



Double duty

Tips on creating more space in your home

YOU could make more work and storage space in your present home by thinking twice: Can the area serve more than one purpose, and is there available vertical "air" space?

Even a small kitchen usually can accommodate a multi-purpose spot for household paperwork and meal planning, according to *Better Homes & Gardens' Remodeling Ideas* magazine.

And consider wall space and door-space in addition to floorspace, advises Judith Miley, spokeswoman for Clairson International, makers of closet and storage systems. You may have more cubic footage available than you realize.

The key to working out a multi-purpose work space is to figure out which tasks are done regularly and base the design on those needs.

If you cook and entertain frequently, then you probably can use a desk for meal planning and shelves deep enough for cookbooks. The same area can double as a family message, study and computer center, complete with wall-mounted cabinets, shelving, bins, wall phone, stationery and books.

You might choose a flat display rack similar to those in stores if many of the cookbooks are in large formats. A stacked desk and shelf combination for the personal computer might be the best choice if you manage household accounts on a PC. Keep in mind that reading and writing by hand require a desk height of about 30 inches, while a computer or typewriter keyboard should be on a surface about 26 inches high.

ALSO PROVIDE A stable power source for the computer, which can lose its memory or scramble your work

during power surges caused by use of other appliances or temporary electrical outages. Power strips or boxes with fused protection against electrical surges and spikes, available in hardware and electronics stores, can be mounted easily to existing outlets.

Use overhead shelves to store small equipment and other items you need frequently but want out of the way. A cork bulletin board mounted next to the wall phone will cut down desktop clutter.

Miley suggests you analyze each room for inventive ways to make better use of the space you have.

Your bathroom linen closet could be turned into a miniature laundry with a compact, stackable washer-dryer (since it's often right on plumbing mains), then linens can be accommodated on wall-running shelves in the bathroom or with tiered shelves in part of a nearby closet outside the room. If you are replacing the tub, consider putting the new one on a platform, with storage drawers in the platform step.

While you can maximize cubic footage for storage as part of a renovation project, there still are ways to reorganize your existing space without rebuilding, Miley says. She suggests using stacking shelves, double-hanging shelf-and-rod combinations, vertical dividers, wall-to-wall shelving, or even automated revolving retrieval systems, which her company markets under the Closet Maid and Keiji trademarks. Most of these pieces are based on coated metal wire, with wood and laminates.

YOU ALSO CAN find useable kitchen space by suspending cookware and lightweight plants from ceilings where there isn't traffic, or hanging shallow, coated-wire bins in existing shelving. Put tiered shelves in previously unused corners.

You can make space by mounting shoe shelves on closet walls or on the interior sides of the closet doors. Shallow shelves and coat hooks also can be mounted on doors.

Remember safety and convenience. Plan storage of heavy items between knee and shoulder height, glide-out cabinet organizers for better visibility and access, mobile storage pieces for use as carts to transport appliances, food or tableware to other rooms, and adequate lighting throughout.

— Associated Press



Small, older homes are often long on charm, but short on space. New organizational features help you make the most of every inch.

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