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How to give the garage back to your car

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The family garage is probably the most used and abused room in a home.

"The average two-car garage has basically become a no-car garage because it's crammed full of so much clutter," says Barry Izsak, author of *Organize Your Garage In No Time* (Que Publishing, $11.50).

Fortunately, it doesn't cost much to organize the family garage, says Izsak, who is also the past president of the National Association of Professional organizers. Here are a few low-cost solutions:

• **Think.** How is the garage used (workroom, storage, extra kitchen)? Do you want or need to change its use? Are you effectively using the floor and walls?

• **Pick easy targets.** Toss out the rusty wheelbarrow and the 10-year-old magazines.

• **Learn from the kitchen.** Kitchens have built-in organizational systems such as the refrigerator, cabinets and drawers. Create a system for organizing your garage.

• **Create zones.** Use a hardware store model to solve the turf war among craft materials, sports equipment and lawn supplies. "Keep similar things together," says Suzy Wilkoff, owner of Tasks Unlimited, a professional organizational service in Miami.

• **Find a new purpose** for the old furniture in your garage, Izsak says. A discarded entertainment center can be recycled as a work bench. Compartments in baby furniture or old desks can be used to store items.

• **Organize a garage sale or donate** unwanted items to charity. The family garage should be purged and organized once or twice a year, Wilkoff says.

And finally, "Save room in your garage for at least one car," Wilkoff says. ``That's what it was built for.''