creative in designing a room that is both fun to use and functional.