

Kiplinger's

PERSONAL FINANCE

YOUR GUIDE TO MAKING MONEY WORK

20s, 30s, 40s...

Success at every step

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MARK and KRISTA SCHUMACHER learned they could live well on one income after son Justin was born.



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HOME | Clean up the family dumping ground. *By Patricia Mertz Esswein*

Extreme makeover: GARAGE

IT'S NO SURPRISE if you can't shoe-horn a Ford Expedition into your garage. But if you can't cram in a Mini Cooper, there's a growing industry ready to rescue you. GarageTek and Gladiator GarageWorks, the leaders in garage organizing, will visit your home free to

measure your garage and devise a plan. One wall's worth of organizing products, installed, will usually cost \$2,000 to \$2,500, although you can spend a lot more. GarageTek sells its products installed only, with a one-wall minimum. Gladiator does installations, sells its products to do-it-yourselfers and lets

you design plans on its Web site.

Both systems start with plastic paneling (\$10 to \$12 per square foot) that is installed on top of the garage walls. Slots in the paneling let you hang cabinets, shelves and accessories so you can stow all the stuff you're tripping over on the garage floor.



Problem: Your tools wander off, and you can never find one when you need it.

Solution: Give your tools a home by creating a workshop or gardening center in your garage. Gladiator GarageWorks' workbench with maple butcher-block top (six feet, \$500; eight feet, \$550), power strip (\$170), lockable modular cabinet (below right, \$350) and tool chest (below left, \$450).

GLADIATOR GARAGEWORKS has a network of outlets nationwide (except in Alaska) that includes Sears, Lowes, Kmart and Target. www.gladiatorgw.com 866-342-4089



Problem: Heaps of balls and sports gear piled at the back door.

Solution: Hang GarageTek's family activity racks (\$70 to \$90) as well as baskets and shelves. Other options: Outfit your athlete with a Kid's Sports Locker personalized with his or her name and favorite number (\$150 to \$165). To stow larger items overhead, add a rope-and-pulley hoist (four hoists, with varying weight and height options, run \$75 to \$190 each). ▶

GARAGETEK has dealers in 35 states. Its products are also sold through Expo Design Center stores. www.garagetek.com 866-664-2724

For more ideas.

Bill West, a real estate agent and professional organizer, is author of *Your Garage-nous Zone: Innovative Ideas for the Garage* (Paragon Garage Co., \$22). One suggestion: Build a shed adjoining your garage to house oversized equipment, such as the lawn mower and snow blower.

For inspiration.

Flip through the coffee-table book *Garage: Reinventing the Place We Park*, by Kira Obolensky (Taunton Press, \$32). You'll ogle these showplaces built in every architectural style and for an array of uses (actor Dennis Hopper hangs contemporary art in his).



Problem: Finding a place for bikes where you won't knock them over or whack them with your car door.

Solution: Gladiator's Vertical Bike Hook (\$10 each) gets the bicycles off the floor and allows you to hang them securely on the wall.



Problem: Yard tools are a tangle of sharp objects.

Solution: Whatever the tool or hardware, you can find an accessory to hold it. GarageTek's hang-all bracket (shown here with hoses and spreader, \$55 to \$60) and gardening-activity rack (shown with bucket and shovel, \$90) let you group related items.



Problem: A Costco buying spree crowds out fridge space and leaves you with excess food to store.

Solution: Gladiator's Freezerator (\$1,100), with more freezer and less refrigerator. Also available is an under-workbench refrigerator (\$450) for your cold ones. The appliances are made by Whirlpool, Gladiator's parent company.



Problem: Tidy garage, ugly floor.

Solution: Interlocking plastic tiles (about \$5 per square foot) protect concrete floors from oil stains. Gladiator offers two colors and GarageTek five, although Gladiator dealers may carry other lines. (Flooring shown here is from RaceDeck.) **K**

—Research: JESSICA ANDERSON