

## Garage Reorganization: Where To Start, How To Keep Going

### Before You Begin:

- Set Realistic Goals:** If you can barely open the garage door and can't bear the thought of giving up some of your stuff, don't expect to be able to fit two cars into the garage when you're done.
- Be Prepared:** Make sure to have plenty of tape, permanent markers and boxes on hand to organize, pack and stow gear.
- Get Your Family Involved:** Some kids will balk, but when they discover treasures they never knew about, they may be more inclined to hang around. Plus, it's a great way to spend time together.
- Determine Duties:** Use a pad and paper to organize who does what to ease confusion and fighting kids, and to check off areas when they are done. (Satisfaction comes from checkmarks!)
- Musical Motivation:** Tune in your favorite station or toss in a CD and "let the good times roll."

### Let's Go!

- Create A Junk Area And Trash Pile:** Lay down a tarp or set up an area for junk -- and don't be shy about using it. If your garage is too full, it is OK to set up the junk area outside. If you have the time and energy, you could gather unneeded gear for a profitable garage sale at this time.
- Start Small:** Organizing small things such as screws, nails, paint cans and tools can really get you on the right pace. Use small containers like jars or food storage containers for the small stuff.
- Empty Shelves:** Clean off your shelves and storage implements to make room for the newly organized items and boxes.
- Label, Label And Label:** When organizing small items that will be frequently used, make sure to label their storage containers. It keeps clutter and confusion from occurring when everything has a home.
- Focus On One Area At A Time:** Don't try to tackle the entire garage all at once. Find a section you can handle (up to 4x6 if the items are mainly boxes and small items) and stay in it until you are done.
- Be Honest With Yourself:** If you haven't thought of it or used it in the last two years, you don't need it. You will probably never find time to refinish that old flea market dresser if you haven't by now.
- Baby Gear:** Keep a few choice items, but if your attic is full and you've filled the garage with toys, clothes and baby furniture, it's time to make it useful to someone else.
- Don't Get Distracted:** Take time to reminisce, but don't get carried away with those old yearbooks or photographs.
- Remember Breaks:** A hungry crew is a lazy, crabby crew. For optimum performance, set up times to grab a drink and snack.

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### Let's Go! (continued)

- The Big Stuff:** When handling the big stuff, don't forget to get help. Back pain and injuries can happen to even the strongest of us.
- The Overhead:** Many of us have garage storage we never use up in the rafters. Using this area frees up floor space and makes finding your stuff (like holiday decorations) much easier to find if they have a centralized location. If you already use this area, don't forget to sort through these boxes, too!

### Finishing Up:

- The Junk:** Make sure the junk gets thrown out. As far as the salvageable items, start planning a garage sale or haul them to a charitable organization (plus, you get a tax break). Try Goodwill [www.goodwill.org](http://www.goodwill.org) for locations or try the epilepsy foundation in your area [www.efmn.org](http://www.efmn.org) for an at-home pick-up. Most churches are happy to take your cast-offs as well. If you're computer savvy, try Craigslist or EBAY and make a profit from your outcasts.
- Clean Up:** Don't forget to sweep the floors! This finishing touch really makes it feel like you've finished the job. Plus, it protects your vehicle (if you can fit it in the garage) from potential tire damage.
- Relax:** Now that you're done, grab a cold drink and relax.