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Time and Energy Saving Storage

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Storage

If your house seems too small to store all the items your family wishes to keep, this fact sheet may help you. It will suggest ways to make better use of your present storage space. It will also help you know what constitutes good storage.

Magazines have excellent, well-illustrated articles on storage. If you know what constitutes good storage, these can be helpful. Some of the ideas may be easily adapted to your present storage facilities while others may be more expensive to add.

Included in this fact sheet are some ideas you may use to "find" extra storage space in your home at very little or no expense. Specific directions as to shapes and sizes of storage spaces may be secured at the county Extension office, from builders, contractors, lumber yards, magazines, and others.

Your storage problem is different from others. The kind, location and amount of space you need depends upon the possessions you and your family have and what you hope to have and do. Your place in the family life cycle influences your needs. A young beginning family has different requirements than a contracting family.

Well planned storage will help:

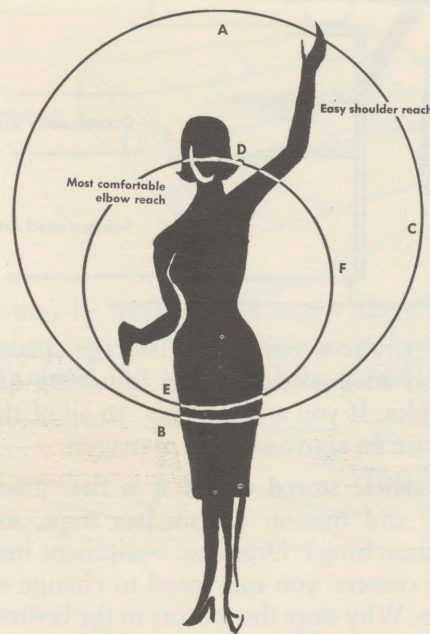
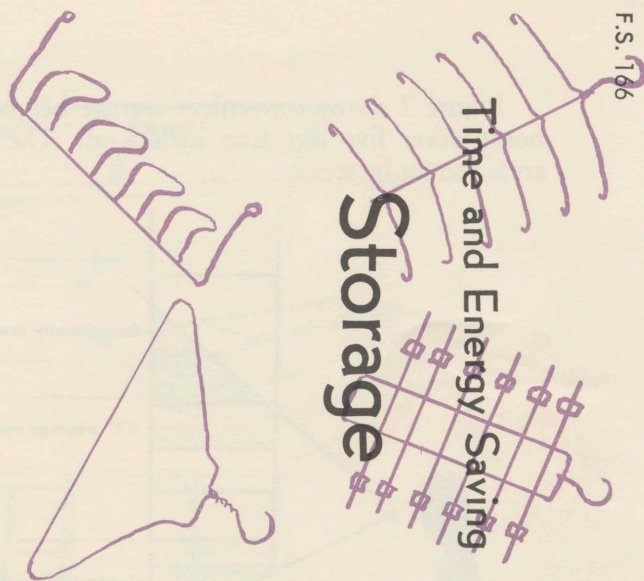
- Keep everything in its place.
- Keep the house clean.
- Save time and energy spent hunting, picking up, and putting away.
- Add to the efficiency of the housekeeping, releasing time and energy for other activities.
- Keep items in good condition during storage.
- Teach habits of orderliness.
- Promote respect for other's belongings.
- Add to living comfort and happier family relationships.

To help conserve your time and energy, store most used supplies and utensils where you can reach them comfortably without stretching or stooping. To plan storage, know your easy shoulder reach and your most comfortable elbow reach.

Your reach:

Point A _____ inches	Point D _____ inches
Point B _____ inches	Point E _____ inches
Point C _____ inches	Point F _____ inches

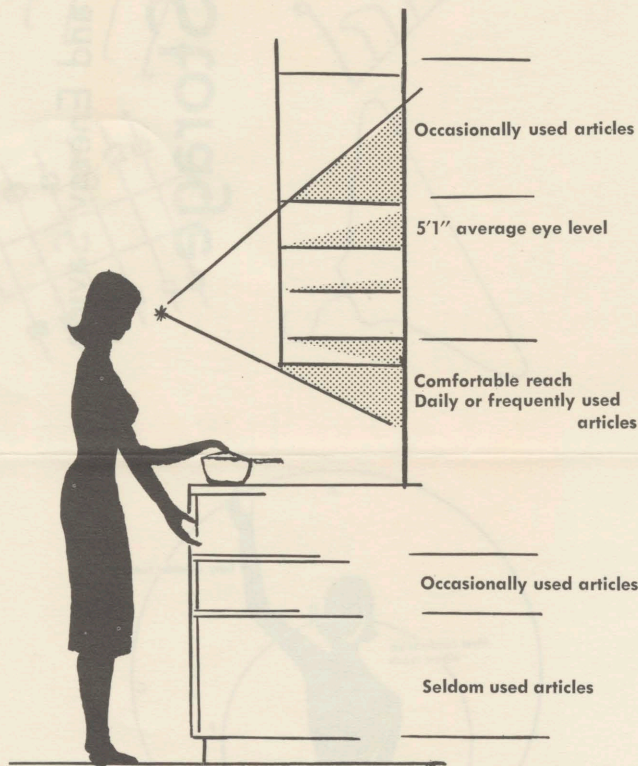
By Isabel McGibney, Extension Home Management Specialist



To measure for easy shoulder reach face the wall, standing about a foot from it. Take a pencil or chalk in your hand. Bend your fingers as if reaching for a dish. Swing your arm from the shoulders to make the widest half circle you can on the wall. Make a dot at the highest point you can reach (A); at the lowest point as your hand comes back to your side (B); and at the distance of your side reach (C).

To measure for most comfortable elbow reach stand as you did for the shoulder reach but hold your elbow at your side and move your arm only from the elbow. Make a dot at the highest point of your reach (D); at the lowest point as your hand comes back to your side (E); and at the distance of your side reach (F).

Figure 2 shows convenient storage heights for a homemaker five feet four inches tall. The shaded areas cannot be seen.



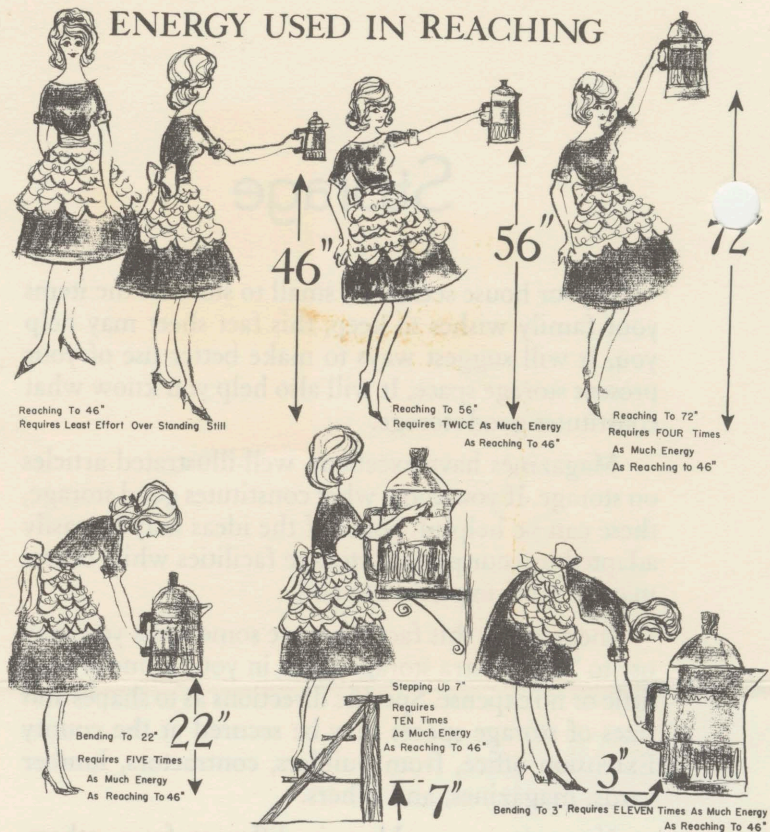
To determine whether your storage space is convenient and adequate, study the following questions and examples. If you answer "yes" to all of the questions, you are an above average manager.

Is the article stored where it is first used? This saves time and motion (eliminates steps, stooping, bending, stretching). Organize equipment into work or activity centers. you may need to change some of your habits. Why store the scissors in the bedroom and the thread in the hall closet, if you sew in the dining room?

When small, inexpensive items (measuring spoons, paring knives, scissors, soap, cleansing tissue, etc.) are needed for more than one activity, have duplicates. Make them different colors for easy sorting. A basket or box organizes tools and supplies that are used together. If the activity could be carried out in different places, take the basket or box with you.

Can you reach it easily? Store items you use most often within your easy reach range (figures 1 and 2). The most used items should be reached without stooping, bending or stretching.

Figure 3 illustrates the use of energy when you reach or stoop. Heavy articles are easier to handle when stored at waist height. When you need something stored out of easy reach, use a sturdy step stool to prevent home accidents.



Can you grasp it easily? Closely packed items, very curved hooks, deep partitions, wobbly supports, and shelves too close together or too deep make it difficult to grasp or remove the item.

Can you remove the article without first moving something else? It is time consuming to move and replace an item to get the one you want. Stack only alike items, otherwise the one you want will nearly always be on the bottom and the whole pile will be on the floor. This frequently results in breakage or spillage, as well as cut fingers or worse.

Can you see what you are looking for? Can you locate the item at a glance (clothing in a dresser drawer, linen in a closet, a can of cinnamon, a paring knife?) Use your imagination in devising ways of making things more visible (rolled instead of folded clothing, special labels, step shelves, transparent coverings). Adapt ideas from magazines, your family and friends.

Are you making use of all your space? Avoid empty spaces between shelves, in top of drawers, and in closets. Allow $\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 inches clearance to remove small articles. Try adjustable shelves or pull out trays to utilize this space.

Is the article used frequently? If not, store in some other place or discard it. Can it be folded or converted (children's toys and equipment). Possessions should fill a functional or psychological need. For example, a vacuum cleaner making cleaning jobs easier and faster fills a functional need. A book of poetry enriching lives with beauty and enjoyment fills a psychological need.

Is everything you are storing useful? Take a firm stand about what to store and what to discard. The only reason you want it after you throw it away is because you were reminded you had it.

Is the equipment in good working condition? Storage space is too expensive to use for items in poor working condition. Use dual purpose equipment but do not expect one butcher knife to do all of the cutting jobs.

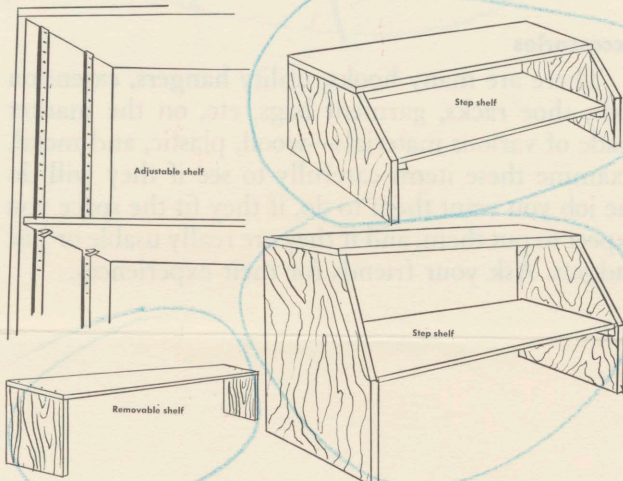
If you need to improve storage space some of the following ideas may solve your particular problem.

Shelves

Adjustable shelves can be changed to fit the equipment or tools stored. These may be held with metal strips or holes in the wood side-wall and braces.

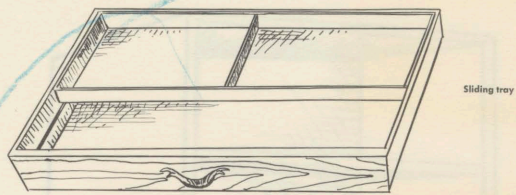
Removable shelves are easy to make and can be used for many purposes. The top and ends may be made from the same wood. Make end pieces from wood at least 1/2-inch thick. Brace the end pieces with angle iron or wood. A shelf 4 inches wide and 15 inches long holds 12 juice glasses. If it is 5 1/2 inches high, average water glasses will fit underneath. A shelf 7 inches wide, 10 inches long, and 5 inches high will fit over a stack of 12 dinner plates and hold a vegetable bowl, cups and saucers, or salad plates.

Step shelves are often two or more widths built together.

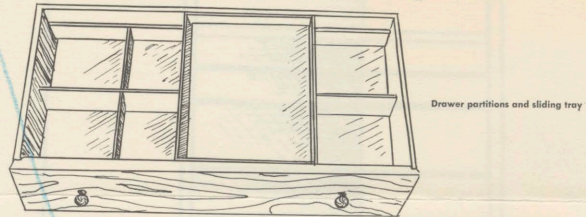
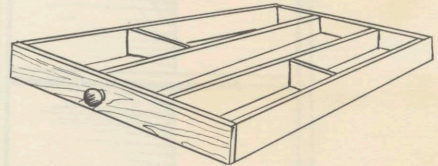


Drawers

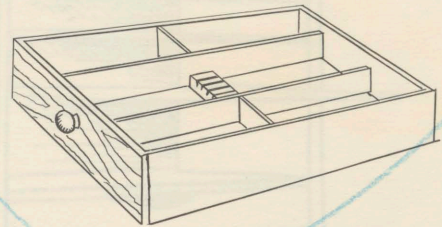
Drawers or partitions in drawers separate articles. Use plywood, hard board, lattice stripping, or firm cardboard for dividers. Keep the partitions low for easy handling of objects and removable for easy cleaning. Cardboard or plastic boxes can do this job too. Use a sliding tray in a deep drawer with wasted space at the top. Screw, nail or glue runners on each side of the drawer and place the tray on these. The tray can be pushed from side to side or from front to back.



Divided drawer

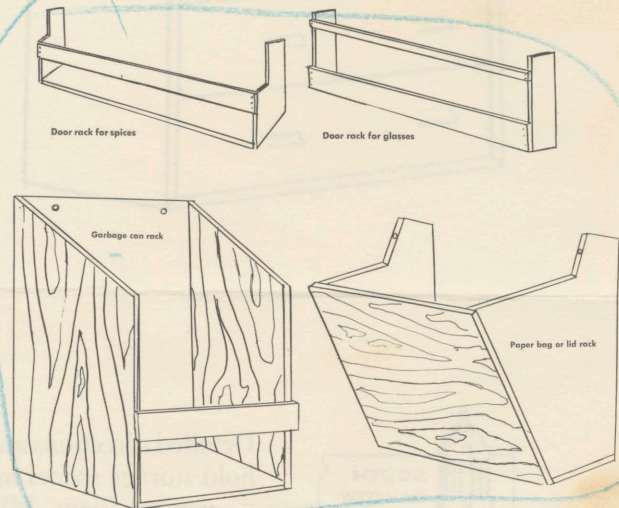


Drawer with knife rack



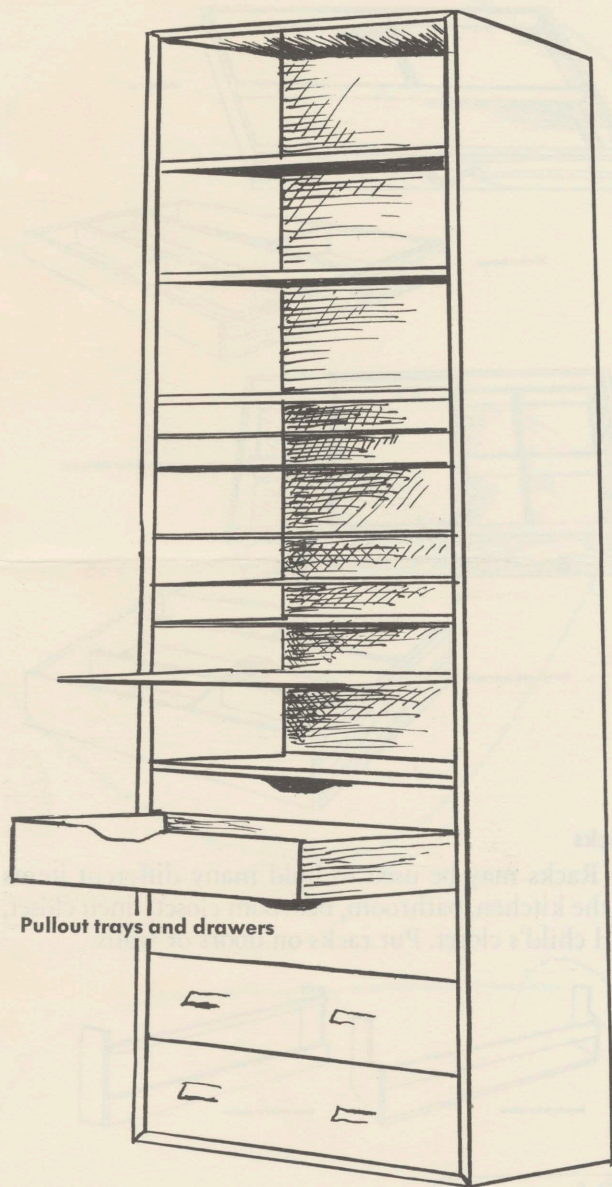
Racks

Racks may be used to hold many different items in the kitchen, bathroom, bedroom closet, linen closet, and child's closet. Put racks on doors or walls.



Pull-out Storage

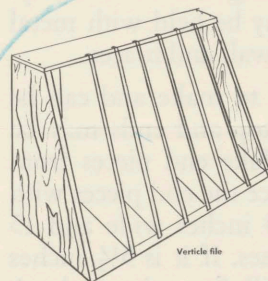
Use pull-out trays, shelves, and vertical drawers where it is difficult to see (below waist level). They may or may not have rims. Pull-out trays and shelves utilize the full depth and eliminate the strain of lifting heavy and bulky items when the arms are outstretched. Place a stop at the back of the shelf or tray to prevent pulling it too far.



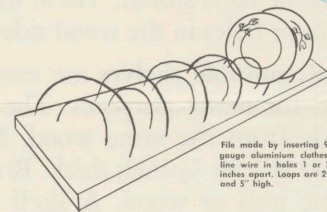
Pullout trays and drawers

Files

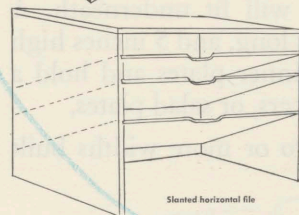
Files may be vertical, horizontal, short and wide, or long and narrow to store items that are shallow, cannot be stacked, and are used one at a time. Removable dividers are more flexible and are easier to clean. They can be built as a unit and set on a shelf or in a drawer or they may be built in permanently. Vertical files are usually placed high or low where one needs only to grasp the edge of the pan or tray. If the partitions are placed in a drawer it needs to be below waist level so that you can see into it. If a plate or platter is too wide to fit on a shelf, slant the file to give extra width.



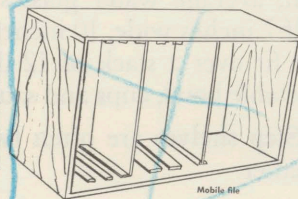
Vertical file



File made by inserting 9-gauge aluminum clothesline wire in holes 1 or 2 inches apart. Loops are 2" and 5" high.



Slanted horizontal file



Mobile file

Accessories

There are many hooks, utility hangers, extension rods, shoe racks, garment bags, etc. on the market made of various materials—wood, plastic, and metal. Examine these items carefully to see if they will do the job you want them to do, if they fit the space you expect to put them, and if they are really usable or just gadgets. Ask your friends for their experiences.



Detailed directions and measurements for household storage spaces may be found in Home Improvement Plans, MWPS 4, Agricultural Engineering Extension, South Dakota State College, College Station, South Dakota, 57007.