

CLEAR OUT THE CLUTTER!

Four Steps to a Clutter-Free Garage



Are you over your head in garage clutter? Spring is on the horizon, and you might have the urge to get all of your clutter cleared out and organized. Not sure where to start? Follow these four steps and get your garage whipped into shape. You can work on this for an hour per day over the course of a week or so, or you can plan to get it done in one weekend.

- 1 Gather your supplies.** Get yourself a nice supply of bins, boxes and garbage bags. Trash, of course, is going to go in the garbage bags. Have boxes labeled "donate," "keep," and "sell." Have extra boxes and bags ready, but plan on using one of each type as you go to make things simple. Packing tape will allow you to close up the "donate" and "sell" boxes. Don't forget to grab a friend (or better yet, friends) to help you! Many hands make light work.
- 2 Jump in and get started.** Pick a time and just do it. Working around the perimeter of the garage, start clearing off those shelves and surfaces. Make quick decisions: If you haven't used something in a year, you're probably not going to use it again. (Tools and other expensive items might be the exceptions here.) As you fill boxes, tape them up and move them out to your driveway. As you fill garbage bags, tie them up and get them out of the garage.
- 3 Clean out the corners of the garage.** Move the existing shelving so you can clean behind everything. Sweep up all of the sawdust and cobwebs that have been hiding all winter long. Check the ceiling for cobwebs, too! Depending on the type of garage flooring you have, you might want to hose the whole floor down or give it a damp mop.
- 4 Put away the items you want to keep.** Organize your belongings by type: Tools can go in a workbench or on one set of shelves. Sports equipment and gardening supplies can have their own areas. If you have boxes of items to sell, stack them in one corner and choose a day to have a garage sale. Any boxes of items to give away should be sealed up and placed in your car; the next time you go past the thrift shop, stop and drop them off.

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Here are some things to think about when looking for garage cabinets and storage items:

- 1 Everything should have a home. This may sound easy enough but having a special place for all your stuff helps to stay organized.
- 2 If you get garage cabinets, make sure the hinges are mounted inside and have a wide open radius. This makes getting things in and out easier.
- 3 If you get drawers or even a nice tool chest, make sure they pull all the way out for easier access to the items stored. Also organize smart -- use shallow drawers for small items and larger ones for the big items.
- 4 Stay away from peg boards; they break easily and don't hold much weight. Stick with gridwall and slatwall storage organizers because they can hold weight and are easy to use.
- 5 Garage cabinets that stretch from floor to ceiling are good, but make sure you split them in the middle with a workbench or even just a counter top. Then you can add a gridwall or slatwall to organize as well.

