

How To Find Hidden Storage Areas In Your Home

By Amanda Harley

The truth is no matter what size your living space you probably long for more storage. We are hoarders by nature, and most of us have a hard time getting rid of stuff. So we constantly seek new ways to store all the things we keep accumulating.

Think about how you use the space you already have. Does the family tend to congregate in the kitchen and rarely eat in the dining area? Consider installing a corner breakfast nook or a kitchen island with stools if space allows. Then you can turn the dining room into a home office, home theater area or a hobby room depending on your family's needs.

Take a walk around your home and look for hidden spaces that could be used in a new way. For example, a playroom could be created in a renovated attic. If you have an open staircase, consider replacing the banisters with modular storage units or bookcases. Then a previously wasted area becomes a showcase for treasured books, collectibles, CDs, sculptures, etc.

Many kitchens have space above the upper cabinets that is open. Use the wasted space to store little used items such as large platters, infrequently used bake ware, fondue sets, holiday linens, etc. Place the items in clear plastic containers for easy identification and to help them stay dust-free.

Hang pots and pans on a wall rack above the stove or on a ceiling rack over a kitchen island. This frees up cabinet space and creates a more contemporary look. Pullout drawers and swing-out bins are a good way to stash trash baskets and bags out of sight. To make better use of deep cabinets install pullout shelves or baskets so the space can be used more efficiently.

Drawer dividers, turntables and other organizers designed to maximize kitchen space are available at discount stores and designed to fit existing cabinets and drawer spaces. Under counter electric coffeemakers and can openers can be installed beneath your cabinets to save valuable counter space. Pan lids stay out of sight when stashed on a lid rack inside a pantry door.

Most people cram their garages with tools, garden equipment and excess stuff from the house without taking full advantage of the space available. Wall-mounted cabinets and inexpensive organizers allow you to move things off the floor. If you have an attic space over your garage, install a ladder and use the space to store camping equipment, holiday decorations and other items you don't need all-year round.

When furnishing a kid's room or guestroom, consider installing a bed with storage drawers underneath to take the place of a chest of drawers. Pegs and hooks on the wall can work well especially if you are short on closet space. Use the pegs for lightweight jackets, sweaters, hats, gloves, etc. Try hanging canvas shoe pockets as storage for coloring books, rulers, crayons, etc.

No matter how cramped your living quarters, baskets in all sizes and shapes can give you more storage space. A tall basket in a kitchen corner can hold cleaning supplies, a short wide basket in the family room can hold CDs, DVDs or magazines, and an attractive wicker basket in the bathroom is perfect for towels.

You can maximize your closet space by installing modular organizers available at home centers and hardware stores. By placing one hanging rod at seven feet and another at 3.5 feet, you instantly double the amount of space for hanging clothes. By adding shelves and bins for sweaters, socks, hats, T-shirts and miscellaneous, you suddenly have more space for shoes, belts and other accessories. Take advantage of under bed storage boxes and luggage to store out of season clothing, gift-wrap, family games, and other items you don't need access to a regular basis.

Bathrooms are notorious for clutter. Discount stores like Target and Wal-Mart offer many kinds of easy-to-install shelves and over-the-toilet units that can be used to store towels, toiletries, hair dryers and other essentials. Hang an organizer over the shower head to store shampoo, conditioner and mesh shower poufs. Rolled up towels look terrific on a wine rack attached to the wall or use a trio of baskets to hold bath towels, hand towels and washcloths.

Shop flea markets for tables, benches and trunks that can be transformed into double-duty furnishings. Many benches have lift-up seats with space for storing throws, blankets, games, etc. underneath. Look for unusual tables with drawers and shelves to hold collectibles, pens, candles and other items. No room for a bookshelf on the wall? Consider placing a shelf above the window or doorway.

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