

# SHELVING AND STORAGE

## SKILL LEVEL



Making storage space can be as simple as putting a hook on a wall, or as complex as a total loft conversion. Most jobs are a matter of a little imagination and some basic DIY skills.

## SAFETY FIRST

Keep your fingers clear when nailing and screwing and especially when working with saws and chisels. Sharp tools are safer to use than blunt ones, so keep them in good working trim. Wear eye protection when necessary and be sure ladders are stable and safe. Dust is dangerous to the lungs so wear a mask when sanding.

## INTRODUCTION

'A place for everything and everything in its place' - it's an old saying and it makes a lot of sense.

## 2 - Planning the work

Always plan for the major items to be stored first and decide how much space to allocate to them. Also, decide if you want freestanding units or built-in shelves and cupboards.

When planning a complete room or floor of a house, make up your plan to scale on graph paper. This will give you an accurate idea of what's possible to achieve maximum storage capacity and ease of access.

Items such as books in bulk which might cover a whole wall can act as soundproofing on an interior wall or as additional insulation on an outside one.

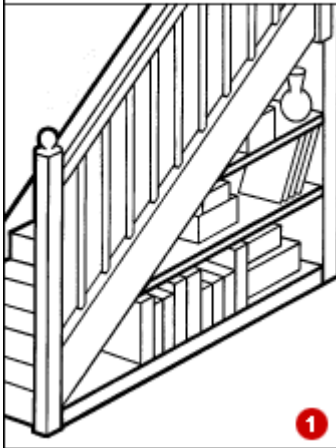
Items can either be stored out of sight behind solid doors or displayed on open shelves or in glass-fronted cabinets.

Plan your storage to allow for additional items to be added in the future. It seems you can never have enough space.

The height and positions of cupboards and shelves will depend a lot on how often you use them. In the kitchen this is particularly important since most articles are in regular use. There are also regulations relating to shelving and other aspects of kitchen design, so it helps to be familiar with them. This information is available, free of charge, from your local council.

## 3 - Using redundant space

Understair storage is an ideal use of wasted space



Probably the easiest way to gain storage space in the home is to use the unused areas of the building itself. One of the most common of these is the area below a staircase. This is easily turned into storage for household items such as brushes and brooms. It can be simply shelved out and left open-fronted (1) or covered in as a complete cupboard.

An old fireplace can still have a lot to offer



Fireplaces are redundant in many homes and they can be removed quite easily. You may need to employ a builder to ensure that no structural damage is done to the house and to see that an air flow is maintained. The space gained makes a useful storage area and can often remain a focal point in the room (2).

The alcoves on either side of a chimney breast can also be simply shelved out to create some very useful areas for storage. These are particularly useful as wardrobe spaces in the bedroom, either for freestanding units or built-in ones. Built-in wardrobes can be made to utilise all the available space to its fullest. Really deep alcoves can also be walk-in wardrobes or can even be used to house shower units.

Simply re-hanging a door can free-up a lot of wall space



Check to see if space can be gained by removing a door or by re-hanging it to open the opposite way (3). Floor space may also be gained by using a sliding door in certain situations. Sometimes either of these solutions can free up a lot of space along a wall.

Most redundant space is on the walls. The more this can be

used the more efficient use you make of your home.

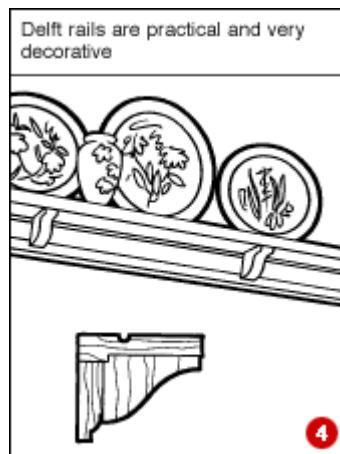
#### 4 - Temporary storage

Plastic crates or wire baskets provide a quick and simple storage solution for busy people on the move who do not require permanent storage. These can be attractive enough to be left on view in a room and some will even fold away so they can be taken to the next stop.

Plastic boxes are space-saving when stacked one above the other in cupboards and wardrobes, and are particularly useful for clothes and children's toys. Children enjoy using brightly-coloured boxes.

#### 5 - Pegs and rails

Peg rails and hooks are the most basic form of storage. Traditionally used for hanging hats and coats, they are very useful in the kitchen for utensils and decorative displays.



Definitely back in fashion is the display or 'Delft' rail. You can use these on just one wall or all round the room like a picture rail. Typically these are shallow shelves with a small groove or applied moulding to stop the plates from slipping off. They are ideal for displaying decorative plates and other china (4).

#### 6 - Shelving

Bear in mind the combined weight of the objects to be stored when you buy or make shelving and also the type of fixing you may need to fit the shelves to the wall. Books, especially, can be very heavy and are likely to increase in number over the years.

There are shelves and shelving systems available to suit every budget and some very attractive ones may be bought quite cheaply.

Adjustable shelving units come in many shapes, designs and colours and can often be used either free-standing like a room divider, or fixed against a wall like ordinary shelving. They are easy to assemble and dismantle if you want to change the shape of the unit, move it or add to it. They can also be moved from room to room or from house to house.

Many units are available in a range of colours to suit other decor. Wall-hung adjustable shelving provides a more permanent but flexible system.

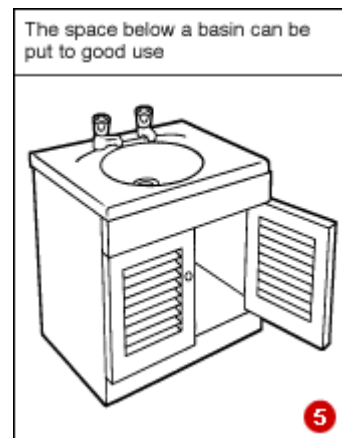
There are many different brackets and fixings available nowadays, in a range of colours and styles. Popular choices include pewter, antique bronze and aluminium finishes. There are even children's products available now too.

Freestanding shelving systems that can be quickly erected and dismantled are very useful for special occasions such as weddings and parties.

Corner shelves are handy for storing knick-knacks for display, but they also have a functional use as sites for televisions and stereo speakers. This not only gets the equipment off the ground, freeing up the floor space, but it also makes them easier to see and hear.

Wall brackets are made especially for TVs, microwaves and speakers and are available in varying weight and joint options, depending on the item you wish to mount.

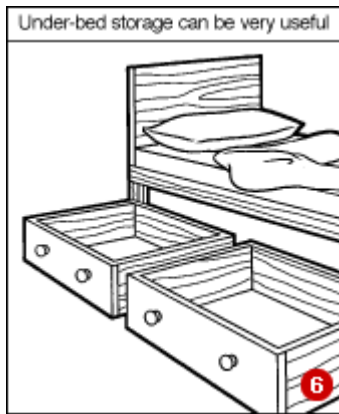
## 7 - Space-saving furniture



In the bathroom you can use the awkward space below the washbasin as a small cupboard to form a vanity unit in which you can store all sorts of articles (5). Melamine-faced chipboard can be used, or you may prefer to work in solid timber. Be sure to seal the joint along the back wall with mastic to prevent seepage.

Most of the floor space underneath a piece of furniture is potentially wasted space, but this situation can easily be remedied.

Bunk beds are a great way to gain a bit of space in the kids' bedroom. These can be built-in or freestanding. Another option is a fold-down bed which, ideally, can be housed in an alcove and dropped into position overnight and folded back up again during the day. A bed that converts to a sofa will also save a lot of space in a bedsit or a teenager's room.

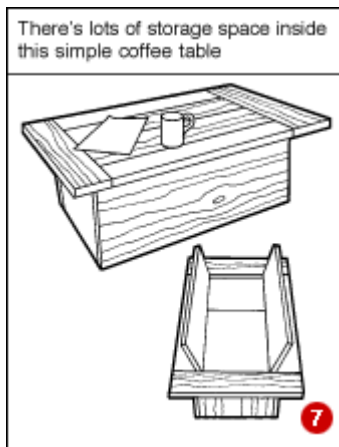


The space under a bed is one of the largest areas that can be usefully converted to storage. Pull-out drawers can house bed linen, clothes, shoes, toys and many other items which need putting away (6).

Another option is to use plastic storage boxes or shallow trays on castors which can be pulled out from under the bed very easily.

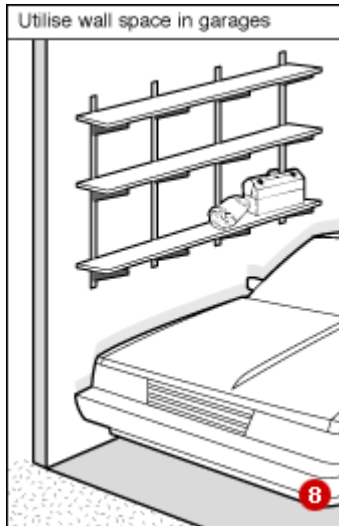
A double bed takes up about one third of the floor space of an average bedroom.

Fold-down tables are an ideal solution in a small kitchen/diner. They can be out of the way while the meal is prepared and lifted into position for eating.



Low tables can be used as handy storage units in the middle of a room. A small coffee table with a hinged lid makes a wonderful storage chest in disguise (7).

## 8 - The garage



This is the one place where you really can't have storage in the middle of the floor area, but the walls and roof space provide excellent alternatives (8).

You don't have to consider how things look on the walls of a garage, so you can use the whole area to its best advantage.

Store larger items such as heavy containers, mowers and bicycles at ground level. Fit shelving to store other items. Keep most items

above floor level, both to save space and to make picking them up easier.

Remember to keep regularly-used items at eye level and within easy reach.

Many of the mechanical items stored in garages are either heavy or dirty and oily. One useful heavy-duty shelving system is scaffolding. If you have the space, one or two sections of tower scaffold can be used to make a sturdy frame that you can clad out in sawn timber.

Long items such as ladders can be stored in the roof area, or if you have a flat roof, they can be hung from the ceiling or wall by some of the large hooks available.

If you do find you have sufficient floor area to accommodate a chest freezer this will free up the kitchen space. Services permitting, the washing machine and tumble dryer could also be usefully stored out here. If you want to use the garage as a workshop but are tight on space, use a folding bench that can be hung on the wall well out of the way when not in use.