

Is garage storage and garage organization an issue for you?

By Paula Constable

Can you park all your vehicles in your garage? Can you walk through your garage without tripping over bikes, shovels or whatever else might be stored out there? Our garages often become the dumping ground for the all stuff we don't have a spot for and hope to "get to someday."

So what are some of the possible solutions? Build an extra storage shed? Make your two-car garage a three-car? The good news is that there is probably enough room in your garage to meet your needs. Yes, you read right! It takes work and effort, but you can make the most of the space in your garage.

Before you tackle the job, choose a day or weekend that rain is not in the forecast. Be careful not to underestimate the time it will take you to do the job. A good rule of thumb is to double your estimation. If you think you can get your garage cleaned out in one day, it will probably take two days.

Before you start hauling stuff out, know what your local dump will accept and will not accept. And, know their hours of operation. You probably won't want to have a pile of trash sitting in your driveway for too long.

Step #1: A good garage organizer starts out with a 'clean slate'

Use the driveway and yard to sort items into piles (this is where watching the weather can be helpful). Some main categories might be yard tools, sports equipment, auto items, donations or things to take to the dump. As you are sorting, ask yourself, "when is the last time I used this?" Don't sort the small stuff, such as nuts and bolts, at this time. Put all those smaller items into a container and save the detail sorting for a later time.

Take the time to sweep out the garage and wipe off surfaces. Start with a clean slate. A clean space tends to stay organized longer than a dirty one.

Step #2: Use 'zones' to decide on garage storage organization

Now that your garage is cleaned out and your items sorted, decide where you want to store everything. Think about zones. Some examples of the different zones you might have in your garage are sports equipment, tools and work space, auto or seasonal. Use sturdy shelving units and containers with labels. Keep the kid stuff at the lowest level for easy access and, more importantly, easy clean-up. Use wall-mounted racks to safely store shovels, racks, bikes and sports equipment.

Step #3: Garage organization and garage storage organization requires maintenance

Finally, you are ready to actually park your vehicles in your garage, but don't forget about the maintenance. Every organizing system requires effort and upkeep from those using the space. Remember, a clean space stays organized longer. Make it an expectation that items will be returned to their bin or shelf after each use.

For more information on garage storage and organization, go to www.tlccgarageworks.com/garageorganization.html

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