

Helping kids organize: How to turn clean-up into child's play

If your child's room resembles a construction zone, with toys strewn all over the floor and dirty clothes stuffed under the bed, you're not alone. Convincing children to clean their rooms can be one of the most difficult

challenges parents face.

According to lifestyle consultant and do-it-yourself expert Beverly DeJulio, children often fail to clean their rooms not because they mean to disobey, but because their rooms do not have ade-

quate storage. "Few children's rooms have the floor or closet space of master bedrooms," says DeJulio, mother of four and host of Discovery Channel's do-it-yourself program "Easy Does It." "In many cases, there really is no place to put the toys but under the bed."

To help children organize and display their favorite things, DeJulio suggests putting the walls to work with easy-to-install decorative shelving. "Of course, installing shelving is no guarantee that you will be able to see what color the carpet is in your child's room, but it will greatly increase your child's storage area," explains DeJulio.

When selecting shelving, look for attractive, well-crafted shelving units that will blend in with the child's style in decor, suggests DeJulio. "Products such as Knappe & Vogt's Variations"

white unit is a wise choice, because it allows you to paint the standards and brackets to match any color scheme." And Variations shelves are reinforced with steel rails and optional bookend brackets to keep heavy items and books in their place.

Shelving can even serve as a small work area or vanity when installed at desk height. "Hang a mirror above a bottom shelf, and little girls have a place to dress up and put on jewelry, just like their favorite movie star," explains DeJulio.

DeJulio also recommends installing shelving at child height, so that favorite toys and storytime books can go on lower shelves within easy reach. "Keep fragile items, like porcelain dolls or prized trophies, on the highest shelves, out of reach," advises DeJulio.

The Variations wall template, a sewing pattern-like aid that is taped on the wall to assist with pre-installation placement, provides shelving height recommendations for youngsters. "The template is especially popular with single parents who want to install shelving on their own," explains DeJulio.

Whether you're a veteran do-it-yourselfer or a rookie, installing shelving in a child's room — or any other room — is a practical solution to controlling clutter, says DeJulio. "It's attractive, affordable and easy to install — but, best of all, it's a solution that may just make parenting a bit easier."

Variations shelving is available at many leading home centers. For a free copy of "Great Shelving Ideas," write to Bev DeJulio, c/o Knappe & Vogt, P.O. Box 11759, Chicago, IL 60611.



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Creating a home office environment

By JAN ADKINS

Those who have been diligently plugging away for years in their home offices must marvel at how "chic" it has become to work at home. In this age of personal computers, laser printers, desktop publishing, modems and faxes, technology has made it just as easy to conduct business around the world as it is to do around the corner — and all from your home.

Many homeowners have converted the extra bedroom, loft or garage into a home office space. The trend has also given rise to creative, multi-use rooms such as media room/office, den/office, exercise room/office, or guest room/office and has generated many new products. Some new kitchen designs even include a small personal office area.

The new home office is certainly a far cry from the dining room table workplace of the past. Today, it may well be used by various members of the family, because it probably houses the family computer.

However, keeping all of this equipment and technology organized and yet accessible is another story. The surfacing products used in an office area also should be adaptable to other uses and easy to clean so that you don't create another major maintenance area.

The elements of a successful home office design include ample work surfaces, storage for files and supplies, and protected areas for sensitive office equipment if necessary. If the space is multi-purpose or a small area, normal office clutter could present a problem. Built-in laminate cabinetry that conceals the paperwork after a busy work day is a good choice, particularly if the space doubles as the family room in the evening.

Nevamar Division of International Paper, a leading producer of residential and commercial surfacing materials, offers an array of decorative laminates suitable for any office environment.

Gone are the days of the dark woodgrain laminate desktop and matching file cabinet. Laminates are now available in hundreds of colors, patterns, and finishes. There are patterns that mimic the most exotic natural stones, marbles and woodgrains, simple geometric patterns, weathered metal designs like Verde Patina, and solid colors to complement any color scheme.

Myriad design options make customizing easy. Since most home offices are designed to the personal taste and requirements of the individual, laminates are a good choice.


If your home office is multi-use and might become a weekend guest bedroom, for example, you might choose to keep the furnishings in a lighter, neutral pattern or color range so that brighter color accents can be added with the selection of bed linen and accessories.

Or, if your office area is part of a greater space, you can choose from Nevamar's wide variety of laminate colors and patterns to complement the surrounding area. Custom features could include a specifically designed laminate desk and built-in storage, a computer center, or even a custom closet concealing a Murphy bed for guests.

Available for vertical and horizontal use, laminates are very easy to clean and maintain, and offer myriad design options. For the most part, these materials can be cleaned with mild soap and water or a non-abrasive cleaner — perfect for a hard working office application.

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