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Making the most of a two-car garage

Nov 01, 2011 5:20 AM by Mary Fetzler
 Posted in SheKnows TV / SheKnows TV: SheKnows HomeStretch
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What's In Your Garage?

According to certified professional organizer Barry Izsak, the average American two-car garage has become a no-car garage because it's crammed full of clutter. Sound familiar? Find out how you can make better use of this prime space.



Studies indicate that 40 percent of Americans rate their garage as the messiest room in the home. But Izsak, author of *Organize Your Garage in No Time*, estimates that number to be as high as 60 percent.

According to Janice Marie Simon, also known as The Clutter Princess, it's time to make a decision about whether or not you're going to use the garage to park your cars. "Some people use the garage as an extra room in their home. Even with the cars, garages can also double as laundry rooms, tool sheds and gardening centers."

Family dumping ground

The garage is a room shared by the entire family and "ends up being the room where everyone throws everything that they don't know what to do with," says Izsak.

Before waging the war on garage clutter, figure out how you want to use the space. Your ultimate objective – do you want to park two cars in there? – will help you create a project plan and dictate which items stay in the garage and which must go.

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Keep like items together

When you have a garage that serves many purposes, it helps to define each area so that the space doesn't become one cluttered mess. "It's important to keep all like items together," says Simon. "So laundry is with the laundry things, tools are kept together and gardening items are in their own area." By assigning areas to your garage, you will be able to find the items you're looking for without difficulty.

Define your first area and follow these steps:

- Remove items from the area
- Sort items by type and size
- Weed out the things you no longer need or have multiples of
- Contain small, like pieces and parts (nuts and bolts, for example)
- Label the container
- Select a home for the items within the zoned area
- Place the items in their new spot

Are you getting overwhelmed? Don't stress! Instead, start small. "It's not realistic to think you can tackle 20 years of clutter in a day," says Izsak. "Make the easy decisions first, and start with those things you can obviously and easily pitch."

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Utilize wasted space

"Vertical is the way to go in a garage," says Jody Driscoll of [Girlfriends Help](#), a premier organizing and moving service in the San Francisco Bay Area. Try a peg board or wall system for accessing tools, and large hooks for hanging bicycles or other large sports equipment.

Seasonal items. According to Simon, the space above the garage doors is ideal for storing holiday decorations, seasonal items and other things you only have to access once in a while.

Mementos. Driscoll recommends utilizing a crawl space or attic above your garage to store cherished keepsakes, old tax documents, saved baby clothes and other items you won't need anytime soon.

Everyday supplies. Install shelving in the area between the two garage doors to house car-cleaning supplies, window-wash solution and other similar items. Keep the shelves shallow so you have room to move between the cars and doors.

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Alternate open shelves and cabinets

"Put least-used items toward the top and at the bottom," says Melinda Massie, owner of [Organizing with a Side of Fabulous](#), a home-organization company in Fort Worth. Store the things you use most at eye level. Open shelving will accommodate items of all sizes, such as serving platters, while cabinetry keeps other things dust free.

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Park the cars

As you plan your various work and storage areas, be sure to leave room for the cars! Leave ample space for the car doors to fully open. And be sure to leave walking access all the way around the car to make it easier to strap in children, load luggage and unload groceries.

More car and garage tips

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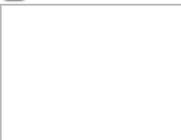
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