

Discovering the Secrets of Successful Storage

Guide G-407

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“Where do I put it all?”
“If I put it away, I never can find it again.”
“If I can’t see it, I won’t use it.”

Do these storage problems sound similar to your own? Take action to save time by organizing your storage now.

Begin by planning for better use of existing space by s-t-r-e-t-c-h-i-n-g your storage. Keeping things where you can find them at a moment’s notice saves time and energy, making life a little easier.

Start your storage plans by considering:

- The space you have available.
- Items to be stored in the space.
- Resources available to you—including money available to purchase storage accessories; skills you have to make items; and the time required to organize, plan and build.



The following are a few simple clues to successful storage:

Sort carefully items to be stored. Many of us store leftovers so we can throw them away next time we clean the refrigerator. This also applies to storage. Many items we keep only to give away or throw away at a later date. These items take up valuable space while we are waiting to take action.

Store articles at point of use: Since many activities—sewing, hobbies, meal preparation—require much getting out and putting away, they can be carried on more smoothly if needed materials and equipment are stored close to the activity.

Rearrange the space to fit the article to be stored. Don’t let tradition trick you into thinking the space *must* be used for specific items only. Store similar items by stacking, or by placing one behind the other. Store unlike items either in one row or in one layer.

Plan for flexibility of storage space. Use adjustable shelving, sliding trays or movable storage accessories. Plan for changing interests and new purchases.

Tips for Successful Storage

The following are practical suggestions for making the most of your storage space, old or new. They can also help you save wear and tear on tempers and supplies.

1. Get rid of items you don’t use or need anymore. This will give you space for more important things.

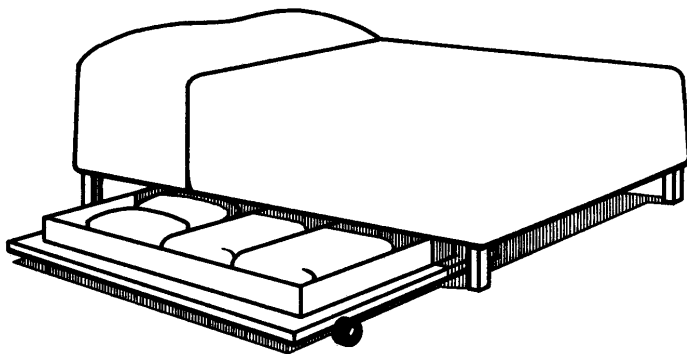
Give Away—Items that have not been used for a year should be given to someone who can use them.

Throw Away—If things are not usable, they should be discarded.

Sell Away—Items that are of good quality but no longer needed may be sold at thrift shops or secondhand stores.

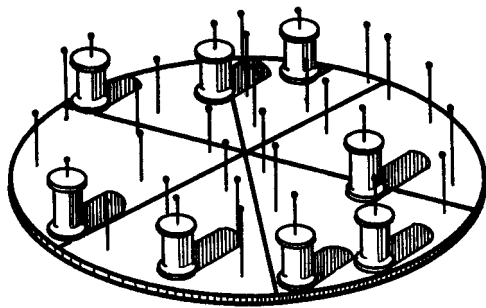
2. Put seldom used or out-of-season articles in boxes or bags in your less-accessible storage areas. This will provide more convenient space for the things you use every day.

* You may have been using as much as 24 cubic feet of space under your bed for storing dust and lost socks. Make that lost space work for you by building containers out of cardboard boxes.



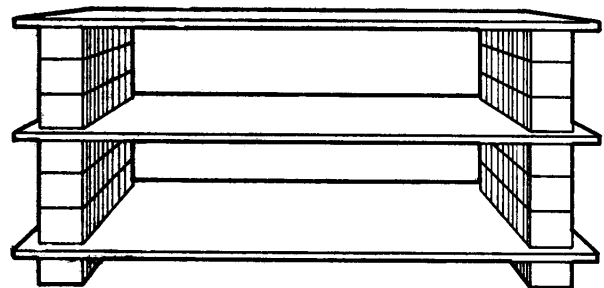
3. Save steps by storing articles near where they will be used.

* Mending time is often lost in searching for thread. A handy pegboard, or board with nails, that is divided by colors can save the frustration of rummaging through boxes of spools.



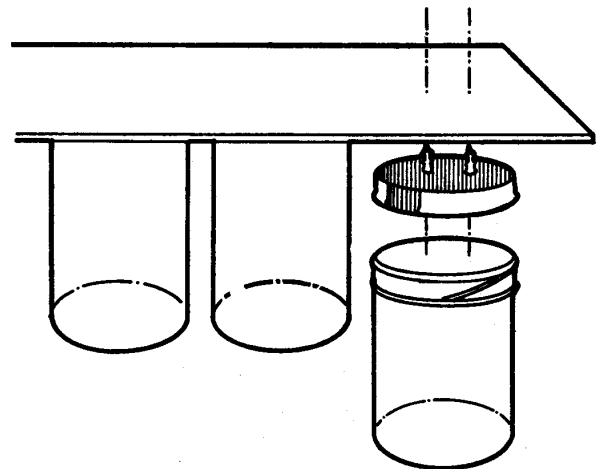
4. Place items within easy reach. If they are easily accessible they are more apt to be put back in place.

* Childrens' toys and homemakers' tools are materials that should be within reach and easy to put back, because of their frequent use. If you have no shelves, an inexpensive alternative is bolt boards (the cardboard from bolts of fabric) or particle boards stacked with bricks or large juice cans (covered with adhesive paper) between them. When the shelves are in place, purchase some plastic dishpans and label them with various categories of supplies, toys, materials or equipment. These dishpans, kept on homemade shelves, will keep articles within easy reach.



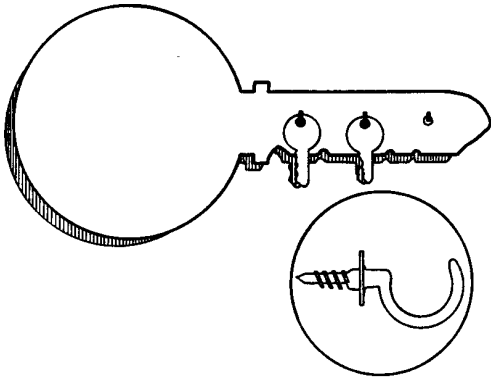
5. Group together articles of a similar nature.

* In the workroom, many hours are lost sifting through large coffee cans of mixed nails and screws. A simple solution is to store heavy objects in tin cans with contents clearly labeled. Glass jars have the advantage of immediate content visibility. To save space, affix the lids of screw-top jars to the underside of a shelf with two screws.



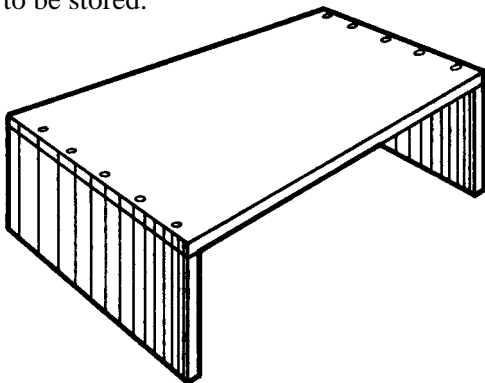
6. Place things so you can see them easily. They will be easier to reach, and a frantic search will be avoided.

* A universal item everyone seems to lose track of at one time or another is their “keys.” A possible solution to lost keys is a keyboard (no, not of the musical variety). Cut a board in the shape of a key and add cup hooks on which keys can be hung. Or, add hooks to a bulletin board or mini-tack board.



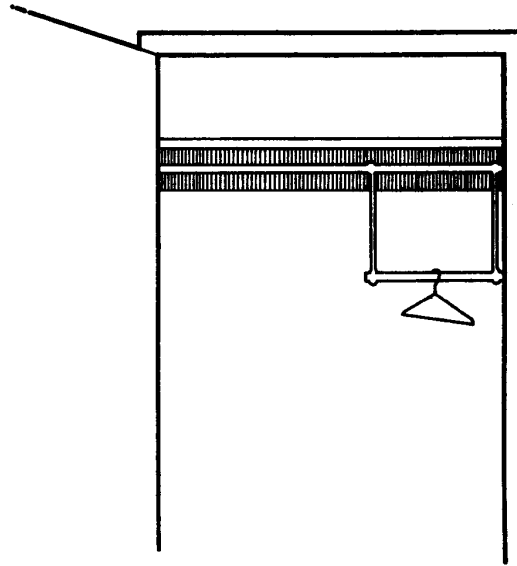
7. Arrange articles so you can remove them without disturbing other things. This way you can avoid missing, crushing or knocking things over.

Often we find the can of green beans needed for a meal is under four cans of corn. To avoid pulling out the stabilizing can, make a removable step shelf. The shelf should be about half as high as the space between the cabinet shelves, or any size that fits the articles to be stored.



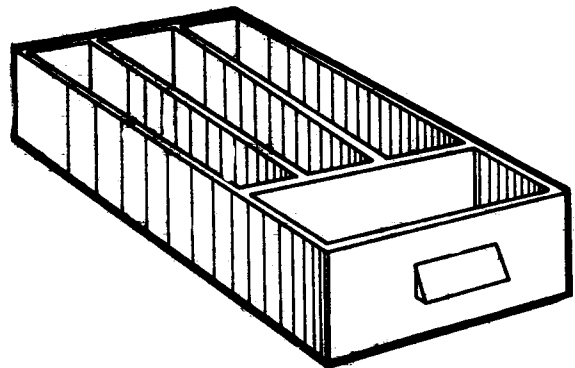
8. Build to fit your storage needs. But keep your storage flexible with adjustable shelves, for instance.

* Usable space in a closet can be increased by adding a lower-hanging rod. Just cut an old broom handle the length you'd like the rod to be, suspend it with two lengths of rope looped around the existing rod and tie to the ends of the lower rod.

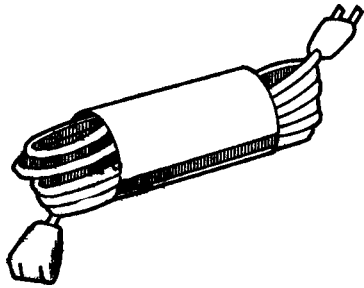


9. Design drawers, shelves and trays to fit the sizes and shapes of articles you will be storing.

* This principle also could be called “divide and conquer,” or “condense the tangles.” Dividers of heavy, corrugated cardboard can be made to fit any sized drawer. Make sections to fit items to be stored.

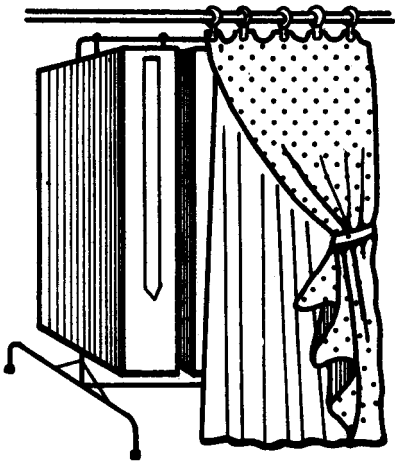


Use cardboard tubes from bathroom tissue to store electrical cords. Coil the cord, push it into the tube and store in a drawer.



10. Protect your belongings from dust, sun, dampness, insects, rats and mice.

* Plan for any special conditions needed for storage, such as refrigeration or protection from moisture. Sealed plastic bags will guard clean woolen clothing from moths and dust. Infrequently used silver will not tarnish as rapidly if wrapped in specially treated cloths or in self-sealing plastic.



In summary, remember the basic secrets for successful storage are planning, organizing and action. The best laid plans are worthless if no action is taken.

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