

Section 8: Storage Solutions

When it comes to small house living, tiny houses with their limited amount of space, need to be efficient and clever with how they implement storage. You'll find tiny houses with well-placed shelves and multi-functional furniture. Tiny houses are a good example that when you get creative, you can maximize even the smallest slivers of space. You'll find some of the best storage solutions in small spaces with small room ideas in every room from the living area, kitchens, bedrooms, and bedrooms too.

Maximize Storage

Small rooms can feel cluttered without the proper organization. Two of the best storage options for small spaces are shelving and cabinets, which provide open and closed storage for all your essentials.

Open shelving gives you easy access to items and works well in both kitchens and small office spaces for decorative items you want to see and enjoy. Closed cabinets, when used properly, are a way to have less visual noise in a kitchen, living room or bedroom.

You want to consider how your cabinets will be used and what items will be stored in them. Whenever possible, go for cabinets that have adjustable shelves so you can customize the storage as your needs change. Use plastic drawers or bins to keep small items from being lost or forgotten in the cabinet. Items that are out of sight are out of mind, so for some people, open storage and shelving work as a good way to keep track of things. Avoid placing too many items on one shelf, be creative with your storage and have designated areas for specific items.

Let your storage act as a design element in your tiny space. You can find interesting brackets at a flea market to help dress up your shelves and the architecture of your kitchen. A collection of white bowls or plates stacked on a shelf in the kitchen can look cool. Use decorative items to hold smaller things, such as a basket on a shelf in a mudroom for garden tools or a vase that once held flowers to store wooden spoons in your kitchen.

Kitchen Storage

Add a fold-out table. Fold-out tables can be used for both dining and desks. The best part about a fold-out table is you can fold it down when you need the extra space and fold it out when you need more counter space.

Add Shelves to the Sides of Cabinets. If your cabinetry opens to the rest of your room, you can put that space to good use with a few shelves on the ends. You could use the shelves to house plants, cookbooks, and dishes.

Build a Custom Cabinet. Custom cabinetry doesn't have to be expensive, especially if you only need one piece. You can get extra cabinetry from one custom piece, and it will change the entire look of the kitchen, while still adding the extra space that you need.

Hang Things Wherever You Can. Use hooks or rails along backsplashes to hang everything from utensils, pots, and baskets. If you think something might look great hung up, try it and see, you might be pleasantly surprised.

Put shelves between the studs. If you don't have room to hang shelves because they'll stick out too far and take over your walking space, you can try adding shelves in the wall between the studs. You might use these shelves for kitchen essentials like spices and tea.

Turn your sink into extra counter space. Cut a piece of wood that slots into the sink opening to create extra storage and counter space. Just place it over your sink and you'll have a cutting board.

Use the space above your stove's hood. Make use of the wasted space between the appliance and the ceiling. It's the perfect spot for storing smaller dishes or things you might not use that often.

Go Vertical

In small spaces, a great way to get extra storage is to go vertical. Use a tall vanity to increase storage in a small bathroom, or choose a tall dresser over a short dresser that takes up valuable floor space in a tight bedroom. Vertical lines will make a tiny space feel taller. If you can go tall, it's a good idea to do so.

Build It In

Incorporate drawers into a window seat to house a variety of things, such as wool blankets and bed linens for the colder winter months.

Take Storage to the Next Level

Look for available wall space in high-traffic areas throughout your tiny house. A staircase can feature a cubby system underneath the stairs built for storing everyday essentials. While closets might be a great place to store clothing, linens and other essentials, they can be a challenge in a tiny space.

Give some thought into how you can make the most out of the closet you have, and you can have the storage you need in a tiny space that feels warm and welcoming. You can remove closet doors as a great way to make a closet feel larger in a small space and give easy access to the items being stored. Painting

the back inside wall of the closet the same color as the surrounding walls in your tiny space as a way to add depth and make the room feel larger. Painting the back wall a bold color or using a patterned wall covering will add some contrast and visual interest.

Optimize Closet Space

A wire shelf track system can make the best use of space in a closet. You'll be wasting the least amount of space and you can see everything you have. For a semi-custom look, use a wood organizer in the closet for what you see and use every day with a wire shelf track system for the higher part of your closet for seasonal items. Drapes are a nice alternative for tiny homeowners who like an open closet but want the option to close things up when guests come over. Choose drapery that complements your tiny space decor. Go for durable fabrics for high-traffic closets that are used often.

For closets with doors, choose bi-fold doors over dual sliding doors that block access to 50 percent of the contents inside your closet. A closet door can also be a way to add a nice design element into your small space. Paint your closet door high-gloss cobalt blue or black to spice up your tiny space and make the door recede and the room feels larger. Add lights to your closet to allow you to see your stored items more clearly and make the closet feel more spacious. If electrical work is out of the question, you can use the stick-on, battery-operated lights that are available at many retailers and home improvement stores.

More Counter Space

Additional counter space can be achieved with a cutting board type counter that pulls out from the main counter space. Whether you just need some room to chop up some veggies, or to just set the groceries down when you first come through the door after shopping, an expandable kitchen counter is a great idea. You want to make sure you consider the size and strength when building so that your hardware doesn't bend or break when under load.

Under the Floor

This type of storage option uses an often forgotten place for storage and that's under the floor. Under the floor, storage is not a good choice for most tiny houses, but great options if you can use it. The difficulty with underfloor storage is keeping the storage area insulated, trying not to bottom the tiny home out on the ground and making sure that you go between the crossbeams of the trailer. If you can make all of that work, underfloor storage gives you places to hide away some things right under your feet.

Tips For Downsizing

Downsizing a tiny house can lead to lots of stress and anxiety for anyone who loves their belongings but hates clutter. Empty nesters, seniors or people moving from a suburban home to a city apartment face the challenge of creating a new living space with limited room for accessories, furniture, clothing, and collectibles. Come up with a plan before you downsize, to create a comfortable and stylish environment made for daily living.

Be conscious of what you bring into your mind, environment, and life, and how you choose to spend your time and resources moving forward. This is the secret to feeling whole and living well. With sentimental items, take photographs of your old home and belonging to help preserve memories. This can be especially helpful for children who don't want to let go of an old stuffed animal or toys.

Determine Your Lifestyle Needs and Find Purpose

It helps to ask yourself some questions. Think about what sort of lifestyle you want to embrace as you move forward. The biggest issue is that most people don't edit. They bring too much stuff into their lives and don't realize every little corner should have a purpose or function. With some planning, a shelf can become your whole home office or a corner can become an art studio.

Keep Clutter Out

Edit your technology. Use a printer that connects to Wi-Fi to eliminate extra cables and choose a TV that mounts to the wall, so you don't need a media center that takes up valuable floor space. Use smart storage solutions in your smaller space. For example, a table cloth can give new life to an older table and give you a way to hide things from plain sight. Or you can use a piece of your china collection that seems too large to store as makeup storage in your bathroom or a pencil holder in your home office.

Plan Ahead

Don't wait to make decisions. Start planning your downsizing early and set goals. For couples and families, make sure everyone is on the same page to eliminate conflicts and hurt feelings down the road.

Think Quality and Multipurpose

Choose quality over quantity. Choose a great piece of furniture that makes a statement, instead of trying to squeeze too many pieces of furniture into a single room. If you're investing in quality furniture when you downsize, choose multipurpose furniture pieces. Choose ottomans with tops that lift to offer storage space inside for pillows and blankets or nightstands with open and closed storage. Look for durable, quality fabrics, since a tiny house often requires flexible spaces that have to do double duty as an extra bedroom, office, or play space.

When in Doubt, Get an Objective Opinion

Accept help from friends and family in sorting and packing your belongings. Consider hiring a professional organizer who can offer an objective opinion when you are trying to decide what you really need to get rid of or donate to charity.