



Getting Ahead Under the Bed

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Seasonal clothing is a good option to store under the bed. Avoid storing rarely used items, which are easy to forget about and even easier to re-buy unnecessarily. Image courtesy HeartWork Organizing

With the right planning, you can de-clutter and optimize an unused storage haven to create invaluable and invisible storage space – that nether region under the bed where stray socks, various clothes and dust bunnies pointlessly accumulate.

“Below the bed often becomes a dead zone where random items get shoved or forgotten about,” says Vanessa Howson, a professional organizer with Positive Spaces in Plymouth, Mich. “From Christmas decorations to oversized sports equipment to old Halloween costumes, these items will likely not be unearthed for years and inevitably be forgotten about, resulting in people wasting money buying and re-buying items they fail to recall were under the bed. Instead, homeowners should take advantage of this precious real estate for storage and organization.”

Darla DeMorrow, owner of Wayne, Pa.-headquartered HeartWork Organizing, says the best candidates for under-bed storage are out-of season items, including winter clothing and shoes not worn in warmer months.

“Generally, the less often things are used, the more convenient they are to stow under the bed. Remember that this space can be a little harder to get to, especially if you have back or knee trouble,” DeMorrow says.

Accessories like hats, bags and purses along with collectibles and souvenirs also are ideal belongings for this sub-mattress territory.

“Memorabilia can live under the bed because the likelihood you’re going to dig through it regularly is pretty slim,” says Amy Trager, a Chicago-based certified professional organizer.

All manner of bedding – from extra comforters to spare pillowcases – can take up residence down there, too, “particularly if you tend to use the same linens all the time and have a backup or guest set you need to store,” notes Amanda Sullivan, author of

“Organized Enough: The Anti-Perfectionist’s Guide to Getting – and Staying – Organized” (Da Capo Lifelong Books, 2017).

However, avoid stuffing electronics, perishables, paint, important documents, sharp-edged items or firearms below your bed.

“Just because there’s room down there doesn’t mean it’s the right spot,” Sullivan says.

To sort and locate them more efficiently and keep dust away, beneath-the-bed items are best stashed within enclosed containers, including low-profile plastic crates, cubbies or bins equipped with lids and wheels that make it easier to slide out and access.

“Many options are available, including under-bed organizer kits and vacuum-sealed zippered bags. You can also repurpose an old dresser drawer into a rolling tray by adding casters and a handle pull,” DeMorrow says.

Before invoking your inner Martha Stewart, be sure to scout out and measure the available square footage under your bed. A popular option for supersizing this space is to place your bed legs on wood or plastic risers that can add a few extra inches of height.

“Risers can create almost half a foot of extra valuable space, and as an added bonus your bed will make you feel more like royalty higher up,” Howson says.

Additionally, prepare to clean house down under before shopping for storage products.

“Take everything out and access what’s hiding under the bed. Throw out anything torn, broken or in bad shape, and donate anything that no longer serves a purpose but is in good condition,” Howson says. “Lastly, give it a good vacuuming or dusting so you can start fresh and create a functional space.”

When it's time to sort, designate and position your under-bed storage containers, consider the big and small details.

“Store the less-used items in the middle or furthest back and items you use on a weekly or monthly basis closer to the outer edges,” Howson adds. “Keep his items under his side of the bed, her items under her side, and children’s storage items under their own beds. Invest in a label maker or create labels with tape and markers so you can easily keep track of what’s inside your bins.”

If you'd rather not turn your under-the-bed area into stowage central, or if you run out of room there, don't despair: you can de-clutter and conceal stored goods in other ways. For example, place an ottoman, with storage space inside, at the foot of your bed.

“A large cabinet, dresser, armoire, hamper, hat rack and hooks on the wall, all within the same room, can also help store items that tend to end up under the bed,” Trager says.

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