

Stylish Scrapbook Storage

What Your Workspace Says About Your Cropping Style!



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Does Your Storage System Fit Your Scrapping Style?

Have you ever started a craft project, and didn't finish it in one sitting? If you answered no, then you can go ahead and navigate away from this page, because this book isn't for you. The rest of you know it just doesn't matter how much, or how little space you have; the potential for chaos looms large over us artsy folks. In fact, the larger your creative space, the greater your chances for full-blown messiness! Anyone blessed with an entire workroom at your disposal knows this is true.

“Organization” isn't necessarily about *storing* your craft supplies; **True** organization is storage that lives and works with you -- and your unique style. It must pass at least four tests:

1. It must provide ***ease of access*** when you are working on a project.
2. It must ***fit the size and style*** of your workspace, whether you have a shelf, a closet, or an *entire room* devoted to your craft.
3. It must ***“play nice”*** with the other situations and people in your life -- other hobbies and those of other family members or roommates, if you share a home.
4. It must ***fit your personality***. For example, imagine an exposed dowel, attached to a wall horizontally, upon which hangs a casual and abundant assortment of ribbons and yarns, ready for the crafter's pickings. What's your first reaction?
 - Yummy and inspiring!
 - That mess is appalling; would you like me to roll those into balls?
 - Wow, the cat would just love that!
 - I don't use ribbon and yarn on my pages.

(All responses have perfectly valid and important distinctions!)

5. Finally (and this is just an opinion, I admit) – it must be **exclusive**: No sharing a cabinet with your husband's fishing tackle, for example.

Now, I've met many types of scrappers over the years, and I think I know a thing or two about how we work. To illustrate some organization solutions, I have separated us scrapbookers into four different organizational types. You may think one's organizational style depends primarily on the amount of square footage you're able to "take over" from the household to practice your craft. Not so! I have found that a creative person, at least in the scrapping community, operates primarily from one of four different creative perspectives – and it doesn't have a thing to do with the space she has!

Which type are *You*?

- *The Greenie*. You recycle, reduce, reuse, and restore. Not a thing goes to waste in your craft. Whether you are inherently frugal, efficient, or just a concerned non-wasteful citizen; you hate to throw things away.
- *The "More-is-more" Gal*. (Oh, you know who you are!) You can't say no to *any* new product. If one is good, sixteen varieties are better. Your pages are bountiful, and never the same. You'd rather have a smorgasbord than a simple meal, every time.
- *Ms. Rainbow* – the color inspired scrapper. Your first thought is color. Whether you are designing a page, or organizing your supplies, color is your ruling motivation. You've studied the color wheel and are sensitive to all hues and shades of colors. You could never pick a favorite!
- *The Artful Beauty*. The elegant, peaceful beautician. Your work environment must be beautiful and serene, at all cost. Your enjoyment comes from your lovely environment. Your workspace provides your creative muse a place of comfort and joy. The process is just as important as the end result.

So which one are you? Probably a mix of two or more, but it's likely you strongly associate with one in particular. By incorporating some good habits and helpful products into your life, you can create a system as unique as you are – regardless of the amount of space you have available. Read on...

The Greenie



The most horrifying sight to the Greenie is a trash can full of perfectly good scraps. You are heartbroken when a jar of glitter glue dries up before you've used it all. You've been known to keep an old greeting card because you're sure the image on the front could fit into a layout some day. In a way, you are the truest of scrapbookers because you know the meaning of "scraps," and you value the smallest one. You see something desirable in almost everything and feel obliged to either use it yourself or pass it along to someone who will.

But the idea of organizing all of this, especially when you have limited space, is almost insurmountable. So what is the greenie to do?

Recycling

First of all, get rid of the guilt over throwing tiny scraps away. That's my first, and probably the most important, piece of advice. If you have a sliver of some gorgeous paper that you *might* use (that is if you ever find it again, or if the project is right), consider the "price" of the challenge of keeping it safe somewhere. If you adore each and every little shred that falls from your scissors, then you're probably not enjoying the process of creating as much as you could be. Put the joy back into scrapping: Start a recycling box and just say

goodbye. If you simply let go of all those tiny treasures, I sincerely believe you will come across the perfect scrap *just when you need it*. Don't let the small stuff weigh you down. Not to sound too "new age-y" but if you believe just a little bit in the law of attraction, "letting go" invites future abundance. Just don't beat yourself up for getting rid of some things!

If it's programs and maps and other odd memorabilia that you are prone to keeping, try using them as backgrounds on your pages. Krylon makes an acid-free spray that neutralizes acids in all types of paper, and keeps it from getting brittle and ruining your books and photos, called [Make It Acid Free](#). At \$9.99 a can, it's a cheap way to get a unique look for your pages of memories.

Reducing

If you are sincere about reducing your inventory, the first step is to NOT purchase more than you need in the first place. Buy what you love and ignore the rest. Stay away from the huge slabs of paper and the stamps in every theme. If you are part of a scrap booking group, convince members to purchase just one die cut or rubber stamp font each, and then respectfully rotate and borrow from one another. I'm sure your goodwill in organizing such a system will be appreciated by all.

Another great way to reduce the supplies you keep on hand is to make use of the *many* digital products available. For example, instead of purchasing a pack of cute stickers just to use that one "*must-have*," consider checking online for a piece of clip art or a downloadable page of images you are **sure** to use. Don't print it until you need it and you've saved yourself some storage space right off the bat. [E-Cuts](#) are downloadable and printable designs.

Reusing

Have you ever had some supplies you know you'll never use again? Maybe you bought them to make something for a friend, and the remainders just aren't your style. How about using up your supply to make cards or some other consumable little product that you could give as a gift, or donate to a craft booth for charity? You could also think about simply selling your unused craft supplies on an online website like www.etsy.com. There are countless other crafters out there who would love a chance to purchase your stuff at a small discount, and you'd be doing yourself a favor to get that stuff out the door.

Schools, children's museums, and hospitals are also ready recipients of your craft cast-offs. Creative kids can use almost anything you might have, from paper, to glitter, to cardboard toilet paper tubes! Even old magazines and pop tabs are welcome at certain venues, so if you're a crafty recycler I'm sure you can come up with some creative products to donate. You'll clear up some space and help out a local organization to boot!

Finally, to keep an eye on your stuff and to make sure you're using all of it, and appropriately finding new homes for the stuff you don't, I suggest keeping your supplies in sight. Your practical nature is probably at home with the idea of storing your stuff in plain view because, truly, that's the most efficient way of assuring it will stay in circulation.

Know and Use What You Have – Choose What to Keep

There is a great organization system call the [“elfa” system](#) which is built right onto your wall to your specifications. If your scrapbook hobby is truly an integral part of your life, it might be a good idea to designate a hallway, or the wall of one bedroom or office just for keeping (and using!) your supplies. This system is perfect for someone who needs to see what is available to use, since the shelf space is ample. Aside from the many cubbies, you can stash items in clear boxes and keep them handy as you choose what to use, and discover what *hasn't* been used in awhile. The upside of everything being in plain sight is that you will no longer wonder what has been stored away (and for how long)! When your work

supplies are in view you can get started faster and put things away faster than ever before. If you are prone to saving things, "elfa" won't let you forget what you have -- which is often the first pitfall of someone whose best intentions involve saving, reusing, and recycling.

The Ultimate Greenie Solution

Of course I would be remiss if I did not mention the ultimate Greenie solution and that is to go completely digital. Converting completely too digital can be challenging and will not happen overnight. However it is doable.

You may ask where to start. I recommend two options.

1. Use an online service like [Heritage Makers](#). You can store photos and create fabulous layouts with their great selection of templates or you can create your layouts from scratch. It is really up to your imagination. You can then order your completed scrapbook and they will send you a great hardcover album.
2. If you consider yourself computer savvy, then you may want to look at Photoshop CS4 and downloading free or inexpensive digital design kits like the great ones found here at [twopeasinabucket.com](#)

Although there will be a learning curve if you have not yet tried it, digital scrapbooking can be every bit as rewarding as traditional paper scrapbooks and it is the definitive green solution.

The More-Is-More Gal

The Case Study



Just to prove that space doesn't matter when it comes to "where your heart is," I'm going to tell you about a friend of mine who had a serious scrapbooking bug. I use the word *bug* kindly because hers was more like a sickness. To give you an idea of her, ahem, *passion for accumulation*: she purchased some wedding-themed supplies several years *after* she and her husband tied the knot and *after* she had already made her own wedding scrapbook. I happened to be along on this particular shopping spree, and I wondered aloud if she was making something special for someone she knew. "No. I just love these. I'm sure my daughter will get married someday, and then I'll be glad I have these things!" I politely refrained from remarking that she didn't have a daughter, because her inevitable answer would have been "Oh, but I will!"

Now, did I mention that she lived in a 900 square foot apartment at the time?

You are probably wondering where she stored that sort of abundance! Well, I can tell you her apartment was quite cluttered, because she kept so many storage boxes everywhere. I think her saving grace was this: The table where she put her books together was always clear of everything but what she was working on *at the moment*. By allowing herself that one oasis of clarity, she justified her endless splurges. While I don't know how she kept on top of her huge inventory, somehow her pages were always delightful and she stuck with her projects until completion – something I can't always say for myself!

Granted, when you live in a 900 square foot apartment, the "more is more" mindset requires a bit of justification and a fabulous organizational system. I will never know how

she remembered what was kept in all those stacked boxes. How is it possible to store all those shades of green paper, for example, or organize the stamps you got on sale (again)? Somehow, she did it with style.

Reality check: Go on a Craft Diet

My life-loving, miraculously organized friend aside, just because you want to try it all, doesn't mean you have to go whole hog with every trendy color scheme and sticker collection. Think of it like being on a diet of sorts: there's no need to cut out what you love altogether. You really **can** have it all, just limit your portion sizes. In other words, acquire what you fancy; just not all of it at once. The best way to do this is to *organize your time*. Limit your choices to two or three projects at a time, or take a strict linear approach and restrain your project resources to one book or card set at a time.

Long term planning allows you to collect all the materials you need, along with a complete time line of photos, all in one place. Perhaps you could keep a file box in a corner of your apartment and add to its contents as your ideas sprout.

I did just that with my toddler's book. After finishing a year-long project documenting the first 12 months of my baby's life, I decided to just make one spot a "keeping place" for the next book in the sequence. I purchased a toddler scrapbook idea book and kept it available over the course of those crazy years, peeking at it for inspiration every now and then. Meanwhile, I stashed pretty papers and borders, made relevant die cuts when I had the opportunity (at crop nights, etc), printed only my best photos, and tossed them into a large envelope. When my toddler went to school (all too soon), I dug into all my saved toddler mementos and worked on the book in one fell swoop.

After it was finished – within several weeks – I realized that the benefit to this method of organization was the ability to enjoy the moments as they unfolded instead of focusing on what the page was going to look like! I fully participated in that short and sweet tumble of years, with no regrets and no stress about getting it documented perfectly. The

“simmering” creative process, as I call it now, added flavor and comfort to an otherwise hectic time of life. I always knew I wanted to make the toddler book, but making it in the midst of all that chaos would have only added to the pandemonium. I’m glad I let it wait; the precious perspective made quick work of the book in the end.

Let’s be honest now, have you ever arranged a background, or chosen clothing, based on what you envisioned the page to be? Maybe you had even already purchased the scrapbook goodies before the actual event? When you put things in their place until your ready to assemble your book, you can trust your ongoing taste and let life happen naturally. Having tried this method with the toddler book, trust me, your pages are richer for it.

Even More-is-More Gals Can Be Practical

Another way to “have it all” in a small space is to put together a community of scrapbook friends who are willing to trade tools and unique supplies. If you really want to try that peach colored glitter (when you already have a perfectly good light orange glitter) maybe you could justify the purchase and the space utilization if you know you are going to trade those unused glitters with a friend. And the bonus is that she probably has some other element that would go to waste if she didn’t pass it on.

I suspect that if we all shared what we knew were done with, we’d all have cleaner workspaces and a wider variety of useful scrapbooking supplies. The trick is getting creative about our social scrapbooking and organizing our networks!

Space Saving Solutions

We come face to face with the honest need for good old storage solutions when you simply **can’t** say no to scrapbooking supplies. If you’ve admitted that you wouldn’t begin to fit your stuff into a desk hutch or file cabinet, it’s time to start shopping for some heavy duty hobby furniture. The great news is there are several products out there that would work for you

whether you live in a small apartment, or have a designated scrapbook room in your mansion.

There is a really [beautiful cabinet](#) available that could be used as a piece of furniture in an entry hall, available to catch mail and keys on its surface while keeping a ton of supplies hidden inside. It's hefty dimensions take up about the area of a work desk, but it's volume is designed to hold almost 27 cubic feet of supplies in sturdily partitioned order! From paper to beads, its 50 drawers ensure there is a place for everything; even loose and odd-shaped things can be hung in satchels of various sizes inside its doors. And the best thing about it is the way it opens up and provides some legroom to sit and create while it furnishes you with anything and everything you might need.

If you use a cabinet like this, I recommend you re-evaluate your supply every year or so. Then keep what you love (but won't use this year) somewhere cool and dry – maybe in one of those ubiquitous plastic bins in a closet. Keep what you realistically may use throughout the year easily accessible in this handsome cabinet. My dear old friend would have loved this system!

The second rule for storing massive amounts of supplies is **use vertical space**, as in this well designed paper storage tower. The tower can be customized to suit your needs, but just imagine what you would do with the basic system, which provides ten [12x12 paper trays](#)! You can then add the [double rolling base](#) allowing for up to 60 trays! If you can't stop yourself from buying paper -- or even painting and making your own – you should have this one piece of furniture in your home. It's so much better than a file cabinet, wouldn't you say?

Ms. Rainbow



The orderly arrangement of color satisfies some people more than others. The scrapper who arrangers her workspace following the sequence of colors in the rainbow is more creatively organized than the rest of us because she sees relations between colorful things and wants to be able to choose the perfect hue, tint, or shade for each project. Therefore, it all must be accessible, with nothing hidden. The looks of her workspace can be very pleasing on the eye, if it's kept neat. But when the rainbow gal lets things get out of control – look out! Not only is she unable to work, but her room looks like a box of spilled paints. Her inner muse can get really sulky!

If you are the color inspired crafter, you know how important your organization system is. Perhaps you organize your materials into warm and cool colors, or maybe you group them by pastels, brights, and neutrals. You may simply follow the rainbow from red through indigo and keep things lined up that way. The one aspect to this type of organization is not the need for more space, per se, but the need for more partitions. After all, your organization must accommodate not only papers, but paints, ribbons, pens, and perhaps beads, buttons, brads, and other small embellishments. And if you're passionate about color coding, they must all have their place.

Challenge: Be Specific!

Organize by Color (or, What's Behind the Door?):

[icube](#) makes some wonderful modular storage systems which would work well for any scrapper. They hold a special charm for the color enthusiast because they come in colors

way beyond black and white (although you can get those, too)! I'm envisioning a grid of all different colors, and behind each colored door hides beautiful treasures in that color family. Imagine opening a plum colored door and finding a flocked lavender ribbon, some grape inkpads and markers, purple glitter and a lovely periwinkle flower image. What could be better for the color motivated scrapper than to choose from among those goodies – all in the color family you desire! Incidentally, the last time I checked there was a **great sale** going on with these cubes and their handy dividers, colored fabric drawers, and special combinations, so I definitely recommend checking this site often!

Organize by Product (or, How Many Shades of Blue Paper Have You?)

Another awesome product for orderly colors – particularly for papers – is the [12x12 Lipless Paper Trays](#). This tower takes up only a 14 inch square on your floor, but can reach all of 67 inches high, so it's perfect for the paper collector who lives in a small OR large space. This series of paper storage also includes a [rolling stand](#) which can hold up to 30 trays to sort your 12 x 12 papers vertically. If you're looking for options, be sure to check out this wonderful product.

Now I ask you -- really, who doesn't organize papers by colors? You'd have to be a little crazy to want to hunt through a large stack of unrelated papers to find the one you need. Just like in the organized scrapbook stores that we all love to frequent, a most pleasing sight is a wall of juicy color, lined up and ready to go! Seeing is believing, and when your eyes are met with that beautiful visual in your own craft area, you won't want to go back to your file system again. Maybe it's time to convert your hanging files to hold interesting borders, a massive sticker collection, or cards and envelopes – things you don't mind hiding away.

No Secrets

Another option for the color minded: keep everything out in the open! Why not? Just like the old fashioned candy stores! You can't use what you can't see, so let the color you love

make its mark on your living environment. If you take advantage of an organizational system like the [elfa](#) you will probably want to live with your colorful supplies in plain sight, no matter how tiny your apartment. The neat and strong white lines provide a visual boundary within which all your beautiful supplies can live. By converting a portion of a wall to a storage space, you immediately add decoration to the place where you work – even if it happens to double as the guest bedroom! By adding framed creations of yours to the surrounding walls, you and your guest are greeted with your flair for color and your passion for preserving memories and creating new ones. Combine it with this [EZ-View Craft desk](#); you can be sure the area will get used for more than just your craft hobby, too.

Armed with some ideas for color organization, go now and tame your rainbow of supplies!

Artful Beauty

Serenity is Key



While some folks love the chaos of creating, there are others who relish a calm environment, free from the distractions of art supplies spilling over here and there. These elegant ladies seem to effortlessly create the loveliest works of art, while maintaining a clean desk, an organized jar of pencils, and stacks of paper with edges so square you could build a temple around them. Not only do they work without a mess, but their workspaces reflect that same structured sensibility. Yarn ends are always neatly tucked in and tidied in beautiful baskets; containers that hold stamps and brushes are usually art works in themselves. These are the women who enjoy music and scented candles while they create. They create an oasis of beauty and turn out equally inspiring craft projects. Hats off to them!

Just As Beautiful on the Inside

I have news for you nay-sayers out there who might argue that these artists just keep their messes stashed behind closed doors. “Sure, the workspace might exude grace on the surface,” you may be thinking, “but just peek inside the closet...” Well, I hate to be the one to break it to you, but these types of hobbyists are usually the real deal. Their closets and drawers are as neatly organized and easy on the eyes as the parts that show on the outside.

While I really have very little advice for such a well-mannered crafter, I can suggest some products which might inspire you to become such a lady. I recently came across a huge armoire, massive (like the antique wardrobes people used before we had closets) in size, and decked out with every imaginable drawer and cubby for your craft projects! It's a very exciting prospect for someone like me who wistfully sighs when I see art rooms with plenty of art on the walls, and a wide sunbathed table beckoning in the center of the room. “But where in the world is the glue?” I think; certain that such a scrapbooker must simply conjure it when she needs it!

If you want to see the future of craft supply storage, and imagine enjoying your home just as it is without the obvious signs of creative madness, [check out this beauty](#) and pull up a chair. Now, I'm an organizer junkie of sorts. I have spent hours of my life wandering through [The Container Store](#) and dreaming of the perfectly organized and mechanized reality which would solve the minor snafoos of my days. For about a year, when I had only one child and he could be carried around as easily as a sack of rice, I too did wonderful things like put detergent in a pretty glass jar on my washing machine, in hopes that the good housekeeping fairies might smile on me and bless my home with happy dust. But fast forward a few years, a couple children and a dog...without painting you a picture, trust me, it hasn't turned out like I planned.

First, let me say, verily, I am a blessed and grateful woman; But now I have something new to wish for! I believe there are around 90 separate containers in this gorgeous [craft armoire](#), as well as a fold-down table, and hanging clear plastic zippered storage bags for who-knows-what? (I'm thinking extra chocolate kisses and beef jerky.) The price tag makes it a commitment, but if it's the last thing I do, I'll purchase one of these armoires (make mine black) and my life will never be the same again! (By the way, you're all invited over for wine and cheese when she arrives and we'll assemble it like real women do. Come to think of it, that can't be easy, but I'm keeping my eye on the prize!)

The New Meaning of “Make and Take”

Whether you have oceans of room to create, or just a closet shelf, the crafter who maintains a sense of calm in her environment also makes herself easy to live with! Pity the poor family of the woman who keeps her glue gun in the bathroom, or the alphabet stamps on the laundry room shelf. Without rhyme or reason, anyone can stumble on some precious craft materials and inadvertently knock them off the shelf, or use them inappropriately. Now take that to the next level when the crafter has her stuff out and is working on a project! The problems compound: for example, the supplies become fair game for anyone looking for a pair of scissors, that marvelous origami paper acquires a phone number in ink, the cat bats the pencil sharpener under the sofa, AND the project makes the whole house look out of order.

Well, here's a really cool table that actually folds up and stores your project in perfect condition whenever you need to stop working on your pages. Its lid actually fits onto the base like a glove, allowing you to leave your scraps just where they are without getting shuffled; and you can hide it under a bed or a sofa in no time flat!

This [Scrap and Stow Portable Scrapbooking Table](#) is the perfect solution for the person whose environment means everything to her. In previous paragraphs I've been swooning about the craft room of my dreams, when actually this good-sized table is all I'd really need

to allow me to work in the “perfect” environment -- that is, wherever my family happens to be hanging out (well, most of the time). Granted, the serene workspace where “all is right with the world” appeals to many crafters, but you don’t have to clear out a room to create the perfect workspace. Sometimes it’s perfectly okay to get your supplies out of whatever small hidey hole they inhabit and insert yourself in the room where you want to be. This table is the solution. Its super sturdy and its compartments can store more than enough supplies for a page or two. You can set it up in the family room, for example, as your spouse watches TV; and enjoy a chat, and a show, and some scrapbooking, all at the same time. At the end of the evening, simply fold it away and it disappears. All you need is a chair and you have a just-right place to crop!

It’s clear that a peaceful atmosphere for creating doesn’t just “happen.” A lot of thought and planning go into organizing an environment that you and the people you live with can enjoy. Sometimes, it’s okay for your hobby to be “all about you” as long as you have the space and time to arrange your house and schedule that way. Other times, and in other smaller and more hectic spaces, you can make a temporary oasis out of a simple table and allow yourself to enjoy the world around you as you craft.

With all the new storage products on the market these days, true organizational creativity accommodates all types of scrapbookers, whether you live large, or in the coziest of homes!

About the Author

Working from her home office, Scrapbook Coach, Tammy Morales serves as editor and owner of Scrapbooker's Inner Circle. Here, she shares her expertise, insights and passion for scrapbooking with others who love to scrapbook as much as she does.



A resident of a small rural community north of Calgary, Alberta, Tammy balances her time between her business interests and her family, which includes her husband, two teenagers and their dog Charlie.

In addition to founding Scrapbooker's Inner Circle, Tammy runs a marketing business with her husband. She also has a successful graphic design company and is a business coach and consultant.

When she's not running the family's businesses or taking care of her husband and two teens, Tammy likes to spend time entertaining family and friends, shopping, reading, traveling, and of course, scrapbooking.

She has been a scrapbooker for 23 years and loves to share her hobby with others. That's the main reason she founded scrapbookersinnercircle.com, so beginners, experts and everyone in between could learn from one another.

Tammy believes that everyone is capable of achieving the goals they set for themselves in life.

Check out her blog at www.ScrapbookersInnerCircle.com.

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