

Inside the Mind of an Professional Organizer - By Jessi Bushman aka “Organizer Jessi” Garage Organization

I hope everyone had a fun and safe winter filled with outdoor activities, holiday lights, family gatherings and clearing snow!

When I reflect on changing seasons, you guessed it, space planning and organization impacts how I arrange items, especially in the garage. **Prioritize Placement** of your possessions and acknowledge if stored items still compliment and enhance your lifestyle.

Spring is much more than cleaning windows, changing air filter and performing annual maintenance, its the perfect opportunity to evaluate toys, accessories, equipment and storage needs as you and your family **bloom** with 2022!

A primary goal in the garage is to refrain from “storing” items on the floor...safety first!

Next-level organization includes **Utilizing Wall Space** and **Anything On Wheels**. Rolling shelves, carts and tables allow you to re-arrange units easily, based on usage and accessibility. I have (3) 3 foot **Rolling Counters** that are stored along my back garage wall. I utilize them daily when loading and unloading my vehicle.

During winter months, I use the additional surface space when entertaining – off the ground! It's a great spot for guests “cold” items, if the fridge is full. During warmer months, rolling platforms allows easy garage clean up when air-blowing around things.

Wall Mount, Interchangeable Systems are an effective way to elevate pretty much EVERYTHING! Folding chairs, side tables, 6 foot folding-tables, yard tools, snow shovels, garden hoses, weed trimmer and air blower are just a few items hanging in my garage.

Mounted Shelves in specific areas is the perfect opportunity to store where items are used. Examples include, storing garbage bags above the garbage can, keeping a tape gun and utility knife for consolidation of large cardboard (encouraging you to break down shipping boxes for recycle). Storing lawn shoes in a bin next to the lawn mower prevents grass stains on rugs or dragging yard clippings into the house. Storing garden gloves and pruning sheers for accessibility will encourage you to dead-head or trim landscaping as you notice attention is needed. Lastly, having a surface to place a beverage while working outdoors is wonderful.

Pegboards are a great solution for smaller items. If your family member(s) have a hard time putting stuff back where they found it, outline the item. If your afraid to commit, tape a piece of paper to the pegboard and outline the items home.

Hooks are an absolute must in my home! Command Hooks are the greatest invention – inexpensive, decorative and convenient! I have them near the entry door to dry outdoor apparel, hang guest coats, pet accessories, kids bags - you name it.

Create a **Dedicated Charging Station** for tools and yard equipment batteries. There's nothing worse then weed trimming and have the battery die within minutes. I have 4 batteries and 2

chargers. I created a label on the battery shelf to remind me; Flat = Dead, Side = Charged.

Twice a year, the lawn mower and snow blower exchange spots in storage. Their “seasonal home” is next to the garage walk-door allowing easy accessibility outdoors. Rotating your seasonal equipment is a opportunity to perform annual maintenance and clean.

Getting Started

This Spring is the perfect moment to create an Organized Garage.

Start with:

- The **3-D's** (dispose, downsize, donate).
- Remember, the **Role** of the Garage is to store your vehicle, tools and outdoor items.
- Remove large items from the area.
- Consolidate small items by category (that additional surface space comes in handy)!
- Clean area: take advantage – paint/decorate/customize.
- Create a plan for hooks, shelves, bins and rolling units. Create zones for like items.
- Restock items based on relevance, usage and frequency.

Upkeep and maintenance of your garage is key. 2-4 times a year, take inventory of what items you are storing. Acknowledge if you or your kids are still using things. Toys, games, sports equipment, tools, totes and boxes should be addressed.

Remember the rule: “1 in, 1 out”. More than likely, Christmas presented new items that will be stored in the garage...**what are you removing to make space for your new possessions?**

Prioritize your space and make the most of your garage. Who knows... space gained could allow you to create zones including a TV/Music/Bar/Seating area – how cool would that be?!! Many are SHOCKED by the amount of space available after removing the non-essentials stored in the garage.

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Jessi is a member of the **Iowa Professional Organizers Association**