

GIVE DAD THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

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Father's Day is just around the corner and if you are struggling to find the perfect gift for the man that has everything, maybe its time to think out of the box. How about straightening up the garage! Here are a few statistics to get you motivated:

- 50% of Americans rate the garage as the most disorganized place in the house and a place the entire family regularly uses.
- 25% of people with two car garages don't park any cars in there and that 32% only park one car.

These are alarming statistics when you consider your \$30,000 vehicle is sitting out in the elements, while burnt out Christmas lights and old toys are getting the "high life."

For many people just opening up the garage door elevates there blood pressure and sweat begins to form on their brow. Not to fear, I have several tips and tricks to get you started. Here is a list of 6 basics steps to turn your garage around:

1. Elect some help!

Organizing the garage is usually not a task I suggest to be tackled alone. Gather up the troops and ask for their cooperation. Even small children can be given easy jobs that are accomplished with great pride. If you anticipate needing more help, call on friends and family to lend a hand. The job will get done sooner and you are less likely to procrastinate.

2. Get prepared!

Make this a fun activity for all those involved by making the necessary preparations beforehand. To eliminate trips in and out of the house, load a cooler up with your favorite drinks and snacks. Next designate areas for sorting, such as sporting goods, lawn equipment, toys and miscellaneous. A fun way to do this is using sidewalk chalk to make a grid on the driveway. Don't forget the trash container. If you think there will be more trash than your receptacle will hold, set out old boxes lined with trash bags to make your trip to the dump easier. Warning! Don't be tempted to purchase bins and cubbies this early in the game. Remember that will be your reward once you determine the appropriate amount and size of containers.

3. When in doubt, throw it OUT!

This is a difficult step for many and sometimes can be the breaking point. Stay focused! Take a hard look at each item and determine the value. If you haven't used it in the past year, then you can probably live without it. If it has sentimental value then maybe the garage isn't the best spot for it. You'll want to store those items in an area (attic or basement) that can preserve them for the next generation. Another tip is to not keep something because it was expensive. There are not many things "held up" in your garage that are actually appreciating. Remember that old clothes, electronics and sports equipment are not worth what you paid. I know it's hard, but let them go!

As you are sorting items to give to your local charity, please remember to only give them items that are clean and in working order. Trash should be placed in the proper receptacles not donated.

4. Sweep, Mop, Paint!

Hooray! Give yourself a pat on the back! Now that you have accomplished the most difficult tasks, it's time to think about bringing the remaining items back inside. Even though it is tempting to start putting things away immediately, let's take this time to go one step further. Grab a nice push broom and sweep away any debris that has been left behind. Spills and stains should be dealt with at this point by getting out the pressure washer or mop. If you really want to knock the socks off of Dad, paint the floor and walls. Painting really turns it up a notch and gives it a WOW effect! Your local hardware store can give you some great suggestions on garage floor paint that will not only look great, but also protect the floor from future dirt and grease.

5. A place for everything and everything in its place!

You are almost done! Let's start bringing everything back inside. Determine where you want each item to reside and the frequency of its use. Tools on the tool bench or chest, lawn tools hung up and shoes placed on shelves. This is a good point to judge if you will need additional storage containers or cabinets. When purchasing storage solutions, I always recommend clear containers and shelves that can be easily labeled. Part of the success rate is continuing to keep items where they belong. Areas that are labeled adequately encourage success. You'll also want to include a trash receptacle that is in a highly visible area. This enables you to throw out the junk mail or fast food containers before they clutter your home or car.

6. Celebrate!

Congratulations! I'm so proud of you! Grab a cold drink, sit down and take a look at all that you have done. Dad will be so excited! You not only gave him a GREAT gift but also lowered his stress. Now the next time he needs a screwdriver or the kids want to play ball, it will be easily found and easily put away.



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