

Not Your Mothers Garage!

Has your average two-car garage has become a no-car garage because it's crammed full of junk and unorganized tools and storage? Garage organization is the newest trend, delivering value and convenience for homeowners. It even has impact at sale time. We have the "how to's" and the facts and figures.

As May is national home improvement month, you may be taking on jobs that require a little effort. If you can't tackle adding an addition, how about upgrading your garage? WHAT? Most have heard of upgraded appliances in the kitchen, or upgraded flooring. But upgrading the garage?

A well-organized, multi-purpose garage can become a selling point if you plan on selling your home. On top of that, some say that improvements in this room may actually increase a home's value.

Some experts say that even if it doesn't up the selling price, the well-organized garage can act as a perk that compels a buyer to make an offer.

When people look to the garage, it sort of sets an overall tone for how the house is being kept. A furnished or organized garage could suggest to prospective buyers that the entire house has been well maintained.

The growing demand for storing and organizing garages has created a mini- industry which does installs and manufactures wall mounted systems.

The garage storage industry was estimated at about \$1 billion in sales 2006, according to recent research by specialists in business Information, a market-research firm.

The Gladiator GarageWorks line of products, by Whirlpool, has quadrupled in sales during the past four years. Here you can [see the entire line of high-end systems](#)

Here you can see a gallery [of well organized garages.](#)

Another major player in the industry has created a franchise model so you can count on local professionals to help with design and installation. GarageTek, began in 2001 with annual sales of \$2 million. The full-service garage organization company had \$30 million in sales in 2006, and is expecting \$36 million in sales this year.

FAST FACTS

According to the Self Storage Association, 9% of U.S. households rented a self-storage unit in 2005. Gross revenues in the primary self-storage facility industry were about \$23 billion in 2006, according to the association.

There's also movement toward extending the garage as a living space, incorporating stations for crafters and gardeners and creating auxiliary play space for kids.

"Great garages" was listed as one of the top home trends by the National Association of Home Builders in 2006.

At this year's International Builders' Show, the NAHB forecasted an increased demand in three-car garages.

Forty-two percent of men and 41% of women said they enter the home most through the garage.

Estimating a price for:

Prices for organization products and services range widely. Do-it-yourselfers can clean things up with a couple hundred dollars worth of shelving components. But upscale garage cabinets can have a price tag of about \$30,000.

And a full-service job by GarageTek will run anywhere from \$2,500 to \$46,000, said GarageTek CEO Marc Shuman. The average job — a two-car garage installation with floors, wall storage and a ceiling system — usually runs around \$9,000, he said.

Home builders also are incorporating the organization systems into new homes in order to differentiate themselves during a slower real-estate market, he said.

If nothing else, a well-kept garage that shows well to potential buyers might help shorten the property's time on the market, said Barry Izsak, president of the [National Association of Professional Organizers](#) and author of the book "Organize Your Garage in No Time."