



Storage ideas for homeowners with little storage space

BY ERIK J. MARTIN, CTW FEATURES

It's an age-old problem that continues to bedevil homeowners far and wide: Finding sufficient storage space in your home for all the belongings you've acquired and can't seem to part with. And it's a particularly problematic issue in older and more cramped homes that lack a basement, attic, or roomy garage.

Fortunately, there are smart strategies you can pursue to effectively stow and conceal your stuff in spatially efficient ways.

"It's incredibly common for homeowners to find themselves struggling with insufficient storage room. It often stems from the evolving needs of families and the limitations of housing design," says Tommy Mello, a home services professional and DIY expert in Phoenix. "As we accumulate belongings over time, from seasonal items to everyday essentials, finding adequate storage becomes a pressing concern — leading to cluttered living areas, hampered functionality, and overall dissatisfaction with your home environment."

This is an especially sticky wicket in older homes with smaller closets as well as apartments and

condos. Many modern homes, especially in city environments, often lack necessary storage due to an emphasis on maximizing living areas.

If you've maxed out your existing nooks and crannies, it's time to think outside the box — without necessarily committing to expanding your home's footprint or square footage.

"One of the most commonly underused areas of the home that is a wonderful storage place is the real estate under the stairs," notes Morgan Newfield, principal/owner of Newfield Design in Los Angeles. "Another wonderful storage secret I've used in many homes is the toe kick in the kitchen and bathroom — under the cabinets. I've incorporated drawers that will hold a stepstool or baking pans. And in the bathroom, this space can hold small appliances like a hairdryer or extra cosmetics."

Another often underappreciated spot is beneath furniture, especially beds.

"Low-profile storage totes can easily slide under beds, couches, chairs, and end tables to provide extra storage," advises Nick

Valentino, vice president of Market Operations for Bellhop Atlanta Movers.

Don't underestimate the value of vertical spaces either, like behind doors, where you can hang things like shoe organizers, and your walls.

"Display shelves along the top of a room are a great place for keepsakes, pictures, and even little-used kitchen items," says Martin Orefice, CEO of Rent To Own Labs.

Additionally, give greater thought to your garage walls and ceilings.

"These can be wonderful places to store bikes, athletic equipment, camping gear, and more," Newfield says.

Consider investing in multi-functional furniture, including furnishings that serve dual purposes like Ottomans with hidden storage or beds with built-in drawers.

If you want to go the extra mile and have some extra dollars to devote to this goal, think about creating customized storage solutions, such as emptying your existing master bedroom closet and personalizing it with built-in cabinets and shelving.

"It's smart to hire a

professional to design and install custom storage solutions tailored to your home's unique layout and your specific storage needs, if you have the resources," Mello says.

Think beyond your back door, as well.

"If you have the backyard space for a shed, it can be an affordable way to add more reliable, accessible storage space — especially for gardening supplies and tools. This can help free up your garage, as well," continues Orefice.

Still don't have enough room for your prize possessions? Ponder renting off-site storage space.

"This makes the most sense on a temporary basis. It's a good option for seasonal items like pool toys or extra vehicles or furniture you plan to give to your kids when they move out," Valentino adds.

Lastly, remember the golden rule for spatial efficiency: Declutter regularly for best results.

"Don't keep things you don't need. The less you have, the easier it is to manage storage," William says. "If you haven't got something in over a year, think about selling it or giving it away."