



Do you have too much to store and too little space?

If you're like many homeowners, finding enough storage space can be a challenge. Thankfully, remodeling professionals can help you create new ways to tuck away your family's treasures in a resourceful and sophisticated way, according to the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI).

Finding storage solutions doesn't always mean undertaking a major remodel. Sometimes it's about using the square footage you already have. Remodelers can help you plan and reallocate storage to accommodate your family's changing lifestyle. Getting creative with storage can improve daily living and boost the resale value of your home.

Look in Unusual Spaces

Veteran remodeler Don Van Cura, owner of Chicago-based Don Van Cura Construction, recently won a regional award for a clever storage solution he designed for stashing canned goods under a kitchen staircase. "I'm a space freak and I don't believe that any part of the house should be wasted," he explains. "Almost every section of home has a void in it that can be made into storage – and the older the house, the more nooks and crannies you can find."

For his stair solution, Van Cura created storage bins under the wooden treads of the staircase. He did this by attaching each tread to the frame using hidden piano hinges, which allow each tread to open like a storage chest. The homeowner could then use the space under the tread to tuck away dry goods and cans.

This strategy can be used in many areas of a home. In the foyer, for example, the hidden cubbies under stairs can stash shoes and outdoor gear. In the basement they store cleaning products

or seasonal accessories. For a short run of stairs, remodelers can also install a set of custom drawers underneath the stairwell with access from the either the side or the back – another great use of space.

Any good stair installer or skilled remodeler should be able to do this project, but it demands a structurally sound staircase, fine cabinetry skills and careful preparation. "It's easiest if you're planning a new set of stairs, but it can also be done as a retrofit to existing stairs," Van Cura notes.

Reconfigure Rooms

Perry Szpek, design sales associate for JDJ Builders in Milwaukee, recently created more storage for a family of six by reconfiguring two existing rooms and adding some square footage. The family's mudroom was once a cramped hallway that led from the house to the garage. "Not having a place to put on and take off their shoes was their biggest pet peeve," Szpek said. As a solution, he designed two furniture-style storage units that provide both seating and a place to store outdoor gear.

On one side of the room, a large boot bench and locker cabinet set gives the kids a place to sit down or hang up coats. The bench features storage beneath the seat and wicker baskets on a shelf above the hanging area. Drawer cabinets flank each side of the bench, creating a personal spot for each child to stash hats, gloves and mittens.

Across the room, Szpek planned a shorter boot bench for Mom and Dad that offered flip-top storage under the seat and hooks to hang coats on. Both storage pieces were accented with traditional beadboard backing, crown molding and a medium-brown distressed birch finish.

In the family's 120-square-foot laundry room, Szpek created a beautiful and storage-smart workspace. Upper and lower cabinetry provides plenty of storage for detergents, brushes and sponges, and a long countertop provides ample space to fold clean laundry. Under one area of the counter, Szpek designed cubbies that accommodate six laundry baskets – one for each member of the family.

In addition, it's important to think about day-to-day schedules. Some areas of the home, like foyers, mudrooms and laundry rooms, could use additional cabinetry or places to drop cell phones, keys and wallets. Sometimes the project is more about reworking traffic flow or designating specific spots for tasks like folding laundry, putting on outerwear and storing cleaning products.

Where to Start

While some homeowners may think a bigger home will solve their storage dilemma, this is not always the case. Often, having better storage is about making better layout choices and putting things within easy reach. Before talking to a remodeler, homeowners should make a thorough assessment of the square footage they have and how much stuff they need to store.



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230 Kinsey Way...\$695,000...Victorian Charmer!

Victorian look-alike in the historic town of Genoa on .67 acre lot with mountain views from the wrap-around front porch. This is a white picket fence charmer featuring 5 bedrooms and huge bonus room equipped with wet bar. Sunny country kitchen has a wall length pantry, Kitchen Aid appliances and spacious tiled breakfast bar. Master Suite is truly a retreat offering a roomy walk-in closet with built-in units and a connecting office/sitting room. A peaceful and serene setting with rolling lawns in a neighborhood reminiscent of days gone by. This will be the gathering place for family and friends!



1381 Bryan Lane...\$319,000... In Stodick Estates!

Stodick Estates home with a spacious open floorplan and finished 3 car garage. The great room living area features a gas log fireplace, wet bar and slider doors which open to the lattice covered patio and fully landscaped backyard. The large bright kitchen has room for a crowd to gather at the tiled breakfast bar. Storage space has not been overlooked in the enormous walk-in pantry and there is even more cabinet & closet storage in the well designed laundry room. Location, location...Conveniently located just 5 minutes and walking distance to shopping, coffee, pizza and parks!

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