

# COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Departments of  
Human Environment and Design  
Agricultural Engineering  
Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture

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## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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### SPACE-STRETCHING STORAGE

Adequate space and furniture for storing the many things you use daily makes a home neater, cleaner, safer and easier to keep that way. With thoughtful planning and use, even the smallest of spaces can be stretched to meet your storage needs.

Use these guides to get the most use from your storage space.

\*1. Make a list of the items you use daily. (This can be a family activity, with each person making his own list.) Decide what things on your list(s) are used daily, less often or never. Get rid of those you never use. Of the things you use daily, which are used together? and where are they most likely to be used? Answering these questions will help you begin to know your storage needs.

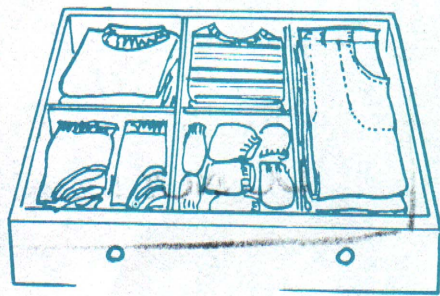
\*2. Use spaces provided for storage to maximum capacity. You may need to reorganize closets, cupboards, drawers, shelves, etc. Step shelves, adjustable shelves, revolving shelves and drawer dividers are a few of the many products you can buy to make existing storage areas more flexible and adaptable. Or, custom make your own. Cardboard dividers, egg cartons or small boxes can separate things inside drawers. Vertical files provide storage for shallow articles that are unhandy to stack on shelves or in deep drawers. Wall and door-hung racks expand kitchen storage space, as will narrow shelves between countertop and wall cabinets.

Hooks, hangers and bars can expand hanging storage space in closets and bathrooms. Lowered clothes rod in closet expands storage space and encourages your child's independence in dressing himself.

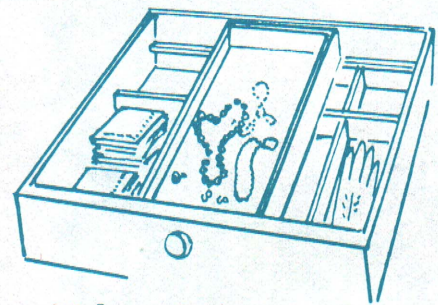
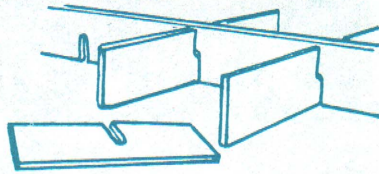
\*3. Convert unused or wasted space. Potential spaces for storage include: from ceiling to two feet below (above bathtubs or kitchen cabinets; in hallways); from the floor to two feet above (under beds, coffeetables, bathroom sinks). Other spaces to consider include: free-standing room dividers and areas too narrow for furniture (underneath windows, on and behind doors). Wall-hung shelves and pegboard increase wall storage.

\*4. Regrouping furniture may open up space for adding free-standing or built-in storage units. If you can place a sofa at right angles to the wall, you could use the space behind for a desk, low shelves or storage cabinets. A simple free-standing shelf unit can be made from boards and bricks, cinder blocks, large juice cans, wood or glass blocks. Stack orange crates, milk boxes, wooden kegs, sturdy cardboard boxes to create extra shelf space. A low chest or trunk topped with a cushion provides extra seating space.

\*5. When you shop for storage units, look for modular sections that can be grouped together, used separately, and/or added to.

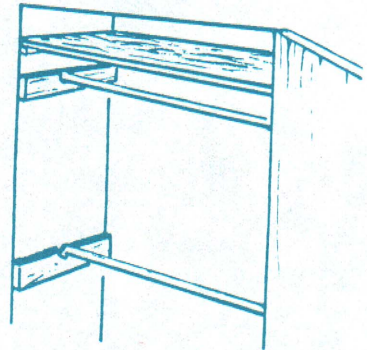
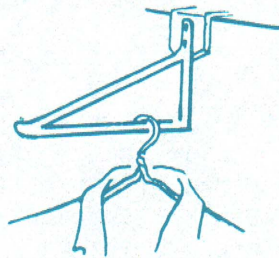
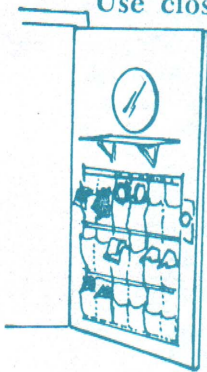


Divide a drawer that is too wide into small spaces



Make a sliding tray for a drawer that is too deep

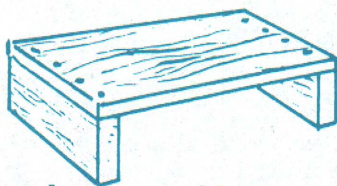
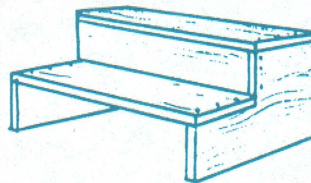
Use closet doors for extra storage space



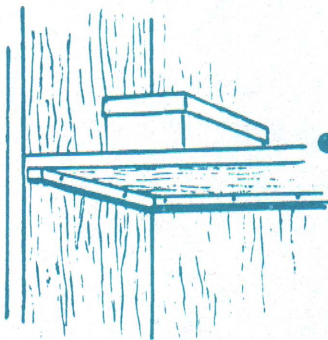
Low clothes poles and low hooks are easy for children to use.

Use the space between shelves

- Use a step shelf.



- Make a movable shelf of wood.



- Nail small strips of wood to the wall. They will hold a shelf.

Hang a shelf on pegboard

