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Think outside the closet, cabinets when organizing household clutter

By SHARON HARVEY ROSENBERG

An unused shower stall in one of our bathrooms has become a sports center. Hidden behind an elegant shower curtain are scooters, bikes, roller blades and other small items that once cluttered various rooms of our home. The spare shower provides a creative solution to our lack of storage.

Finding hidden storage in unconventional spaces is an ideal solution for apartment and condo dwellers or families in small homes. Even in large homes, unused bathrooms can solve many organizational challenges, according to Rivka Caroline, owner of SoBe Organized in Miami Beach. For instance, a spare bathtub can be converted to a small hidden laundry room, Caroline said. Here's how: install a second shower curtain rod over the tub and use that rod to hang either wet or dry laundry.

"The trick is to think unconventionally," Caroline said.

In other areas of the home, ornamental accessories and furniture can provide places to stash things. Near her front door, Caroline uses a beautiful antique desk to keep her family organized and equipped as they walk out the door.

She has it neatly stocked with water bottles, ear pieces for electronic gadgets, phone chargers, flashlights, rain jackets, suntan lotion and other items for family or school outings.

Elegant piano stools also offer options. If the piano is rarely used, consider using the stool for storing other items needed around the home, Caroline said.

Myscha Theriault, a contributor at www.Wisebread.com, a popular frugal living blog, has compiled a helpful list of unusual storage spaces. Her list includes:

- **The space below shelves.** Mugs, dishes and utensils can be hung on hooks from the bottom of a kitchen shelf. That same wall space can be used for storage if pegs are installed in the wall below the shelf.
- **Use ceiling racks.** In the kitchen, garage and other rooms, ceiling racks offer extra layers of storage. Sold at home improvement stores, these racks are great for storing pots, holiday decorations, tools and sporting equipment, Theriault said.

But avoid creating new clutter corners, advises Suzy Wilkoff, owner of Task Unlimited, an organizational consulting firm in Miami. Think before storing.

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