



Using Storage Solutions

to Solve Kitchen-Organizing Dilemmas

Adding storage solutions to an organizing project is one of my favorite parts of the process. Containers provide the opportunity for you to make your space even more functional, and they give you the chance to dress up your space and make it more pleasing to your eye.

When you're ready to purchase containers or repurpose storage solutions you already have on hand, keep in mind that the primary role of containers is to solve your kitchen-organizing dilemmas. Start by considering what problem or problems you are trying to solve, and then select a container that will best solve that dilemma. Here is a summary of things to keep in mind when selecting containers:



- * Identify the problem or improvement you want to make. Then select a container that best addresses or resolves that problem for you.
- * Select containers that are functional and attractive. The more you love how your finished project looks, the more motivated you will be to keep it that way going forward.
- * Measure the area where your containers will go. Then, take your measurements and a tape measure to the store with you!

Storage tip! I absolutely love how baskets and canvas containers look in a kitchen. But my kitchen is a messy work zone, so I tend to use white, plastic containers. They look clean and they are easy to clean, which makes them a great choice for the kitchen. (Every now and then, I do make an exception.)

Problem: My cupboard shelves look cluttered.

Problem solved! Opaque bins allow you to group like items together, such as food storage containers or lunch-making supplies. I also use small white bins to store spices blends on a shelf in my kitchen cupboard. Because these bins aren't see-through, they also help cut down on visual clutter in your storage spaces. Because they are durable, they make it easy to get a bunch of items off a shelf and into a usable area in your kitchen in just one step. Also, because they're washable, they stand up to years of use and still look great.

☞ Storage tip! As a general rule of thumb, I like to use containers that can be used in many different environments. For example, I replaced some of the Sterilite containers I've used in my pantry for years with some Lazy Susans. I'm sure that I will be able to put these containers to use in other areas in my home, either now or in the future. That's the power of using versatile containers. ☞



RESOURCES + LINKS

Plastic storage bins are available at most retailers that carry storage products. Check your local retailer to see if they carry a container that will suit your needs.

I use **Sterilite® Ultra Baskets**, which are available through Amazon:

<http://amzn.to/sPWg2a>

The Container Store offers similar baskets that are stackable. Stackable baskets can help you stretch storage space by putting more vertical space to use.

<http://bit.ly/v1u6xH>

The **itso bin from Target®** is another one of my favorite storage bins. Go to www.target.com and search for "itso."

Problem: I can't get to things in the back of my pantry or refrigerator!

A Lazy Susan is handy for all sorts of applications in the kitchen, including in the cupboard for spices, in the pantry for baking goods, canned goods or snacks, and in the refrigerator for condiments. They make it easy to get your hands on items stored at the back of the deep pantry or cupboard.

Three-tiered shelves make it easier to see items in the back of your pantry or cupboards. This helps prevent items from getting lost or forgotten.

Pull-out drawers allow you to more easily access the items in the back of a deep cabinet. You can create makeshift drawers using a bin. Or you can purchase units to convert cupboard space into drawer space.

RESOURCES + LINKS

Lazy Susan/Turntable

✦ My new **Lazy Susans** were purchased at **Bed Bath and Beyond®**. They are 18" Non-Skid Turntables made by Copco®. Lazy Susans are also easy to find at stores like Target, Walmart®, The Container Store and other specialty storage stores.

<http://amzn.to/1bqCq7g>

<http://bit.ly/vR7Prq>

Three-tiered Shelf

- * The three-tiered shelf I used is from Expand-a-Shelf®: <http://bit.ly/uvpjIZ>

Spice Packet Holder

- * Mesh packet holders from The Container Store will help prop up your packets so they are easier to see. <http://bit.ly/sgdyXd>

Pull-Out Basket System

- * Deco Brothers mesh sliding basket drawer <http://amzn.to/1bhDF2N>

Pull-Out Shelves

- * Rev-a-Shelf: <http://amzn.to/uH6QYb>
- * IKEA: <http://bit.ly/rRkcry>

Problem: I can't find a good place to keep the lids for my pots and pans.

Problem solved! A simple **lid rack** for pot and pan lids helps keep your lids accessible. I keep mine in a pull-out drawer right in front of my pots.

RESOURCES + LINKS

Lid racks are readily available at stores like Walmart, Target and The Container Store and come in a variety of types and styles.

- * Some sit stationary in your cupboard: <http://bit.ly/rEUbts>.
- * Others can be mounted on the inside of the cabinet door: <http://amzn.to/uMknTc>.
- * And others are designed to slide out of the cupboard as needed: <http://bit.ly/v3kSzH>.

Problem: All my drawers end up so disorganized!

Problem solved! Drawer organizers give the inside of your drawers definition and division, which means it's easier to carve out specific homes for all of your kitchen items.

**RESOURCES + LINKS****Drawer Organizers**

- * Bed Bath & Beyond: <http://bit.ly/uqttHA>
- * Amazon: <http://amzn.to/1cm71ld>

Problem: I can't access my cooking utensils easily when I need them.

Problem solved! While I do like to keep my counter relatively clear of items, I love the function and look of a **utensil crock**. I fill mine mostly with items used for cooking, and keep it on the right-hand side of my stove. This saves steps and time when I'm cooking, since I'm not constantly rummaging through a drawer.

RESOURCES + LINKS**Utensil Crock**

- * My white crock came from **Target**. Go to www.target.com and search for utensil crocks.
- * **Bed Bath & Beyond** carries a rotating white utensil crock
<http://bit.ly/uLRhv4>

Problem: I can't see my stored food which leads to lots of wasted food.

Problem solved! Whether you're storing leftovers or dry goods like cereal, rice or pasta, **clear food storage containers** are the way to go. You will waste a lot less food when you can see what's inside the containers.



☞ Storage tip! If your drawer organizers move around in your drawers try Loctite® Fun-Tak®. It works great for me! ☞

RESOURCES + LINKS**Clear Food Storage Containers (Plastic)**

- * My new cereal canisters are **Snapware®** from **The Container Store**: <http://bit.ly/sJv6fO>
- * Or consider the **IKEA 365+** jar: <http://bit.ly/vIAPXk>
- * For flour, sugar, spaghetti and chocolate chips, I used **Click Clack® Original Canisters**, also from **The Container Store**: <http://bit.ly/s1lOzx>

**Glass Jars**

- * **Canning jars** are a cost-effective and widely available choice.
- * **IKEA glass jars**: <http://www.ikea.com/us/en/catalog/products/06130000/>
- * These jars from **IKEA** are great because the lid is clear, too, making them a terrific option for inside of a drawer: <http://bit.ly/1ePYzuj>

Problem: My counter-tops look cluttered, but I need to keep things out due to lack of storage space.

Problem solved! Trays are another organizing essential in the kitchen. I keep my toaster on a tray in the pantry, which makes it easier to move the toaster out onto the counter when we need to use it, plus it keeps crumbs from falling through the wire shelves in my pantry. Trays are also terrific visual clutter cutters. When you group a collection of items on a tray, your eye sees just the tray, which makes for a more streamlined and clutter-free look.

RESOURCES + LINKS**Trays**

- * **IKEA**: <http://www.ikea.com/us/en/catalog/products/90187550/>
- * **Amazon**: <http://amzn.to/sRKZsc>
- * **Target**: Visit www.target.com and search for melamine trays.

Problem: I need more storage space in my kitchen.

Problem solved!

- * **Edit your belongings.** If your kitchen is short on storage space, the least expensive solution is to edit your kitchen items down to those things that you use, need and love. Remember, it doesn't make sense to spend money on storage for items you don't use.
- * **Consider storage areas outside of your kitchen.** This was one of my go-to strategies when organizing my kitchen and it freed up a ton of storage space. Consider where in your home you could add a shelving unit (or declutter an existing shelving unit of things you don't need or use anymore) to create space for kitchen items.
- * **Add extra shelves** in your kitchen. Extra shelves are terrific storage stretchers in any space, and the kitchen is no exception. If you're short on storage space in your kitchen, do a quick scan for white space—open areas in your kitchen where you can add a shelf. If you have open space in a cupboard, consider adding a small, free-standing cabinet shelf to expand your storage space. If you have open space on the wall, consider a small ledge shelf for spices or bottles of oil and vinegar. In our kitchen, we added an extra shelf above the top shelf in the pantry, which became a terrific out-of-the-way home for infrequently used appliances.
- * **Consider using the backs of doors for storage.** Consider adding hooks to the inside of your cupboard doors to hold utensils like measuring cups or spoons. Put the inside of your pantry door to use with an over-the-door shelving system or repurpose an over-the-door shoe organizer for spice packets or light-weight kitchen gadgets.
- * **Add free standing storage such as a cart or armoire.** If you have open wall space or floor space in your kitchen or in a nearby room, consider using a kitchen cart or an armoire to store overflow kitchen items.



“This cabinet is right off of my kitchen. It could be used for storing all sorts of kitchen items like placemats, cookbooks and serving pieces. Do you have a cabinet you could repurpose for extra storage?”

RESOURCES + LINKS

- * **In-Cabinet Shelves**
- * Stacking shelves from **The Container Store**: <http://bit.ly/rySDcy>
- * Under shelf basket from **The Container Store**: <http://bit.ly/tkrkIS>

Wall Shelves/Storage Systems

- * Your local home improvement store such as Lowe's or Home Depot, is a terrific place to check for shelving systems of all types.
- * Consider using a **narrow ledge shelf** like this one from **The Container Store** for spices, oils and other frequently used items: <http://bit.ly/s0s5HH>
- * **IKEA** has a terrific wall storage system: <http://bit.ly/uOdqxp>
- * **IKEA** also has a variety of wall mount shelves that would work great in the kitchen.



Storage for Behind Doors

- * White **elfa®** door and wall rack solution: <http://bit.ly/uPJhUN>
- * **Walmart** kitchen shelving for back of door: <http://bit.ly/uKqZS8>
- * **The Container Store** 24-Pocket Overdoor Shoe Bag: <http://bit.ly/szSExl>

Free-standing Storage

- * **Carts and islands** from **IKEA**: <http://bit.ly/27RQMY>
- * **Carts** from **The Container Store**: <http://bit.ly/uIFEUg>
- * **Bakers rack** from **The Container Store**: <http://bit.ly/u9oMI7>
- * **Free-standing kitchen** storage from **IKEA**: <http://bit.ly/gkTDV6>
- * **Hemnes Glass-door** cabinet from **IKEA**: <http://bit.ly/1q7cmjN>
- * **Repurpose a cabinet** you already own or look for one on Craig's List or eBay.

Remember, the big trick when selecting storage is to find containers and organizers that will solve the problems you're currently experiencing in your kitchen.

Happy shopping—and happy organizing!

Aby