

Step One: The Gathering

Search the corners of your house for every item related to your hobby, and put everything in one area — like the living room floor or the dining room table.

Step Two: The Embarrassing Truth

Weed out duplicates (I already had pinking shears? Who knew?). Throw away scraps that are too small use, as well as markers that don't work, paints that have dried out and things you have kept "just in case." Make sure all of your equipment works, and get rid of anything broken. Be honest during this process, even if it hurts.

Step Three: Inventory

Look at your stuff, and think of creative containers for storage. Remember, you always want to leave room to grow (because it will grow, I guarantee it). An over-the-door shoe rack is a great place to store skeins of yarn. Plastic Crystal Light containers, when wrapped in pretty paper, are perfect for pens or paintbrushes. Shoeboxes can be papered or painted and used to store sewing notions. Does your home have a spare toolbox floating around? Think beyond hardware; it's a great place to store small pieces, like beads or eyelets. There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to organizing your hobby.

Step Four: Buy, if you must

Invariably, some crafts require "special needs" storage. Scrapbookers who use 12" by 12" paper would be wise to invest in correctly sized plastic drawers. Bobbins and spools of thread have specific containers, which keep them neat and accessible. But beyond that, you might want to invest in a few containers that really inspire you. A beautiful knitting needle case might lure you to use its contents more often. A woven basket full of colorful fabric is pleasing to the eye and to the spirit.

Step Five: Make a Home

Most of us will use a closet for crafts storage. But a closet can be more than a single shelf and a rod. If you're not using your closet for clothes, install inexpensive shelving to maximize storage space. Consider building a desktop inside the closet, with lighting and a stool. If you're leery of construction, you can purchase wire cubes, milk crates, or cubbies. I purchased a vintage metal cabinet for \$40 to hold my yarn supplies. A few coats of spray-paint was all it took to freshen it up. A computer or office armoire can easily be modified to hold crafty gear.

A final tip: Stay organized

Take a clue from your favorite 6-year-old and pick up your toys. Getting yourself organized is useless unless you commit to keeping yourself organized. But once you do corral your clutter, you will remember why you started crafting in the first place.

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