

Crafty ideas for a work space

Consider size, storage, cleanup and comfort when designing the perfect hobby room.

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SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

Crafters who are ready to move their creative endeavors from the dining-room table to a more suitable space can fashion a usable room or niche in the house by taking a few tips from those in the know.

Residential remodeling contractor Victor Farina of Farina & Sons in Orlando says that a hobby room should be at least 10-by-12-feet to provide enough space to work and store supplies. If spare bedrooms are not available, consider refiguring another space such as your laundry room, he says.

Then, ask yourself a few key questions.

- How much work space do you need? The amount and type of space required will depend on the crafts you make. All crafters can benefit from a large work surface, Farina says, and many types of crafts such as scrapbooking will require a computer station as well.

Sewing hobbyists need a place to cut patterns, press fabric and work at a sewing machine; those who dabble in decorative arts need a large worktable with a durable, washable surface.

Be sure to choose countertops and floors that will hold up to chemical spills, paint splatters and excessive amounts of cutting.

- Will you be selling your work? Artists who plan to sell their crafts would benefit from a room with a separate outside entry so that customers won't have to traipse through the house, Farina says.

- How much storage will you need? One of the most important elements of a craft room is organized storage. Built-ins can be space savers, Farina says. If the room is large enough, consider adding a center work island along with additional work surface along the walls. Plan for shelves, drawers and bookcases, and don't ignore the empty space below and above your desk or workstation.

If you're building or remodeling a room, plan for plenty of electrical outlets, says builder Charlie Clayton of Charles Clayton Construction in Winter Park. Many types of crafts require power tools as well as computer equipment and task lighting. If you're repurposing a room, consider available outlets when planning furniture placement.

Also, if possible, choose a room with plenty of windows for natural light and ventilation.

Even homeowners who can't spare a room for crafts can carve out hobby space with a little ingenuity. Look for existing underused space in other parts of the house such as in closets and

under stairs. A workstation can be created by installing a custom counter at desk height.

Think creatively. Tuck rolling organizers underneath the work surface. Use CD towers to store sewing patterns and labeled shoeboxes to hold assorted crafting baubles. Hang shallow shelves on the back wall and suspend wooden dowels for ribbon and gift wrap. Drape a plastic shoe organizer over the closet door and insert scissors, tape and other supplies.

Even if your artistic endeavors require a larger work area, these spaces can be used for organized storage. Supplies can find a home in a rolling cart that can be pulled alongside the kitchen table while working and then rolled back in place when done for the night. A kitchen caddy with handles works well for smaller supplies.

If your closets are stuffed with other household items, consider storing supplies in a trunk that can be placed at the end of the bed.

Here are a few more ideas:

Look to kitchens for inspiration. Install spice-drawer organizers, for instance, to hold smaller supplies and file drawers to keep your ideas organized. Use cabinets with glass doors so you can easily spot supplies.

Vary countertop height and depth. The standard cabinet depth is 24 inches, but ideally a hobby room will have a space with a countertop depth of 30 to 36 inches. Also, installing countertops in various heights throughout the room makes the space more functional for different projects.

If plumbing allows, consider installing a sink. Having a sink means quick and easy cleanup. Plus, there's

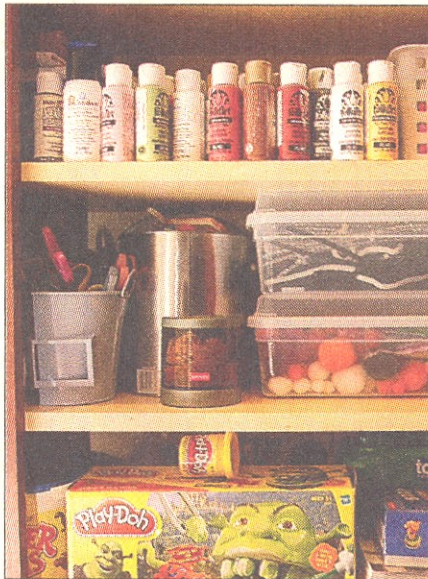
less chance of trailing paint, glitter and other messy supplies through the house.

Make use of every inch of wall space. Mount pegboards, corkboards and other organizers nearby. Glue magnetic strips to a wall to hang scissors and other metal tools.

Comfortable seating is key. Consider an office chair on wheels or a rolling stool if you move frequently between multiple workstations. A more comfortable club chair works well for lengthy detail work such as embroidery.

Make the room welcoming as well as efficient. Artist Donna Dewberry says an attractive craft room can offer inspiration for starting a project and the staying power to see it through. Place furniture so you'll have a nice view onto a garden or other outdoor area. Add softness with curtains and pillows sewn in bright fabrics. Use colorful pots to store paintbrushes and other tools.

Clear up clutter with organizers. Store supplies in clearly labeled plastic stacking containers that allow you to keep track of what you have.



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A kitchen cabinet holds children's craft supplies at the ready in Laurie Dewberry's home.