

# Tips on getting that garage organized

By DOUG FUNKE  
STAFF WRITER

Use all dimensions — length, width and height — when organizing or reorganizing your garage.

That's what the experts, or at least people who have neat garages, advise.

"In my neighborhood," said John Wisz, a Livonia resident, "people keep one car in the garage, one car out and the rest is filled with kids' stuff and other things they accumulate for years and years."

First things first.

"Throw out stuff you don't need," Wisz said. "There's always something there."

It could be broken down appliances, bicycle parts, scrap pieces of wood, cardboard boxes, chipped patio blocks or paint cans. (Be sure to check with

your local public services department on proper disposal methods.)

You have to be serious about throwing out. If you haven't used things for years, chances are you aren't going to need them tomorrow. Or ever. Disposing will open up all kinds of vistas to reorganizing.

Steve Sproul, a Redford resident, has an older one-car garage in which he stores a working refrigerator, a Volkswagen Beetle, a workbench, several bicycles, wagon, sleds, tools and all kinds of other things.

"The key here is an aisle way," he said. "When kids are involved, you keep their stuff closer to the door. It heightens the chance they will get them back inside and keeps them away from your stuff."

"My experience in the service taught me to utilize all space," Sproul said. "Go up. Don't be afraid to use the wall. Hanging stuff is big with me. Obviously, it has to be light or moderate weight."

Sproul uses peg board and hooks to store garden tools and hand tools.

He also uses the rafters in his smallish garage to store camping gear and lumber.

Wisz, who admits to being a detail person, stores two cars, three bikes, a snow blower, workbench, tools and other goodies in his garage.

He's also a booster of shelving, store bought or hand-made, and hooks.



TOM HAWLEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Organized garage: John Wisz uses shelving and wall hooks to maintain a neat, orderly garage.**

"I have a daughter, Christina, and her toys I keep on shelves so I can pull both cars in," Wisz said.

"I have some hooks for lawn tools, brooms and other utensils. Even the snowblower is on hooks out of the way. Make sure you keep dangerous implements out of the reach of children."

"I have a crawl space in the garage. I can store stuff up there that's hardly used — an ax. I put tomato cages up there," he said.

Wisz said he moves bikes into the basement during the winter to give himself more room to maneuver the cars.

That's a big, big advantage to an organized garage — moving the vehicles inside, keeping them out of the weather and getting off to a quick start in the morning.

"I don't want to spend time scraping windows," Wisz said. "It's a time factor, definitely."

Organizing the garage is more an exercise of will, actually doing it, than an intellectual pursuit.

It takes just four simple steps. Dispose of the junk. Find convenient, yet out-of-the-way places for tools and toys. Install hooks, shelving and rafters. Make the transition.



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