

stow it

Lack of storage is the down side of many houses, but there are plenty of clever ideas and products to help you stow your stuff.

Let's face it, we're an acquisitive lot. Try as we might to contain our consumerist urges, with all the beautiful stuff in stores, it's always been difficult to be minimalist. Even now that we've given in to more extravagant accessorised interior havens that wrap us up in comfort, the things we gather around still have to be kept under control. For an orderly sense of calm, contain the clutter with plenty of stylish, well-planned storage solutions throughout your home.

For those planning new homes or renovating, there are many fabulous ideas to incorporate from the start. But for those stuck with older homes, notoriously lacking in storage space, it's definitely a challenge to keep tidy. Check out some of the following ideas.

Kitchens

Organisation is the key to well-designed, good-looking kitchens, says Linda Christensen of Kitchens By Design. "The secret is compartmentalising things. It basically means putting similar-sized objects together or storing things with a similar function in the same place. You don't load everything into one big drawer and scramble around looking for it."

Linda says all the big hardware companies like Hettich and Hafele have ready-made storage solutions for compartmentalising. But you can create your own affordable solutions with wooden, metal or woven baskets or plastic storage kits in all shapes, colours and sizes. Take a

look at what you have inside your drawers, measure up the space and wander down to the local plastics store.

Joanne Godding, also of Kitchens By Design, says pull-outs (usually in the form of wire racks) are a super-efficient way of saving space. Even drawers have become better designed. In older-style cabinetry, drawers don't usually run the depth of the space but modern versions are more stable and can extend right out for more space and better accessibility, she says.

Every cupboard can have a pull-out solution behind it, shaped and moulded to maximise the full extent of cabinet space. Frames can also be fixed to the back of cupboard doors and integrated with pull-out railing systems to hang containers for storing soaps, brushes, cloths, tea-towels and detergents.

Look out for narrow pull-outs, 15cm wide for vertically storing baking trays, oils and sauces.

Traditional pantries have gone out of fashion as they waste space with gaping U-shaped shelves. Instead you can fill up the space with trays, shelves and... pull-outs.

To remove clutter from benchtops, add rails to under-used walls to hang mugs, foil and wraps. Teamed with lighting, hanging off the wall is also the perfect place for a cookbook holder.



Above Kitchen storage continues to improve in sophistication thanks to systems from Hettich like this Cargo pull-out pantry and Innotech drawer, and Hafele's modern version of the lazy susan.

top tip

Paint the inside or outside of wardrobe doors in Resene Magnetic Magic and finish in your favourite Resene topcoat. You can then use magnets to hold items in place. Or combine with topcoats of Resene Blackboard Paint.




words Vicki Holder



Left and below
Look for opportunities for more casual storage, for example in baskets (from California Home & Garden, Wellington) or in glass-topped coffee tables (from Rose & Heather).



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- Resene Matterhorn 
- Resene Mojito 
- Resene Woodstock 

Living rooms

For the living areas, choose furniture that has a double purpose, says interior designer Karen Fergusson. "Long ottomans where the lid lifts up; coffee tables with drawers; book shelves with baskets or built-in cupboards; window seats with storage underneath where you can hide all the magazines and toys. They're all good ideas," she says. The television can look good on an old oriental chest, or hidden away in a chest with cupboards. These days, the stereo hardly needs to take any space at all when you can download your whole collection onto an MP3 player or iPod and play it through discreet speakers.

Bathrooms

Storage sunk into the wall behind mirrored cabinets is a great way of maximising space in bathrooms, says Joanne Godding. But if you want to add storage to existing bathrooms, there are many freestanding units available. For traditional solutions, try the Australasian store chain of Early Settler and Recollections. Old-fashioned train luggage racks are great for rolled towels.

Natalie Du Bois of Du Bois Design says there's always room in the wall cavity that can be used for extra storage. "You don't need deep storage for medicines and potions." There may even be a cupboard opening from the next-door room that you can make better use of as part of the bathroom.

Look out for tall, freestanding, mirrored tower storage from Inovo in Auckland's Parnell, says Natalie. "It sits on a pole and can turn and swivel. It makes the bathroom look spacious and beautiful."



Bedrooms

If you're building a new home, chances are you'll opt for a walk-in wardrobe attached to the bedroom. But owners of older homes must consider what they can do to maximise existing spaces. If your bedroom is small, make the most of every bit of space by consulting a wardrobe specialist who can fit out the space with rails, pull-out baskets and racks to squeeze everything in.

Matt Taylor of Boston Wardrobes says in the past 20 years we've become very consumer-driven. We buy lots of stuff, but also want an uncluttered, minimalist look. "New wardrobe systems allow people to deal more effectively with all their clothing, handbags, shoes and so on."

Matt says the traditional, shelf and single rail wardrobe wastes a lot of space because 90% of the clothes we wear require just over a metre to hang up. The double hang wardrobe available from wardrobe system companies doubles the amount of storage space in a wardrobe. They're not necessarily bigger but they use space more efficiently.

The latest generation of wardrobe systems are more flexible and can be adjusted as your needs change. "Our Innova range has aluminium uprights and everything is adjustable in height. New systems can chop and change at your will without the need for installers."

Children's rooms

Karina MacLeod of Tom Tom Jak (formerly Treehouse) says having a place for everything in a child's bedroom makes it easier to keep tidy, but it needs to be accessible to children. "Shelving on the walls is good for books and toys. You can stash more if you put things in baskets and boxes. Underbed storage is a space not often used



Above Long gone are the simple pole and shelf arrangements for wardrobes, replaced by these clever fitted systems from Boston Wardrobes.

efficiently. Bins on wheels for toys and games can be rolled away when not in use and rolled out ready for action.

"Of course you need good wardrobe systems for clothing. And hooks and coat racks are great for bags and jackets. Children need to be able to get to them quickly. Even just large boxes on wheels make it easy for keeping sports equipment and bags tidy."

Not everything needs to be hidden away. Karina also suggests pin boards for keeping papers up off the floor. Desks with lift-up lids are a good idea because they help keep papers and pens neat. **H**