



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A before (left) and after comparison of a garage that was organized by Monkey Bars.

STORAGE WAR

Simple reorganization methods can bring a garage back to life

BY ALEX HALL
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Does your garage look like a small tornado whipped through the inside of a storage unit?

You're not alone. In fact, Ted Wood has probably seen worse.

"So many garages we walk into, everything's piled on the floor."

Ted and his son Steve Wood are authorized dealers of Monkey Bars, a unique garage storage system that incorporates shelving, cabinets and overhead racks. They are based in Jordan and serve the counties of Hennepin, Scott, Carver and Wright.

Ted Wood said that too often, the garage is the most neglected space in a house.

"It's kind of the forgotten room, or the last area of the house people really pay attention to," said Steve.

The only way to get the most out of a garage is to make use of all its possible space. The first step is getting items off the ground and uti-

lizing space on the walls and the top corners of the garage. Getting items off the floor is important because it makes it easier to clean the garage floor, and it also keeps stored items safe from the elements, especially during the winter.

"You also don't get the critters in your boxes, which is a big one for me," said Steve, "and you're not tripping on things."

Ted added that by getting items off the ground, you may be saving money in the long run.

"With everything on the floor, things are getting lost or getting damaged, people are going out and buying things they already have," he said.

With the Monkey Bars system, a shelf is installed to hold long-term storage items like camping equipment, spare tires or bins. Each shelf is made of melamine and designed to hold up to 1,000 pounds for each 4-foot area.

Underneath the shelf or shelves is a system of poly-coated steel bars and hooks that allows items to be stored several layers deep on a wall.

"In most single-stack systems people have, you just hang one item, then the next and the next [along a wall]," said Steve. "With this, you can layer or tier the storage... We can get your stuff in about a third of the space as other products."

Steve said that anything with a hole or a loop or a "T" would hang on the racks.

"Basically things that don't fit in a cabinet or a box, and that's a lot of garage stuff," said Ted.

While the shelving and bars and hooks system is at the heart of what Monkey Bars offers, the company also offers cabinetry and overhead racks. The racks are key to making sure you're getting the most out of your garage space, said Steve. The design and steel structure of Monkey Bars' overhead racks make them capable of supporting up to 750 pounds of storage.

The Woods say it's important to take into consideration many different factors before deciding where to put shelves and cabinets, such as where a person typically

Go big or go home

Looking to do something a little more adventurous than a simple reorganization of your garage? One of the simplest ways to add some pizzazz to your carport is to replace the flooring.

"That's been kind of a big, popular one," said Gary Bannochie, general contractor and owner of Bannochie Builders, Inc. "Sometimes garage floors, in time they'll start pitting and cracking. You put a polyurethane (finish) on there, and it puts a nice little smooth finish on there."

But putting in new flooring is small potatoes compared to some of the renovation projects Bannochie has been involved in. Bannochie has helped turn garages into home offices, music studios and "man caves," and he's even taken out part of a roof in order to put a second level into a garage to be used as a billiards room.

The first step is making sure the garage is properly insulated and sheetrocked.

"Some guys are just so excited to get the thing cleaned up and sheetrock up and paint it, they forget to insulate it properly, give it a proper vapor barrier," said Bannochie.

In addition, if you plan on living out your rock star dreams in your garage, you may want to take some steps to avoid alienating your neighbors. Proper insulation and sheetrocking should help to soundproof, but having some heavy duty garage doors doesn't hurt, either. Bannochie keeps his drum kit in his garage, and he has 2 1/2 inch commercial garage doors on his.

"You still can hear," said Bannochie, "but if you're going to try to push that next level, where your going to really be jamming in there, then there's products you could put up to deflect sound."

parks and the length of vehicles.

For many homeowners they work with, a simple reorganization allows them to park in their own garage for the first time.

"The difference is dramatic," said Steve.

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