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# The Space Race

15 streamlined storage ideas for every interior



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*far left* Boxed storage and bright colours create a fun child's room

*left* Use moveable furniture to define different areas

*below* Mix & match – Montana units in lacquered MDF, £2,255 as shown, from £250 for one unit, 42 unit sizes and four depths, available in 49 colours, Icons of Denmark (07525 171 118; [iconsofdenmark.dk](http://iconsofdenmark.dk))

# THE SPACE RACE

*Clearing away clutter into streamlined storage will help you make the most of your square metreage. Read on for advice on how to build it in and for tips on easy updates* **Words Sarah Baldwin**

*this picture*  
Freestanding option – Modern in lacquered MDF in yellow (H123xW120xD45cm), from £2,495, available in a range of colourways, by Piero Lissoni for Porro at Aram Store (020 7557 7557; [aram.co.uk](http://aram.co.uk))

Ngoc Minh Ngo; Edina van der Wyck

**F**rom dead batteries and out-of-date currency to obsolete mobile phone chargers and useless cracker presents, we Brits are a nation of hoarders (if you haven't seen comic Michael McIntyre's sketch about the man drawer, check it out now on YouTube).

But whether it's a case of hanging on to your hoardings, or simply having room for all your family's necessities, well-planned storage is the key to a fuss-free, organised existence – regardless of whether you're building a new home or are in the don't-move-improve camp.

The key is not just to think about what you own right now, but also to consider what you may accrue in the future. Will you be working at home? Will you need extra space for growing kids? These factors need to be taken into consideration when working out your needs. Read on for some tricks to maximise storage in the design phase and for clever ways to gain extra space once in situ. →







*left* The client was keen to work with the original features of the building, so commissioned Studio Octopi to design shelving within its frame

*right* Architect Mark Dyson did the majority of the work himself, commissioning a local carpenter to design the drawers to his specification

# BUILD IT IN

**T**here are countless nooks and crannies in your home that can be used for storage with a little creative thinking. So, decide what you want to store and where – you only need easy access to the things you use regularly. Hire an architect if you're unsure, who'll suggest clever solutions. Architect Your Home (0800 849 8505; architect-yourhome.com) offers fixed-fee design visits and can be commissioned on a pay-as-you-go basis.

## THE STAIRS

An obvious place to build in storage is around your staircase. Consider making the structure itself into open or closed storage. Mark Dyson from Enclosure Architects (020 8469 1969; enclosure.org.uk) recommends fitting drawers beneath the treads. 'In place of functionless vertical risers, fit pull-out drawers that make great storage for shoes,' he says. This is easiest if you're working with a new feature, but can also be fitted once the staircase has been installed.

There are other options for adding storage to an existing staircase. If you have wide treads, consider installing a wall of shallow bookshelves; you need between 15–20cm of depth for standard paperbacks. Or organise the void underneath the stairs into compartments; commission a carpenter to come up with a bespoke design. Pull-out panels are the optimum in efficiency and Deriba Furniture (020 8993 2866; deriba.co.uk) produces a range of pull-out units that hold up to 200kg in weight and can be customised to include coat cupboards or larder-style shelving.

## DEAD SPACE

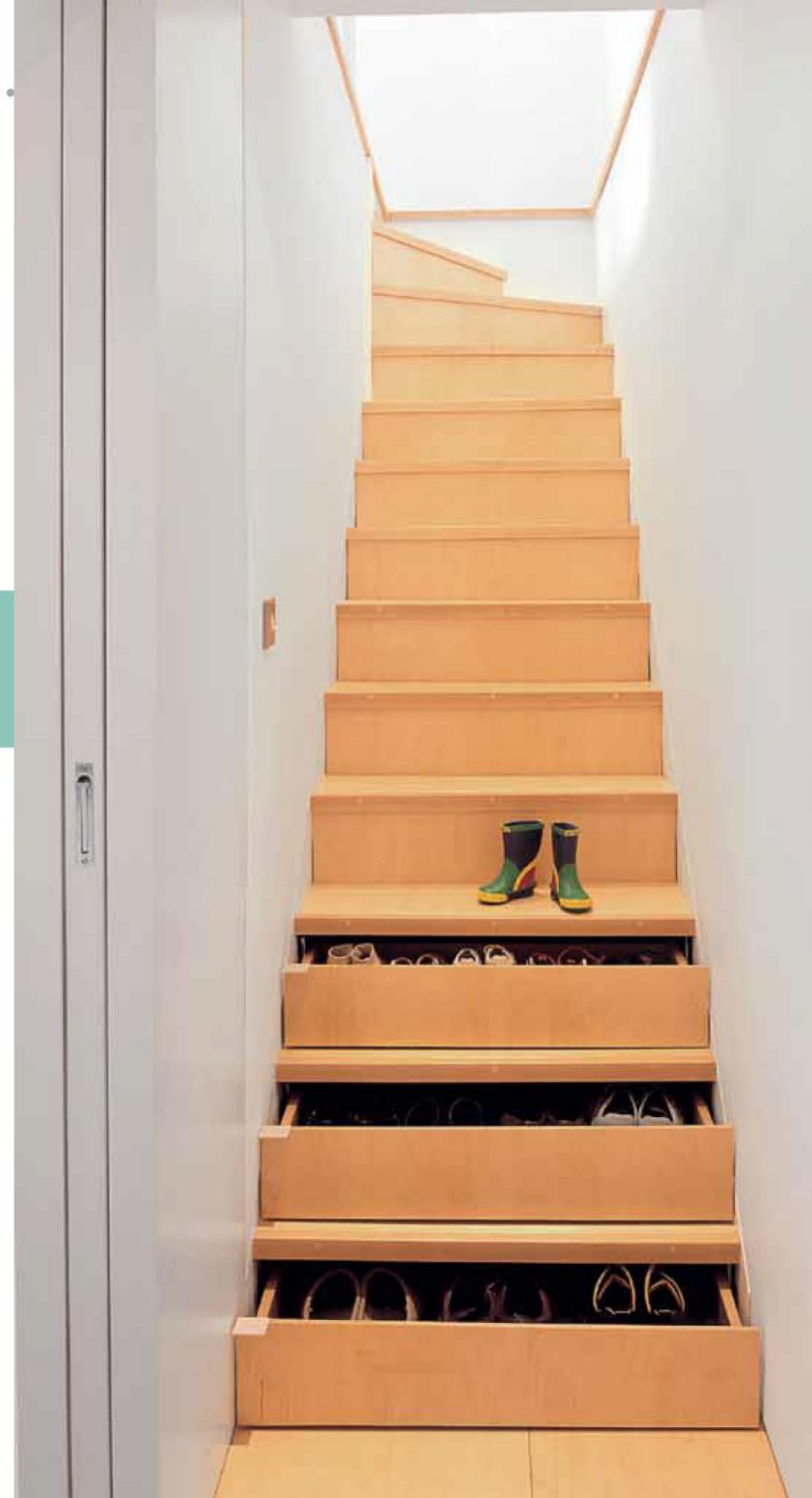
Homes are packed with wasted space that can be transformed into storage. These include under floors, around baths and

doorframes. 'The quality of the design of storage makes a huge difference in a small house,' says Sophie Goldhill of Liddicoat & Goldhill (020 7380 0977; liddicoatgoldhill.com). You saw their two-bedroom house a few months ago in *GDM's* December issue; Goldhill and husband David Liddicoat designed storage into every available inch. The super-tiny downstairs WC – just 890mm wide – holds the washing machine in a cupboard behind the toilet. They also left out some bricks on the left-hand wall to make room for a sink and toilet-roll holder.

## STRUCTURAL SOLUTIONS

'The principal place that gets forgotten is in between stud walls,' says Dyson. There's at least 10cm of depth in a stud wall, and it can easily be opened up and fitted with shallow shelves. Dyson recommends using a stud wall in the kitchen to store slim containers. In a bathroom, stud walls are usually about 20cm thick to allow for drainage, so a recessed cabinet is another space-saving solution. MDF is suitable for lining stud walls, but Dyson suggests using a solid laminate sheet such as Trespa or block board for the shelves, as they're more resistant to sagging.

Architect Chris Romer-Lee of Studio Octopi (020 7633 0003; octopi.co.uk) refurbished a Victorian home by exposing the frame to create space for a collection of design objects (pictured above). 'We stripped back layers of house to expose the timber studwork, which set out where the shelves would sit,' explains Romer-Lee. He inserted grey-painted MDF boxes into the holes. 'Their simple spec means they do not take away from the grandeur of the structure,' he says. Romer-Lee recommends always consulting an engineer for this kind of work as you are working with the bones of the building. Findanengineer.com will help you find a chartered structural engineer in your area. →



*above* This dining table folds up to provide extra living space. The stools in this modular lacquered MDF unit, by architect Rob Gregory at around £6,000, are stored underneath

*right* Very short of square metreage, architects Liddicoat and Goldhill used the void under the stairs, which backs on to the downstairs WC, to house the washing machine



James Balston; Julian Lano; Jefferson Smith





# EASY UPDATES

**N**ot all shelving needs to be considered at project stage; there's plenty you can do once you've moved in. There are essentially two approaches: make a feature of it or integrate it, so that it's completely hidden. Think about what you are looking to store; sculptures and books look great on open shelves, while mismatched items and electrical goods are better off hidden away.

## SECRET STASH

For fans of the minimalist aesthetic, handleless designs are an ideal and attractive solution. A bank of built-in and simple cupboards is an extremely effective way of concealing your clutter, media units or even a home office space.

'It should look like part of the room, as opposed to an item in its own right,' recommends Romer-Lee. He also suggests painting it to match the wall, so that it doesn't stand out. 'Opt for a dark interior like, say, a blood red, inside simple white cupboards. It can be really dramatic.' Romer-Lee says the depth of storage you decide on is critical – it needs to be a

minimum of 60-65cm – and make sure you allow additional depth for services in a kitchen.

Paul McAneary Architects (020 7240 0500; paulmcanearry.com) recently refurbished this penthouse in London's Victoria (above right). 'Storage walls are one of the most important architectural elements within our projects,' explains McAneary.

Here, the kitchen cupboards have chunky, wire-brushed and sand-blasted oak doors to match the rest of the scheme. 'If your budget is tight we suggest a simple, multi-purpose solution made of economical carcasses for the interior, and high-quality lacquered handleless doors for the outer surface,' says McAneary.

## ON DISPLAY

Some things are worth showing off. A key advantage of open storage is that everything is accessible and easy to find. It works best if you select complimentary items; consider colour, shape and texture. Display shelves often become a sculptural feature in their own right, too. Architect Paulo Marto of →

*above left* These cupboards by Sliderobes (0800 454 465; sliderobes.com) have white glass doors and dark wood vinyl wrap shelves. A similar look costs from £1,500 depending on dimensions and finish

*above* Designed by Paul McAneary Architects, this flat is divided up by timber boxes. Into these boxes, the team built banks of shelving, finished with doors made of the same material





*above This modular range, The Fortepiano by Molteni & C (020 7631 2345; molteni.it), comes in tons of different colourways and configurations. From £2,500 for range (£4,514.40 as pictured)*

*right and below Paul+O Architects designed this library for an avid reader. The room is double height with bookcases on two levels. The bookshelves have a hierarchy, the smaller shelves at high level are for paperbacks, with slightly larger shelves below for hardbacks and much larger shelves below that for Folios*

Paul+O Architects (020 7604 3818; paul-o-architects.com) designed this wall of black-stained oak bookshelves (below) in a new-build in Suffolk. 'The black bookcases filled with an assortment of books, photographs and objects form an ever-changing tableau and are mirrored on the other side of the room with double-height windows,' says Marto. The shelves, which cost around £1,000 per linear metre (£10,000), run across two levels, connecting the downstairs space to the gallery above.

Ready-made systems can be a more budget-friendly solution than a bespoke design. Ikea (0845 358 3363; ikea.com) is an obvious choice. Choose a modular system with adjustable shelves, so it can be adapted to suit your needs.

But there are plenty of high-end companies who can design fabulous storage walls on all scales. Vitsoe (020 7428 1606; vitsoe.com) is a go-to company for flexible, industrial-style systems. With tracks, shelves, cabinets and tables, the systems can be arranged to suit your individual needs – a bit like Meccano for adults. If you want truly flexible living, opt for a solution that includes both cupboards and display shelving. Other good brands that offer wall storage solutions include B&B Italia, Poliform and Molteni & C. **GD**



Fernando Guerra

