

# Functional & organized!

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**WE ALL SEEM TO ACCUMULATE MORE AND MORE THINGS EVERY** year. Our lives become so cluttered with stuff it becomes a burden, a source of stress, frustration and saps us. Learning to balance the flow in and flow out may not come naturally. A key area is to have a functional, organized storage room.

We often end up with ridiculous things in our storage rooms, crates of container lids, dried up cans of paint, boxes of bent clothes hangers, old clothes, shoes and toys. If they cannot be used or you do not anticipate using them yourself anytime soon, it is best to let go and get rid of it. If its sentimental take a picture of it, this works well for children's school projects or large outdated furniture. If it is about time you got your storage room in order here are some ideas to get you going:

Spend a few minutes thinking about and planning what you would like to achieve. What kinds of items do you need to store? One minute planning can save you five minutes of work. Often this is a stage where you might decide to purchase a shelving system and storage hangers you will need to have an operational storage room. Consider which items you will use the most and plan for those to be in the most accessible areas, your best real estate.

Once you have an idea of what you would like to accomplish, clear out the area and begin categorizing and cleaning everything. Have a separate pile or bin for things that are going for donations. Piling or placing in a bin items next to a "FREE" sign at your curb is sometimes the easiest way to cut back. Also remember the women's shelter or, a young person just starting out on their own can almost always use household items.

When the area is clear you can clean, paint, prep and install any shelving, hangers, and brackets. Make sure your design allows for accessibility to all areas. If you cannot get to something easily, you will likely never use it. Hang up clothes instead of boxing them up, as this will keep them from permanently developing creases or a musty odours. Closet poles for clothes hangers come in all sizes and are easy to put up.

Use like sized or modular storage bins instead of boxes. Most home stores carry a large range of clear plastic storage containers. Clear storage bins are the quickest and easiest way to find what you need. If you are using boxes take a picture of the contents with a Polaroid or label them specifically item by item or make a note on the container of its contents. Camping, Halloween, Christmas, little Johnny's school projects.

Special measures should be taken when storing things in a garage or basement to prevent moisture from damaging items. Some items should not be stored in these areas, such as photographs or a wedding dress. If possible put a board or something to lift them off the floor in order to help with moisture and a possible flood.

Have fun with the process and enjoy yourself. Get the family or some friends together and spend the afternoon working on it. All it takes is a few good solid efforts. Order some pizzas or celebrate by going out for dinner afterwards. In the end after all the planning, you're not sure where to start just begin anyways and you will find the process take shape as you go. Keep moving forward and do not be afraid to make changes as you go, but do not get too caught up trying to make it perfect, just to make it more organized and functional! 

