HOW-TO GUIDE

gearing up

TIPS TO KEEP SPORTS GEAR ORGANIZED, ACCESSIBLE AND ADVENTURE-READY

The sporting life is the fruitful life. And now that summer is in full swing, the great outdoors is ripe for the taking. But between game days and getaways, the garage can end up looking like a disheveled sports store.

Camping and hiking gear for nights under the stars. Baseball mitts and bats for the kid's little league games. Soccer. Raquetball. Tennis. Pickleball? There's so much gear, and so much potential for mess — you need to have a solid organization game plan. Here are some tips to help you keep your gear organized, accessible and adventure-ready:

Inside track

Athletic wear is a big part of the game. Consider a dedicated space in your bedroom closet to keep your athletic apparel separate from your regular wardrobe.

1. Like athletic equipment attracts like, so make sure every sport is in its place. Bats, fishing rods and similar objects live in harmony together, as do balls.

2. Stow away out of season gear. Some sports aren't year-round, so equipment like ice skates or snow skis can be hung or stored until it's time to use them in the winter.

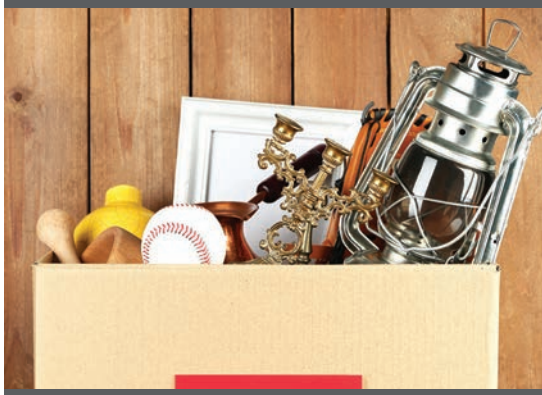
3. For the serious four-season athlete, your garage or basement is likely to get cluttered quickly once the next sport season comes along. Rotating items, and keeping in-season gear most accessible, will encourage little ones (and adults too!) to put their gear away after use — instead of leaving it to pile up on the garage floor.

4. Keep camping gear together for ease of packing. Store sleeping bags in breathable bags to prolong life and comfort,

or better yet, turn them inside out and hang them. Washing and hanging tents to dry before storage will avoid mildew and rot. Always be sure to keep fuels and flammables out of the house, and remove batteries and anything that can melt (looking at you candles!) if your garage tends to be hot.

5. The garage is a good place for sports-related footwear, but so is the laundry room, mudroom or an entryway when adequate storage is available. Don't forget that shoes can get muddy — keep a duffel bag in the car just for shoes, and save yourself unneeded clean up.

6. Sports gear is expensive — clean and safe organization protects your investment, and your fun! There are a number of ways to keep your garage organized all year long, ranging from simple shelves, to custom-made cabinets, to wall-mounted storage systems. The possibilities are endless.



Strike clutter and win

What about those old shoes, balls or golf clubs you've since upgraded or replaced? It's time to clear out all that equipment piled in the corner of the garage collecting dust. You could toss them to the dumpster, but why not donate them? Organizations like YMCA, Boys and Girls Club and Special Olympics are always in need of useable equipment. If you're hoping to get a return on your investment, retailers like Play It Again Sports offer trades and other options.

Speaking of return on investments, items like treadmills and stationary bikes might be worth selling, as long as they're in still in good shape and working order. With online options like Craigslist, eBay, Amazon or OutdoorClassifieds, you could walk away with some extra cash in your pocket.

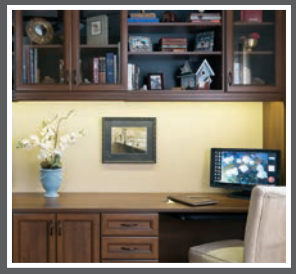
Bet you never thought of recycling your shoes. Through Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe program, the company shreds shoes into recycled surface material. According to Nike's website, about 632 million square-feet of recycled material have been used as surface material. That's nearly the size of Manhattan.

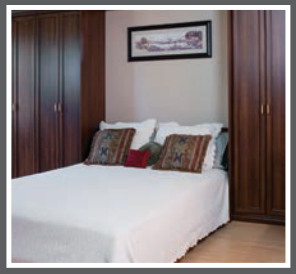
Keep it clean!

- Equipment bags and gear are bound to acquire some funk, especially when it comes to youth athletics. Bacteria is everywhere — it thrives in moist environments, but it can be kept in check. Make storing your gear away from dusty, dirty or moist environments a priority.
- Equipment doesn't need to be washed after every game but it should be aired out.
- Use vinegar for the harder to wash gear, such as helmets and pads. A spray bottle containing half vinegar and half warm water does the trick. Just let air dry, no wiping needed. Then a few drops of lavender or other scented oil will take the vinegar odor edge off.

- Baking soda is your friend. Sprinkle some in shoes after each wearing. It can also be used in addition to laundry detergent for extra punch. Use four tablespoons of baking soda to a quart of warm water to pre-soak uniforms and other sweaty clothing. Don't forget to sprinkle baking soda in the equipment bags.

Titleist





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