



The Scrapjazz Guide to Organizing Your Scrap Space

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Designing Your Scrap Space

By Andrea Steed

Scrapbooking, for many people, is much more than a passing phase. It becomes a lifelong hobby. Not only are you able to artistically express yourself through a craft, but you're also doing something very important at the same time—preserving your family history. Since this hobby in particular becomes a part of everyday life, it makes sense to have a dedicated area in your home to devote to your craft.

While each individual's scrap space will vary in size, style, extravagance and frugality, everyone faces the same basic dilemma: *How can I organize my workspace and store my scrapbooking supplies?*

Within this Scrap Spaces guide, you'll find fantastic organization, storage and decorating ideas for creating a work area that fits your budget, space constrictions, and style. The tips and suggestions given by our writers and contributors will help you take control of your supplies and increase your productivity during the time you have to devote to scrapbooking.

Find a Space

The first step in creating a space of your own is to choose an area of your home that can be designated as your scrapbooking space. There are three categories of areas that your space may fall into: dedicated space, shared space, or portable space. While most crafters dream of a dedicated room with a fabulous view, custom-built storage, and all of the latest tools and supplies, only a lucky few are able to enjoy that type of space. Most have to share or "borrow" space from their home, and others still must tote their "space" to a local store or fellow scrapbooker's house to have an appropriate workspace and environment. The good news is, you can do any of these easily with a little bit of creativity. Below are several options for finding room within your house to create your own scrap space:

Attic/Loft – An unused area of an attic or loft can be converted into a scrap space with a little bit of renovation. The angled ceilings are a fun architectural addition to the room, giving it some additional personality and flair. A nice reason to use a space like this is to be able to keep your workspace out of the natural traffic flow of the house, especially if you like to get away and retreat to your own world when you are creating.

Basement – Finished basements are used for all sorts of things such as playrooms, storage, laundry areas, and exercise rooms. Why not add your scrap space to a section of the basement? The amount of open space available is usually a great benefit to someone with a large quantity of supplies. However, if your basement floods or has any moisture problems, find permanent solutions to those problems before you decide to set up your space in the basement. Moisture will damage paper, photos and other supplies.

Bedroom – Bedrooms are a common solution for where to store scrapbook supplies and set up a workspace. Depending on your home and space availability you may have a bedroom completely converted to a scrap space, a shared guest bedroom, or even a corner of your own bedroom to use for your workspace. Some benefits of working in bedrooms include the natural

light from windows, closet storage space, a door that can close off the room, and of course the typical comforts of home.

Closet – If you can't steal an entire room from your house, or even a corner, consider taking over a closet. Choose from front hall closets, bedroom closets, a pantry, or even a linen closet. Some are even large enough to include a desk, workspace and storage, all with a door to close it off and keep it out of the way when you aren't using it. If your closet isn't large enough, look for portable storage ideas, so you can store your supplies out of sight, but easily take them out and transport them to your chosen workspace when you are using them.

Dining Room – A storage armoire or buffet dresser is a great disguise for scrapbooking supplies hiding in a formal dining room. If your family doesn't use a formal dining room, you can consider converting the whole room into your scrap space. Those that scrap in the dining room tend to enjoy being a part of the main traffic flow of the house and being involved with the rest of the family while they're working. A downfall is that your space may be very visible to the rest of the house or even the entry into your house and will need to be kept neat and tidy most of the time, especially if you use your dining room table for meals.

Enclosed Porch – If your home has an enclosed porch or sunroom, it might make a fabulous scrap space retreat. Porches offer plenty of natural light, potentially a great view of the neighborhood, and the chance to designate an entire room to your supplies. Consider factors such as temperature control, lighting solutions, window coverings and moisture issues before designating this space as your work area.

Garage – With some thoughtful design and renovation, you can convert a portion of a garage into your scrap area. If the ceiling is high, consider adding a loft area. Particularly deep garages may have extra space at the back for a room to be built in. A two-and-a-half or three-car garage may leave an abundance of extra space that can be converted into a room. Since garages are often completely unfinished, this can incur some construction costs, but offer a designated space that is both convenient and private.

Home Office – If you already have a home office area designated in your house, simply expand your storage containers and options to include your scrapbooking area there as well. A computer, printer, and internet access available to you while you scrapbook will become some of your favorite scrapbooking tools.

Kitchen – Some have even found a little nook in their kitchen to be a great place to store their supplies and work on scrapbooking projects. An eating nook, breakfast bar with cabinet storage, or even a pantry off the side of the room are all options if you're strapped for space in other areas of the house. Use your kitchen table as your workspace and store supplies in cabinets, drawers and other containers that can be closed up when you aren't using them and they'll be protected from any kitchen spills.

Laundry Room – If your house has a laundry room with only a washer and dryer in it, why not use the extra space for your workspace? Closets,

shelving and storage space can be divided between scrapbooking and laundry supplies. Build your workspace into the middle of a shelving system, so your supplies are all around you while you work. You can even use the top of the washer and dryer as a workspace for your cutting mat and paper trimmer.

Living Room/Den – If you like to watch TV, hang out with your family, or watch your kids play while you scrapbook, a section of a living room or den area is another great place to locate your space. You can separate your space from the living space with shelving, a couch or even a folding screen if you'd like to be off-limits to the rest of the family while you work.

As you can see, it's possible to convert nearly any space in your house into a scrapbooking workspace. Just a little bit of reorganization, rearranging and renovation and you'll be on your way to a scrapbooking space of your own.

Organize

As you read through the tips and suggestions for storing the various types of scrapbooking supplies, you'll find one common theme throughout them all: *organize*. If you know what you have and how to find it, then you'll be able to use it. Each lesson in this guide gives specific ideas for how to best organize and categorize supplies. Here are some basic tips to remember as you organize your supplies to fit them into your space.

Sort and Categorize – First separate your supplies into types. Our lessons will cover how to store all of the following items, so begin by separating them into these basic categories.

- [Adhesives](#)
- [Embellishments](#)
- [Ink](#)
- [Magazines & Idea Books](#)
- [Paint](#)
- [Paper & Cardstock](#)
- [Pens & Pencils](#)
- [Photographs](#)
- [Ribbon & Fibers](#)
- [Stamps](#)
- [Stickers, Die Cuts & Rub-Ons](#)
- [Templates](#)
- [Tools](#)

As you read through each lesson, you can further sort each type of supply based on your own needs.

Assemble – If you have tools or supplies that need to be assembled such as stamps or dies for a die-cutting machine, take some time to put them together and get them ready for use. If they aren't ready, you're not likely to use them while you're working on a layout.

Unwrap - Packaging takes up a lot of extra space. To condense your supplies to fit a small space, remove products from their packaging. Be sure to save any instructions you might need. If it is important for you to know who made the products (you may

need to re-stock eventually) label the back of the products with the manufacturer name.

Label – While you're labeling, use a permanent marker or labeling stickers to mark your tools with your initials or some sort of personalized indicator. If you travel to crops, loan out your tools, or scrapbook with other people, you'll want to be sure you (and they) know which tools are yours. Since many people have the same brand and types of tools, this is important.

Discard, Recycle, Donate or Sell – As you sort through your supplies, you're bound to find products and tools that you know you won't use, damaged or bent items, or even duplicate materials. Anything that is not salvageable can be tossed in the trash or recycled. Create a donate and/or sell pile for any materials that are still useable. You can donate them to schools, new scrapbookers, or give them to your children to play with. Items with more value can be often sold via eBay, scrapbooking web sites, or local crops.

Apply a Storage System

Once you've read through all of the tips and options for storing each type of supply, you'll need to make decisions about the types of storage containers you'll need to buy, make or find. You have several storage elements to consider such as furniture, shelving, cabinets, closets, drawers, boxes, bins, baskets, and lighting. As you read through each lesson and look at the examples, make notes of the solutions that interest you and see how they can be implemented in your space.

Devise a Plan - It is helpful to plan out your space before you start buying containers. Even though nearly all of the supplies can be put into a storage system that resides right on your desk, you'll quickly run out of workspace if you try to have everything right at your fingertips. Mix and match the ideas for storage based on the way you scrapbook and your space limitations. Choose storage systems for each type of supply that will complement the storage you've chosen for other supplies. Stacking bins, matching baskets, or a dresser full of drawers are all examples of how you can use one storage system to house several types of supplies. As you are planning out your room, it is also a good time to decide on any decorating themes or styles that you want to use, before you begin buying materials.

Make a List – You now have a pretty good idea of what you need for your space. Begin a shopping list of items you need. Include any measurements and requirements that will be helpful as you shop, such as you need at least seven trays for wooden stamps, three 4" 3-ring binders for stickers and die cuts, fifteen 12" x 12" hanging files, etc.

Go Shopping - Make a basic sketch or take a photograph of your space and write down the measurements of the area. Take your sketch and/or photograph with you along with your list, a tape measure and a calculator as you shop for furniture and storage containers. This will prevent you from buying something that is too big or too small. Make your purchases, and be sure to save receipts in case you need to return an item. Keep track of how much you are spending, so you stay within your budget. Buy the essentials first, and you can always add other items later.

Put the Plan in Action – Paint the walls, assemble your furniture, put your supplies into the containers, label drawers and boxes, and enjoy your fabulous new scrap space.

Decorate & Personalize

Some people say that *where* you create plays an instrumental role in *what* you create. Most people are creative when they feel creative and they feel creative when they are in an environment that inspires them. Build your scrap space into an environment that inspires you to create, with these scraproom decorating tips.

Choose a Color Scheme

Possibly the most important step when decorating a scrap space is to choose the color scheme. When choosing a color scheme, start by finding an inspiration piece—something that makes you feel creative. It can be a fabric swatch, a piece of art, a piece of furniture, or even a favorite scrapbook paper. Often the inspiration piece will contain the color scheme you're looking for and all you need to do is find paint and coordinating accents for the room. If the inspiration piece doesn't offer three to four colors for your scheme, use a color wheel to find accent colors that will work with your inspiration piece.

If you are able to paint the walls of your space, as you consider colors keep in mind that the color will change with the lighting during the day. While you may love warm mustard yellow first thing in the morning, it might be far too overwhelming on the eyes in the bright midday light. A good way to test this is to paint a large piece of foam core or canvas paper in the color you are considering and move it around the room at various times of the day.

Another reason to carefully consider the wall color in your scrap space is that whatever color you surround yourself with might change the way that your project looks as light is reflected off walls and other surfaces. Neutral colors on the walls such as tan, cream, and white are a good way to assure natural lighting and reflections, especially right around your work space. However, don't let that stop you from painting one wall the deep purple you've been dying to use!

Decide on a Theme or Style

Your room doesn't need to have a "theme" per se, but choosing a general style will make it easier to achieve a cohesive look. By choosing a theme, you will know what types of containers, wall décor, and accents would help complete the look you are after.

Need ideas for themes? How about Funky Retro? Start with black, brown, white or silver furniture with clean lines and add pink, aquamarine, or lime green accents with photo boxes, framed pictures, and shelving.

Another style that might be fun to explore is Paris Chic. Rich burgundy velvet, black and white toile, and lots of vintage glamour would make for a fun and exciting scrap space. You might even add an actual divan in the corner for reading!

A shabby vintage garden theme can be achieved by adding accents from recycled garden or vintage items. An old garden planter can become a storage container. Convert a vintage dresser mirror to a framed cork bulletin board by removing the glass and inserting cork board inside the frame. An old, used lattice piece can hold small hooks for ribbons and embellishments, and vintage sap buckets can hold painting supplies.

Look at decorating magazines and websites to help you choose the style you like, especially if you don't know where to start. Choose a special item that has meaning and build your room around its colors and style.

Fashionable, Yet Functional

As you add trinkets and style to your room, be sure to look for organizational items that can be painted or altered to match your décor. Here are several decorative projects that also have a practical use in your scrap space:

Lamps – You'll need to have a combination of overhead, task and possibly additional accent lighting in your space. Use the opportunity to bring some style to your room. Look for interesting lampshades, decorative trim, and a lamp body that fits the style of your room. You can even spruce up plain lamps with stamps and paint, ribbon, and beaded trim.



Magnet Board – Purchase a large magnet board to display just-finished pages, to-do lists, magnet-mounted foam stamps and even supplies hanging from magnetic hooks or baskets.

Bulletin Board – Cork bulletin boards are a great way to temporarily move papers, notes, and new product packages off your main workspace, while still keeping them within sight. Decorate them with paint, ribbon trim, and stamps to match the décor of your room.

Magnets and Pushpins – Use your scrapbooking supplies to make fashionable magnets or pushpins for your magnet or bulletin board. Page pebbles with a patterned paper backing or stickers on top of buttons make great magnets. Use strong liquid glue that dries clear and a roll of self-adhesive magnet tape. For push-pins, simply glue the decorative element to the front of a flat pushpin with glue that adheres to metal.



Lattice Board – Paint a section of wooden lattice in the color of your choice. Then attach hooks and clips to hang baskets, buckets, tools, and supplies from the lattice. Clothespins, large clips, metal "S" hooks, and even standard finishing nails are all effective ways to hang items from the lattice board.

Hardware – Don't settle for a plain white plastic hook or knob if you can spring for a more decorative one. Decorative hardware is a little detail that can make an inexpensive piece of furniture or storage instantly gain personality and style.

Furniture – A fresh coat of paint, stripped and re-stained wood, or even a table skirt are all easy ways to dress up an old piece of furniture. If you're buying new, look for a style that will serve both your workspace and storage

needs as well as fit into the look you are creating in your space.

Storage Containers - Plastic, canvas, or metal bins, painted baskets or wooden boxes in an accent color create functional organizational containers that also serve as decorating pieces throughout the room.

Decorations

To really make your scrap space your own little haven, add personal decorative touches that inspire your creativity.

Layout Frames – Show off your masterpieces by displaying your favorite or most-recent layout creations in frames throughout your room. [Clear acrylic frames](#) are an easy way to interchange layouts frequently and are available in sizes ranging from small 5" x 7" or 6" x 6" sizes to 12" x 24" frames for two-page spreads. A wooden or metal frame is a more permanent way to display your artwork. Also available are giant clip boards made to hang on the wall, perfect for displaying finished layouts. Get creative and hang taut heavy-gauge wire from one end of the room to another along a wall. Then use clothespins to hold the corners of your layouts along the wire for a unique hanging decoration that can change constantly.

Curtains – Just as you'd decorate a room in your home, don't forget the accents that make it homey. A fun fabric that matches the décor of your room is a great way to add texture, pattern and color to your room. Use wide satin ribbon as a sash or a decorative hook to tie them back.



Rug – Define your space with an area rug that matches your space. Take into consideration whether you will need a chair to roll over the top of the rug when you choose the size and thickness of the rug.

Favorite Photographs – Photos are what fuel the passion for scrapbooking, so don't forget to include your favorite photographs in your space. Create an elegant photo collage with coordinating frames, consistent matting and a grouping of black-and-white photographs. Enlargements make a big statement; consider a poster-size version that inspires you.

Quotes – If you are inspired by words, add your favorite quotes to framed pieces throughout the room. You can even purchase words and quotes that can be affixed directly to your wall for a more permanent statement. Wooden and metal words can be purchased by the letter for a custom word or phrase that fits your space.

Candles – Appeal to all of your senses, and add a fragrant candle to set the mood for a relaxing session of scrapbooking. Be careful with fire around your supplies. Keep candles away from your direct work space where they can be easily knocked over. As with anywhere in your home, do not leave them unattended. For a fire-proof smell-good option, a soothing scented air freshener can serve the same purpose.

Decorate your space so that it's an enjoyable place for you to spend your time. The more you enjoy being there, the more likely you are to accomplish much during each scrapbooking session.

Maintenance

Once you've organized, stored, and decorated your space, don't forget to keep it maintained so you can continue to enjoy it. Here are several maintenance tips that will help you keep your space in top condition:

1. Make it a habit to clean up and clean out your supplies regularly.
2. If you run out of room in a storage bin, see if you can discard older products before you expand to another container.
3. As you buy new products, put them right into your storage system.
4. To save time while you are scrapbooking, designate a "put away" basket near your workspace so you can put all of the extra products away after a scrapbooking session rather than while you are in a creative zone.
5. Clean up between layouts, so you can start with a clean slate for each new page.

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[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

Paper

by Andrea Steed

What is the best way to store 12" x 12" patterned papers and cardstock? As a scrapbookers' stack of papers and cardstock grows, this question may weigh more heavily on their mind. Thankfully, now there are several manufacturers who have realized the importance of paper storage and have answered the pleas of scrapbookers everywhere. The question isn't "How to do it?" anymore, but "Which system and products will work for me?"

Below are several options for storing 12" x 12" cardstock and patterned paper. Some are products designed specifically with scrapbook papers in mind and others are make-shift solutions put together by a scrapbooker in need. Take a look at several solutions to see which will work best for you.

Assess Your Needs

The first step in choosing a storage system is to assess your needs. Ask yourself the following questions:

Do I have more cardstock or patterned paper?

A collection primarily made up of cardstock might be best stored in horizontal paper trays arranged by color. A smaller assortment of patterned papers could then be stored in one or two trays or an accordion folder. On the other hand, if you have primarily patterned papers, you may prefer a vertical storage system that allows you to easily browse and see the patterns on each sheet from above.

How much space do I have to devote to my paper collection?

Where you have room available in your scrap space may help determine the best method of paper storage. For instance, if you have a narrow footprint where you can store your paper, but have a large amount of paper to store, you might consider paper towers or stackable paper trays so you can store your paper horizontally, while building vertically to save floor space. Then again, if you have windows, shelving, or a desktop that prevent you from building up, you may prefer a shorter, but wider storage system in the form of hanging file storage bins sitting on the floor.

Do I need to have a portable storage system?

If you plan to take your storage system with you when you go to a crop, look for a system that travels well. Handles, wheels, and a cover are all handy ways to bring your paper with you. If portability isn't important to you, then more heavy-duty and permanent options may be more applicable to your situation.

Categorize Your Papers

Another factor to consider before choosing a storage system is how you organize your papers. Knowing how many categories of paper you have and how they will be divided will help you determine how many shelves, folders, or containers you will need for your storage system.

As you begin to categorize your paper, think about the way you scrapbook. When you go searching for a sheet of paper to use, are you looking for a particular type of pattern, or are you looking for a specific color? Do you know the manufacturer you want to use for a layout, or do you like to mix and match papers from various manufacturers? Answering these questions will help you know how you should organize your papers so that you can quickly and easily find exactly what you are looking for. You may find that organizing by manufacturer is more easily done one way and organizing by color or pattern is best done another. Here are several examples of paper organization categories:

Categorize by Color

Since so much of scrapbooking revolves around color, this is a very popular method of organizing. Regardless of the pattern, manufacturer, or material of a sheet of paper, if you need red, you'll be able to see all of your red paper options in one place.

- Black
- White
- Gray (grey)
- Red
- Orange
- Yellow
- Green
- Blue- Green
- Blue
- Purple
- Pink
- Brown
- Multi-Colored

Categorize by Pattern and Style

Basic patterns tend to be repeated among the various patterned papers available. If you like to add specific pattern styles to your pages, you may prefer to organize your patterned papers by the style or pattern so that you can see all of your striped paper options at once, for instance.

- Solid
- Stripes
- Swirls
- Dots
- Paisley
- Plaid
- Stars
- Floral
- Themed (pets, holidays, seasons, school, etc)
- Realistic (animal prints, wood grain, photographic scenes, etc.)
- Specialty Paper (mulberry, handmade, velveteen, metallic, etc.)
- Vellum
- Embossed
- Miscellaneous

Categorize by Manufacturer

If you tend to buy paper in large packs or are partial to a few specific manufacturers and always use their papers together, this might be a good option so that you can keep coordinating papers grouped together.

Ultimately, this is your system and it should fit your needs. Don't be afraid to combine aspects of these suggestions. For instance, you may want to divide your papers by color, and then have additional sections for your favorite manufacturers, and yet another section for themed papers. As long as *you* know where to look, you'll be a step ahead.

Don't Toss Your Scraps

As you decide on a storage system, be sure to consider how you will store your scraps or leftover pieces of paper. Individual plastic drawers, folders or even Ziploc baggies are a good way to find what you're looking for quickly. For consistency and ease, the organization method you use for storing scrap pieces should compliment the method you've chosen for your larger sheets of paper. Using the same categorizing system and a similar storage method will increase the likelihood that you'll check your scraps before pulling a full sheet to create a photo mat or journaling block.

Now that you know what you have, you probably have a better idea of the type of storage you need. Here are some options for storage solutions:

Vertical Storage Systems

Storing paper vertically is a fantastic space-saver and it allows you to sort through several different types of patterned paper without having to pick up a full stack.

The downsides of vertical storage can include bent edges, bowed paper and dust. Keeping paper packed fairly tightly helps to prevent the bowing and bending, and if you can find a storage system with a cover, you can eliminate the dust problem as well.

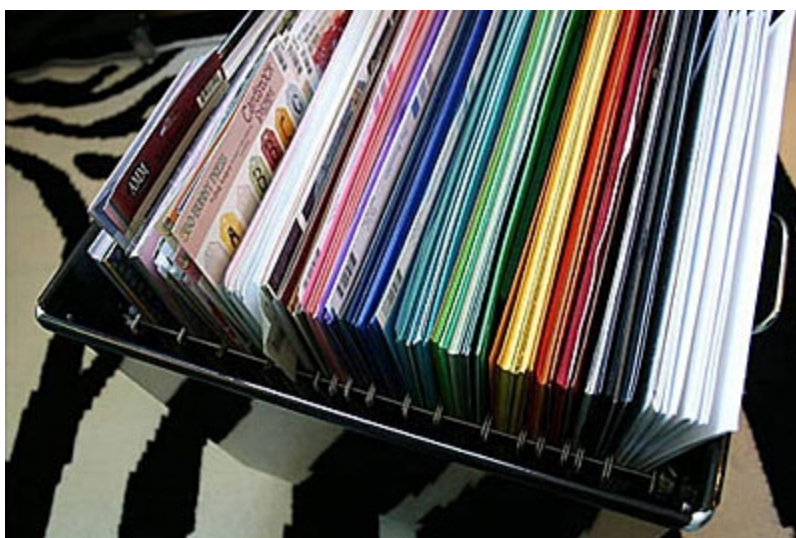
Hanging Files – Whether you use hanging files made specifically for 12" x 12" paper (available from companies like Cropper Hopper and Making Memories) or you use the standard size made for 8 ½" x 11" paper, you can use several adaptations of this method.

Hanging files are convenient for grouping various types of paper by color, manufacturer, or pattern style. The most important thing to look out for is how strong the container is that is holding the hanging files. Paper can become very heavy. Look for stability; it will last much longer.

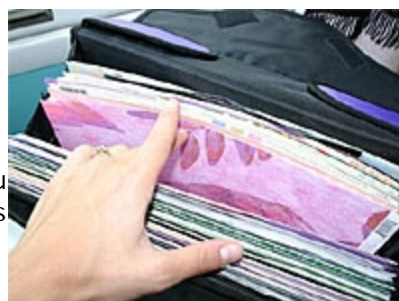
You can also find several brands of rolling carts that are made for hanging files. Having it on wheels makes it much more easily accessible when you need



it and you're able to roll it away when you don't.



Accordion Folders – Another option is to use an accordion-style folder such as the Crop-in-Style Paper Taker shown here. Often a handle or shoulder strap will be attached to the folder so you can easily tote it with you. It comes with several dividers, so you can organize the paper in the same way that you would with hanging files. These can store as much as 500 sheets of paper in one container, making it a great space saver.



Storage Containers - Several small containers such as the storage containers from Cropper Hopper shown below can also be used to store your paper on a shelf or bookcase. Since there are several smaller containers, it's easy to pull only a section off the shelf to thumb through, instead of dealing with the entire collection as a whole. They can easily be stored in a closet, bookshelf, or inside a cabinet to keep them nicely stored away when you aren't using them.



For a wallet-friendly solution, try converting a plastic tub container into your paper storage solution. A few tips for this method:

- Be sure to keep a heavy object such as a binder or book end at one end of the container to keep all of the paper standing upright.
- It's best not to use this system for flimsy patterned papers as they will easily bend and become damaged. Instead add a hanging file container to the inside of the tub to include patterned paper as well.
- If you want to cover the paper, be sure to find a tub deep enough to fit the paper with the lid on top.



Horizontal Storage Systems

If vertical isn't your style, give horizontal a try. There are also several ways you can store your paper horizontally. Often this is how you'll see it displayed at your local scrapbook store. It's an attractive way to see what you have at a quick glance and it keeps the papers from bending or bowing.

One downside to horizontal storage is the amount of space it can take up. Depending on your collection, you can quickly cover an entire wall with paper alone. It can also be inconvenient to go through horizontal stacks of paper when the piece you want is somewhere in the middle of the pile. Having multiple organizers will help reduce that problem, because you can have less paper in each compartment.

Stackable Paper Trays – Clear plastic trays are a great way to store paper, especially cardstock. The paper trays allow your paper to lay flat, preventing any bending or warping that can be caused by vertical storage. Also, since you can see the color of the paper from the edges, it's easy to find the exact sheet you need.



To store patterned paper in this way you can group them by color or paper manufacturer and only sift through the section you need. Since patterned papers can't be seen from the edge (only the top), it makes this system a little less convenient for those papers.

Paper Towers – A variation of the paper trays are paper towers. Often these displays are more expensive, but are just like the ones used in scrapbook stores to display paper. They look pretty and are made for storing paper, so they're sturdy and sized exactly how you need them.



Wire Cube System – A more cost-effective way to store papers horizontally is to use wire storage cubes. They can be purchased in sets at various department stores such as Target, Walmart or ShopKo. Instead of using them to create the six large cubes, you can use zip-ties to use the extra side panels to create shelves. Each shelf is just large enough to hold a stack of 12" x 12" paper.

Find the system that's right for your style of scrapbooking, the amount of space you have, and your budget. Some scrapbookers will favor vertical storage because it's easy to access individual sheets of paper. Others are inspired by a tower of colorful papers sitting across from them as they work. Whether you build a perfect unit, buy a storage system specifically for scrapbook paper, or alter another great storage product, there are so many options that you're sure to find one (or several) that work for you.

Additional Tips:

- As you add to your scraps, set a size limit for how large a leftover piece of paper needs to be in order to save it. For example, it must be large enough to use as a photo mat for a 4" x 4" photograph, or it can't be smaller than a 3" x 3" piece. Setting standards will help eliminate too many tiny pieces of paper cluttering up your scraps area.
- Every so often, go through your papers and pull out any that you have had for several months, but haven't used. Use them on a layout, or pass them along to someone who will.

Related Links

[Paper Product Reviews](#)

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[Using Patterned Papers in Scrapbook Pages](#)

Embellishments

by Andrea Steed

Small embellishments like [buttons](#), [brads](#), [eyelets](#), [beads](#), [clips](#), [tiles](#), [charms](#), [glitter](#), [wire](#) and [flowers](#) (to name a few) are perfect finishing touches to your pages. However, because they are so tiny and there are usually so many of them, it can be difficult to keep them organized and easily accessible.

Organization

The first step is to separate all of your embellishments into categories. This helps you see what you have and then later make decisions about the type of containers you need to store them. There are several options for categorizing your embellishments. You may want to use a combination of these ideas to best fit your scrapbooking style.

Sort by Type – If you typically have a certain type of embellishment in mind when you are creating a layout, this method of categorizing should complement the routine you already have. Separate the items into categories by type such as brads, eyelets, buttons, charms, glitter, wire, etc. To save space, take the embellishments out of their original containers, so that you can group all similar objects together. If you like to know the manufacturer who made each item, you may want to keep them in the original packaging and look for larger storage containers instead.

Sort by Theme – If you tend to purchase embellishments that correspond to specific themes, you may prefer dividing your embellishments into themed piles such as [birthday](#), [pets](#), [school](#), [sports](#), [seasons](#), [holidays](#), etc. You may even want to combine these three-dimensional embellishments with flat embellishments such as [stickers](#), [die cuts](#) or [rub-ons](#) and themed [patterned papers](#) to keep all of each theme together.

Sort by Color – Some people are color-oriented when they scrapbook. If you are, you can categorize embellishments by color and have several options of embellishments in the color you need, all in one place. Get as specific as you'd like, depending on the volume of your collection, by adding categories such as blue-green, sage green, fuchsia, or light pink in addition to the standard rainbow of colors.

Sort by Manufacturer – Using coordinated products from the same manufacturer may be the way you most often create layouts. If so, keep those products together with matching embellishments, stickers, rub-ons, and papers from the same manufacturer. Then you'll have created a kit of sorts filled with products that you can use together.

A combination of these sorting methods will also be an effective organizing technique. For instance, you can sort general embellishments like brads, buttons and eyelets by type. Then separate products into additional categories by theme. Yet another category can be for your favorite manufacturer's coordinated products. Customize your embellishment organization to your scrapbooking style.

Storage

Once the embellishments are categorized, look at your piles and decide what size and type of storage containers will work best in your space. There are an abundance

of products that can be found in scrapbook stores, office supply stores, hobby stores, and even hardware stores that are perfect for these small embellishments. Here are a few ideas:

Divided Organizers - These little plastic containers with small compartments and a snap-shut lid are great for storing embellishments. They come in all different sizes and shapes, and can usually be stacked easily. Some have handles, or totes to hold many of them at once. These are also fantastic for storing alphabet charms and embellishments. A compartment or two for each letter makes putting titles together a breeze, without having to dig and search for the right letters.



Tool Boxes - Fishing tackle boxes, tool boxes, makeup and jewelry organizers, and art supply totes are all terrific embellishment organizers. These types of containers usually have several different compartments and/or trays, and even a handle for portability. This method of storage is great for people who do most of their scrapbooking at crops or other places where they need to transport their supplies.



Hardware Store Mini-Drawers - Sets of drawers made for holding screws, bolts and washers found in the hardware store are perfect for small embellishments. Each drawer is removable, so it's easy to reach all of the little pieces. Drawer sets come in several sizes, so you can store a combination of small and slightly larger embellishments in the same type of organizer. These narrow units fit on top of a desk or shelf. Clear drawers are helpful so you can see the contents of each drawer from the front.



Drawers, Boxes, Baskets and Bins – A larger set of plastic organizational drawers is a handy way to store embellishments, especially if you organize by theme, color or manufacturer and need to have a larger container. In the same way, you can use photo boxes and organization baskets to store your embellishments.

Individual Jars or Containers - Some other suggestions would be to use empty film canisters, spice containers and a spice rack, pill holders, or small zipper baggies. The smaller containers can be put on a shelf or in a box. Make sure the individual containers can be closed securely to avoid spills.

Scour the aisles of department, home organization, hardware, craft, and scrapbook stores to find containers that fit the style and look of your scrap space. However you organize and store them, the idea is to have embellishments easily accessible so that you can use them to create fantastic scrapbook pages.

Additional Tips:

- Take the embellishments out of their packaging to save storage space. Clear containers will help you remember what you have, so you are less likely to buy more if you don't need it.

Related Links

[Embellishment Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Using Embellishments on your Scrapbook Pages](#)

Ribbon and Fiber

by Tammy Jackson

Fibers and ribbons have long been popular scrapbooking page embellishments. Their numerous colors and textures make them a fun item to use and to collect. However, even a modest ribbon and fiber collection can soon become disorganized clutter if they are not stored in an organized fashion.

Organization

Before ribbons and fibers can be organized, they should be separated into groups. There are many ways to categorize these items. Use the method which suits your scrapbooking style, or you may want to use a combination of the following options.

Sort by Color - This is probably the easiest way to sort ribbons and fibers. Put spools of like colors of ribbons together in a group. Separate ribbon remnants and fibers into similar color groupings.

Sort by Thickness - Ribbons in particular will vary in thickness. If you need to be able to find ribbons based upon their width, sort them by thickness starting with the narrowest widths and working up to the widest.

Sort by Pattern/Style - Polka dots, plaids, gingham, grosgrain, satin, lace, stripes, velvet, and organza are just a few of the many types of ribbons. Likewise, fibers come in several types such as chenille, eyelash, and charm. If you find you have a lot of different ribbons and fibers in these various categories, you might want to consider sorting them by this method.

Combining some of these methods will be the best solution for most people. For instance, separate all of your ribbons by color, and then sort the color groups either by thickness or pattern. The most important thing to keep in mind is how *you* use these items in *your* scrapbooking, and organize them based on your own personal style.

Storage

When you have decided upon an organization method and you have all of your ribbons and fibers sorted into categories, it is time to store them. There are three things that must be considered. Ribbons stored on spools take up more space, but have the advantage of keeping the ribbon neat and wrinkle-free. Fibers tangle easily, so a tangle-free storage solution must be found. Loose pieces of ribbon need to be stored in a manner which keeps them from wrinkling.

Dowel Rod - To organize spools of ribbons, dowel rods may be used in either a horizontal or vertical fashion. Drill holes into blocks of wood or pre-made wooden shelf brackets so that a wooden dowel can slide in and hold spools of ribbon. A block of wood with a hole drilled into the center and a dowel placed vertically into that hole makes a terrific vertical spool holder. Note that straight pins may be necessary to hold the ends of the ribbons on the spools. Particularly with the vertical dowel storage, gravity tends to unwind the spools unless they are pinned.



Tension Rod - Another practical spool organizer is a tension rod (available at any home improvement store). Tension rods, sold for hanging curtains, contain springs that create tension between the two sides of the rod when placed between two supports. The rod can be placed in a doorway or window and will store a lot of ribbon spools in a small space. Tension rods come in different diameters and spans, so be sure there is some way to slide the spools onto the tension rod and that it will fit in the space where you want to use it.

Card Organizers - Embroidery floss storage boxes (found wherever sewing notions and crafts are sold) come with standard-sized cardboard or plastic cards to wrap fibers or ribbons around. This is an excellent solution for fiber storage. The storage cards slide neatly into a handy storage container and can hold hundreds of fibers. However, these smaller cards are not as good for ribbon storage. Wrapping ribbons around small cards tends to “kink” the ribbon. Larger pieces (four to five inches wide) of cardboard work better for ribbon because it does not cause as many folds from wrapping on the card. Besides embroidery floss storage boxes, ribbon and fibers stored on cards may also be stored in drawers or boxes.



Box Dispensers - Box dispensers are a great solution for storing ribbons on spools in a hidden and uncluttered manner. Ribbon dispensers are commercially available and can also be homemade craft projects. Ribbon feeds through holes or slots in the container, giving you easy access to each type of ribbon, while enclosing the spools in a hidden box. A homemade ribbon-dispensing box can easily be made using a cardboard photo storage box, some grommets, and a few tools.

Jars - A popular, decorative and colorful solution to ribbon or fiber storage is to place your sorted ribbons or fibers into glass storage jars. Any see-through, wide-mouth glass jars, including canning jars, will work. Not only does this keep your ribbons and fibers together and organized, but the jars look pretty sitting on a shelf. The problem with this solution is that when a ribbon is pulled out of a jar, a lot of the other ribbons will come out as well, and they may end up getting wrinkled stored in a jar.

Baggies - Another very inexpensive storage container solution is plastic zipper storage bags. The snack-size variety are the perfect size for storing fibers or ribbons. The bags can then be stored in a storage box, a drawer, or hole punched and stored on ball chains or notebook rings.



Hanging rack - Use a 5-tier swinging-arm pants rack for storing ribbons. Spools can be stored on the upper swinging arms. Put by-the-yard ribbon on the bottom tier, using shower curtain rings. To avoid damaging your loose ribbons, attach them to your hanging system using a single half-hitch knot. This will keep it secure until you need to remove it. Removal is easy because the ribbon is basically just looped over the hanger.

Ribbons and fibers are beautiful and fun finishing-touch embellishments for any scrapbook page. Knowing how to organize, store, and care for these items will ensure that they will be easily available and ready to use when they are needed for that next masterpiece.

Additional Tips:

- Fibers can be stored in small zipper embroidery floss bags that store on a ring.
- House guttering (like the gutters on your roof) can be nailed to a wall and used to store spools of fibers. Drill holes in the bottom of the gutter for the ribbon to feed through.

Related Links

[Ribbon Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Using Ribbon on Scrapbook Pages](#)

Stamps

by Andrea Steed (with Sherrill Pierre)

Whether you began crafting as a stamper or you added stamping to your range of scrapbooking techniques, a growing stamp collection is very common among scrapbookers. The size of your stamp collection and the type of stamps you have will determine your organization and storage needs.

Organization

If your collection is rather large, it may be hard to keep track of what you have. Categorizing them into groups is a helpful way to easily find the perfect stamp for your project. Separate your stamps by theme or style and then sub-categorize them as necessary for larger collections. Some examples of categories are:

- Alphabets
 - Large
 - Medium
 - Small
- Animals
- Botanical
 - Flowers
 - Leaves
 - Other
- Frames
- Greetings
 - Birthday
 - Thank You
 - Other
- Holidays
 - Christmas
 - Halloween
 - Other
- Home
- Photo Corners
- Quotes
- Shapes
- Textures
- Travel
- Vintage

A large collection of alphabet stamps can also be categorized based on the style of each font with categories such as curly, block fonts, typewriter, and sans-serif. Along those lines, you can categorize stamps with a similar style together such as cartoon-like or realistic images. Use categories that make sense to you and your style of scrapbooking.

Storage

Once your stamps are categorized, you can assess your storage needs based on the type and volume of stamps you have. There are three primary styles of stamps: wood-mounted, foam and unmounted. A wood-mounted stamp is a rubber-stamp image attached to adhesive foam and then adhered to a wooden block. The image

of the stamp is usually printed on the top of the wooden block so you know what the finished image will look like. Foam stamps come mounted on foam blocks and are about half the thickness of wood-mounted stamps. Unmounted stamps come in both traditional rubber and clear acrylic forms. Since they are not mounted to a block of any kind, unmounted stamps take up much less space than wood-mounted stamps. Since the various types of stamps have such differences in size and functionality, each style of stamp must be stored differently.

Wood-Mounted Stamps

You'll want to store wood-mounted stamps so that you can see the image printed on the top of the wood block. Shallow boxes and narrow shelves are a convenient way to access your stamps and see what you have at a glance, instead of having to dig through a deep basket or bin.

Shallow Drawers, Boxes or Trays – Create a layer of rubber stamps, categorized by theme, in shallow drawers, boxes or trays. Position each stamp so that you can see the image on the top of the wood block. The wider the containers are, the more stamps you'll be able to fit. Open-top trays can be stacked, but be careful when you access them that the contents don't spill out. Boxes with clear lids are nice so you can see what's inside without having to open each container, and the stamps will stay put. You can also label the outside of each box or drawer with the theme or style of stamp it contains.



Narrow Shelves – Whether they are store-bought or custom-built, you can use narrow shelving to store wood-mounted stamps right on your desktop or hanging from the wall. Line the stamps up side-by-side so you can see the image from the front. Shelves that are made for displaying knick-knacks and collections work well, because they aren't very deep. You can also create your own shelving by attaching narrow wood strips inside a shallow wooden tray or box turned on its side for vertical storage.

Medicine Cabinets – If you like the convenience of shelving, but don't like the clutter of stamps hanging on your wall, consider repurposing a medicine cabinet to store your wood-mounted stamps. Hang the cabinet on the wall or set it on top of a counter or desktop for easy access. With a door to cover the clutter, this is a neat solution for adding some personality and décor to your space in a functional way.

Tiered Cabinet Organizers – To make a deeper shelf work, and to save some space, try using tiered cabinet organizers to triple the space of a shelf. Three-tiered cabinet organizers, typically used in kitchens, are a perfect way to display your stamps in rows of three. Arrange the smaller stamps in front and larger stamps in back so you can see the image on the front of each stamp. These are a great option for an open shelf or inside a cabinet.



Foam Stamps

Foam stamps are an inexpensive type of stamp to buy, but create a different storage dilemma. Because they are so lightweight, if you store foam stamps vertically on shelving like you would wood-block stamps, they're likely to fall over. Shallow trays, drawers and boxes are all efficient ways to store these stamps. Keep the stamps facing up so that you can see the image, or use a paint pen to write the letter on the side or top of the stamp so you can identify them. You can also treat them as you do unmounted stamps and adhere Velcro or magnets to the back of them and hang them from Velcro strips, the side of a metal filing cabinet, or a magnet board on the wall. Another unique way to store foam stamps is inside photo sleeves within a 3-ring binder.



Unmounted Stamps

Unmounted stamps are quickly becoming the most popular form of stamps. They're less expensive and take up much less space than wood-mounted or foam stamps. The method you choose for mounting your unmounted stamps may play a part in how you store them. The following methods are all possible solutions for attaching your unmounted stamps to a stamping block:

- Double-sided tape
- Repositionable glue
- Self-adhesive Velcro
- Self-adhesive magnets
- EZ-Mount Static Cling Mounting Foam

Once you have a mounting system in place, there are several storage options, all fitting different space and convenience needs.

CD Jewel Cases – Remove the CD tray from a standard-sized jewel case and add stamps to the back cover of the case. Stamp the images onto a piece of paper that you can slide into the inside of the case facing out and label the spine. Your collection of stamps can then be stored either in a CD rack or in a storage box. This works best for the static-cling mounted stamps, because they cling right to the plastic covers. You can also use double-sided tape mounting with this storage idea.

Metal Tins – Metal tins made for holding CDs are a good way to store acrylic stamps. Since they are self-adhesive to the metal and fairly shallow stamps, you can include them on both sides of the metal tin and enclose them in the container. These also can be labeled and easily stored in CD racks or storage boxes.

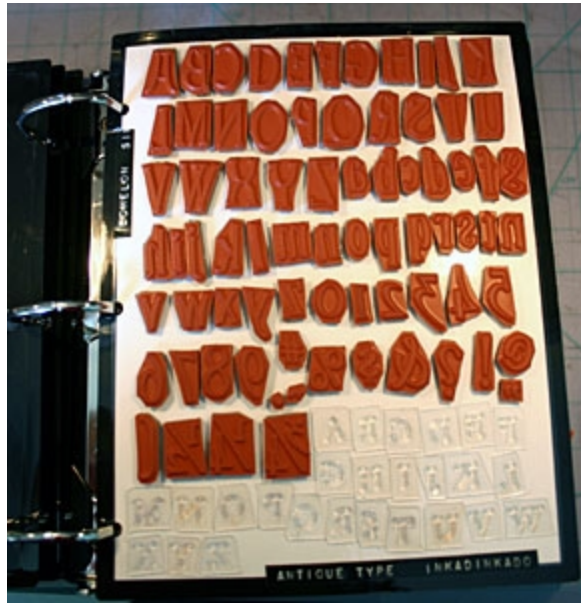


Clear Storage Containers - Shallow plastic containers such as document cases are great for storing unmounted stamps. They're about 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick, so they can fit foam stamps as well as stamps with EZ Mount foam on them. You can also attach a sheet of Velcro to the bottom of the case and use a Velcro system. Because they have clasps and handles, they are a handy transportable storage option.

Plastic Zip Bags - Plastic bags come in all sorts of sizes, but sandwich bags would work for most stamps. Punch a hole in the corner of each bag and attach them to a sturdy ring. Or, staple the bags to sturdy cardboard or chipboard and file them in a storage box or file folders. Since the bags are clear, you'll be able to easily see what each stamp is. Any of the above-mentioned mounting systems would be compatible with this storage option.

3-Ring Binder - Page protectors with compartments, such as baseball-card holders or photo sleeves, are another great way to store unmounted stamps. Standard 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" page protectors will work for very large or uncut stamps. Use the different sizes of compartments for different sized stamps and store them in a 3-ring binder.

Another variation of 3-ring binder storage is to put one side of Velcro tape on your stamp and the other on a sheet of heavy cardboard. Punch holes in the cardboard and store them in a 3-ring binder. If you use a static-cling system, you can laminate cardboard and attach the stamps to the laminated surface. An additional storage option, which helps keep the stamps in place, is to attach them to a transparency or laminated cardstock with double-sided tape or EZ Mount foam. Then slide the transparency or cardstock into a page protector in the binder.



Storing your stamps in a way that allows for easy access is important. If you can't see your stamps and look through them easily, you're less likely to use them. Once you've found a system that works for your stamp collection, be sure to allow room for growth. The more you use them, the more you'll tend to accumulate!

Additional Tips:

- To save space, convert your wood-mounted stamps to an unmounted system. Peel off the rubber portion of the stamp and attach it to your mounting system of choice.
- Create a reference catalog of your stamps by stamping each image on paper in a notebook divided into themed categories. Then you'll know exactly what you have and which container to find it in.
- If you're using a laminated cardboard system, first stamp the images to cardstock and attach the cardstock to the cardboard. Once they're laminated, you'll have a storage guide to let you know exactly where each stamp goes.

Related Links

[Stamping Supply Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Stamping in Scrapbooks](#)

Ink Pads

By Allyson Bright

These days, ink pads are a hot product for scrapbookers. Given their myriad uses (distressing, stamping, aging, and more), it's no surprise that many scrappers have dozens of ink pads in their scrap area. Of course, when ink pads aren't organized correctly, they can pile up and become difficult to sort through. Also, when a system isn't in place to help you keep track of them, you can even end up losing money by purchasing duplicates or replacing ink pads that have become damaged due to improper storage.

Factors to Consider

While it doesn't always seem that way, ink pads are indeed a consumable supply. When stored correctly, many ink pads will last for quite a while before you'll need to replace or refill them. However, if ink pads are not properly taken care of and stored, they will become dried out much more quickly.

Ink pads are best stored flat. Each pad is filled with liquid ink, and this ink can travel throughout the pad over time if not stored properly. For example, if you stored your ink pads vertically, over time the ink would drop to the bottom edge of the pad, and you would no longer be able to get a fully-inked image when you tried to use the full surface of your ink pad. For this same reason, it is highly recommended that you store your ink pads upside down. This will keep the ink flow at the surface of the pad, rather than allowing the ink to seep down to the bottom. This is especially important for dye-based ink pads, as this ink is thinner than some other inks and will migrate through the pad at a faster rate. Ink pads containing thicker inks, such as pigment ink, can be stored face up.

Sorting Your Pads

Before you choose a storage solution, it's important to take stock of your current inventory of pads. This will save you from buying a container that is too small or that won't adequately hold your entire collection. Start by gathering all of your ink pads and sorting them using one of the following methods.

By Color. If you're a stamper or scrapbook artist that works primarily by color, this will be the option for you. Sort your pads into basic color groups, with additional groups for neutrals and rainbow ink pads. If you choose this method, you'll be able to easily access the perfect ink to coordinate with your current project, regardless of the size of the pad or type of ink it contains.

By Manufacturer. This method is ideal for artists who like to work with coordinated products. If you like to buy inks, papers, and accents all from the same manufacturer in coordinated sets, this is the best option for you. You'll be able to find the ink you need to match what you're working on without a problem.

By Ink Type. If you're an artist who works in several different mediums, or simply if you like to use different types of inks for different projects, this is the perfect choice for you. Most of your ink pads will probably fit into one of two categories: dye ink pads and pigment ink pads. However, leave some room for specialty pads, such as watermark ink pads, interference ink pads, mica ink pads, and solvent ink pads.

Sorting in this manner will allow you to quickly and easily find the ink type most suitable for the medium you're working with.

By Size. Finally, perhaps you're one of those people who simply likes to keep things that fit together in the same place. If you own a lot of oversized ink pads or very small square ink pads, this can be a great choice for you. Sometimes it can be more difficult to sort odd-sized pads into standard categories or fit them into standardized containers, so this can be an excellent choice.

Once you have your ink pads sorted, take a quick inventory count. Note how many total ink pads you have and the various sizes of each.

Choosing Your System

Now that your ink pads are sorted and counted, it's time to select the best method for long-term storage. Choose a system that works with your budget and space. It's important to select a system that can not only hold your entire current collection of ink pads, but also allow room for future growth. For example, if you own 17 ink pads, don't select a system that will only hold 20. After you've purchased only four more pads, you'll have a collection that is too big for your system, and you'll have to begin again.

There are many containers and options for [storing your ink pads](#). Some are designed especially for ink pads, and others are simply household items that work well. Try one of the following options for your collection.

Shallow plastic boxes or storage bins. Ideal for the crafter who is budget and space conscious, storing your collection in plastic boxes can be ideal. Usually found in the closet organization section at your local store, these boxes are an inexpensive yet effective storage solution. Many crafters choose to purchase several, and keep one bin for each category of their sorted ink pads. If you use this method, it's a good idea to choose several shallow containers rather than one or two large ones. If your box is too deep, it will be hard to keep your pads organized, and will likely become too heavy for practical purposes. Label the outside of each box with the contents, and store them on a shelf or inside a closet in your crafting area.

A small basket or bin turned on its side can be used to stack the ink pads within the basket. This works best with a small collection of ink pads, or several stackable baskets.



3-ring binders. This method is perfect for the crafter with a smaller collection of ink pads that wants to have them easily accessible at all times. Purchase a large 3-ring binder, as well as several 4" x 6" photo-sleeve page protectors. Place one pad into each photo pocket, and keep the page protectors together in a large binder. You can use tabbed dividers to keep your categories separate, or use individual binders for each category. If you use this method, be sure to remember to keep the binders stored flat instead of vertically to ensure proper ink flow.



Cassette tape holders. Since many ink pads are roughly the same size as audio cassette tapes, many of the containers and storage systems designed for them will work wonders for your ink pads. Vertical towers and specialty crates are just a couple of choices. Visit your local home entertainment store for even more options. Many of these systems have the capacity for collections of a hundred or even more ink pads, so this can be an excellent choice if you have an extensive selection of ink pads. Be aware that while these systems will hold numerous standard-sized ink pads, they often will not effectively hold odd-sized ink pads.

Ink-pad carousels or storage racks. Given the long-term popularity of rubber stamping and the ever-growing popularity of scrapbooking, many manufacturers have responded with specialty containers specifically designed

for holding ink pads. The advantages of these systems is that they will often hold a large collection fairly easily, and they are also often highly decorative. Wooden models can be purchased to match the décor of your space, and they will often take up less space than some of the other methods. These containers often include room for ink refill bottles and liquid inks as well, which can be yet another advantage for some artists. The downside of these containers is that many of them can be costly, and that some are designed to hold only one specific brand of ink pad.

Once you've chosen the perfect method, simply add your ink pads by category, and get stamping. Keeping your ink pads effectively organized will save you valuable time and money. You'll love being able to find what you need, when you need it. Ultimately, you can spend less time hunting for that ink pad you need, and more time experiencing the fun of using it.

Additional Tips:

- Label the outside edge or bottom of your ink pad with the color and type of ink the pad contains. You'll be able to view your selection at a glance, and will save even more time by not having to pull out each pad to find what you're looking for.
- Using a small rubber stamp of your choice, stamp the bottom of each ink pad using the ink it contains. Or, keep a chart with a sample of each color you own next to your storage system. Either way, you'll be able to see the actual color of each pad quickly and easily.
- To really increase the life of an ink pad, store each one in its own Ziploc bag, with the air pushed out of it. It helps keep them from drying out.
- Don't forget that many companies sell refill bottles for their entire collection of ink pads. When your favorite pad starts to dry out, just purchase one of these bottles. It will help you save both space and money.

Related Links

[Ink Pad Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Scrappers, INK](#)

Paint

By Amy Stultz

For many scrapbookers, acrylic craft paints are an essential scrapbooking embellishment. Whether they are used for stamping or decorating elements of a layout, paints have won a permanent place in our hearts, right next to rub-ons and alphabet stickers.

Acrylic paints are relatively cheap; therefore scrapbookers tend to purchase them in a wide variety of colors. Since paint is usually used in small amounts, each bottle lasts a long time, making permanent storage necessary.

Organization

When choosing the storage solution that is best for you, take into account the following factors:

- *How often do you use your paints?*
 - If you use your paints with nearly every project, a storage solution that allows them to be near your work surface at all times is desirable. Pay special attention to open storage solutions, allowing you to easily see the color choices and grab the bottle that is needed.
 - If paint is an occasional embellishment for you, storage options that allow that paint to be organized, but out of the way will typically be more desirable. This frees your workspace for more frequently used items.
- *Do you have a large number of paints, or just a few bottles?*
 - A small paint collection can be stored as one cohesive unit.
 - As your collection grows, the need to subdivide your paints will arise. Consider sorting your large collection in one of the following manners:
 - Medium (acrylic, water colors, etc...)
 - Brand
 - Bottle size or shape
 - Finish (gloss, satin, matte)
 - Color (group all mediums, finishes, and brands by color)
- *Are the bottles all the same brand, or do you need to accommodate several sizes and styles of paint bottles?*
 - Even small paint collections may contain several bottle shapes and sizes. Assess your needs before purchasing a system.

- *Do you want to store brushes in the same place as your paints, or in a separate tool area?*
- *Do you want your paints to be hidden from view or on display?*

Storage

After you've examined the answers to these questions, you'll have a better grasp of the type of storage system that will work best for you. Whether you choose to keep your paints on display, using the rainbow of colors as a decorative item in your creative space, or if you prefer to keep your supplies hidden, you have several unique paint storage options. When evaluating your options, keep in mind that paint bottles should be stored upright in order to prevent leaks and spills. Any of the following suggestions can be adapted and customized for your own space and preferences.

Spice Racks - Visit any kitchen supply or home store, and the array of spice racks is overwhelming. The choices range from basic wooden and plastic designs to more decorative wrought-iron shelves. Most can be conveniently stored close to your workspace on any shelf or counter, or inside a cabinet, while others can be located in out-of-the-way spots. Consider the following possibilities:

Hanging Spice Rack - The beauty of hanging spice racks is that they easily install on any wall, freeing valuable shelf or counter space. They also allow the bottles to be held upright, while keeping your color choices visible for easy use.

Multi-Tiered Spice Shelf - Another useful kitchen supply store find is a multi-tiered spice shelf. These shelves work on the same principle as a set of bleachers. Each shelf sits slightly higher than the one before it, allowing all of your paint choices to be viewed at once.



Door-Mounted Spice Rack – Attaching a door-mounted spice rack to the inside of a cabinet door or on the back of a closet door is a great way to use otherwise unused space. It allows you to store your paint bottles upright and out of the way, while keeping each color visible.

Revolving Spice Racks - Carousel units, also called revolving racks, are a great solution for acrylic paint bottles. Once you remove the glass bottles that are included with the carousel, each hole will hold one bottle of paint. Although often the bottle will not be entirely visible, therefore disguising the paint color, the bottles can be easily removed for viewing. When choosing a revolving spice rack, look for one that holds each bottle at a slight upright angle.

Drawer-Insert Spice Rack - Nifty drawer-insert spice racks are also an excellent choice for acrylic paint bottles. The insert holds the bottles at an angle, and also allows you to easily see and grab the color of your choice. When choosing a drawer insert, look for one that is expandable for a custom fit.

Under-Cabinet Spice Rack – Another useful home-store find is the under-cabinet spice rack. This storage compartment affixes to the underside of a hanging cabinet. Once installed, the rack can be pulled down for easy access to all paint bottles, or closed for out-of-the-way storage. When open, the bottles will sit at a slight angle; when closed, the bottles will lay on their sides possibly allowing leaks and spills.

Totes, Trays and Baskets – Walk down the storage container aisle at your local store and you will find a plethora of options. Available in many shapes and sizes, totes, trays and baskets are useful storage containers for many scrap supplies. These are available in craft, home decor, import, kitchen supply, and discount stores, to name a few. You will want to choose a container that is deep enough to allow your paints to stand upright. With these types of container, you will most likely be able to see only the tops of your paint bottles, so you will want to clearly label the lids. Some of the containers in this category include:

Storage Tray or Drawer – Once loaded with your paint bottles, storage trays can be placed on a shelf or directly onto your workspace. Since trays tend to have angled sides, your paint bottles may not stand up neatly.



Plastic Caddy – The plastic caddy traditionally used to hold cleaning supplies is also a useful paint storage solution. The handle makes it portable for on-the-go use. Again, the sides may be angled.

Storage Tote - When choosing a tote to hold paints, it is useful to purchase clear ones so that your paint supplies are easily viewed. Totes usually have lids, which is an advantage if your paint bottles are stored where young children can reach them. These containers are an excellent portable option for scrappers on the go.

Storage Basket - Wicker storage baskets are more attractive than plastic containers, and often cost about the same, but they don't usually come with lids if that is important to you. If you scrap outside of the home, look for baskets with a handle for easy travel.



Other options – While spice racks, totes, trays and baskets are obvious options, there are other possibilities, limited only by your imagination. Here are a few other ideas to get you thinking about what you might be able to use:

Lazy Susan - The traditional Lazy Susan has been used by crafters for years due to its versatile design. Once loaded, the Lazy Susan can sit on a shelf, in a cabinet or on top of your workspace. To locate the bottle you desire, simply rotate the unit. Many crafters choose to place a jar in the center of the Lazy Susan to hold their brushes, and then arrange their paint bottles around the exterior so all of the paints can be seen easily.



Over-the-Door Shoe Pouch - Over-the-door shoe pouches can be placed over the entrance door to your scrap room or on the backside of a closet door to create a visible display for all of your paints. The clear plastic pockets hold each bottle upright and make it quick and easy to choose the correct color. This storage option is particularly useful for scrappers on the go. Simply slip the hangers out of their holes, roll the pouch up, tie with a pretty ribbon, and you are on your way.

Soft-Sided Carrying Case - Many art supply stores carry soft-sided carrying cases designed specifically for storing and transporting acrylic paints. For scrappers on the go, a carrying case is a useful option. Carrying cases are designed to hold and organize all of your painting supplies securely.

Several of these storage options allow you to see the front of the bottle and the color of paint inside. If you've chosen a container that doesn't display the paint bottles in that way, making it more difficult to see the colors, label the top of each paint bottle. It will make it easier to find the color that you need without having to pull each bottle from the container. An easy way to label them is to add a small circle of paint to the top of the bottle. Then you'll instantly know exactly what color is inside.

Acrylic paints are a scrapping embellishment that is here to stay. Take the time to fully consider your storage needs before you choose a solution, and you are sure to be pleased with your choice.

Additional Tips:

- Only purchase acrylic paint in primary colors, plus black and white. From this basic collection you can custom mix your own colors.
- Apply a circle of acrylic paint to the top of each bottle to see its "true color."

- Using a small notebook, create a swatch book of the colors you own. This will prevent purchasing the same color more than once.
- Use a transparency and a permanent marker to create a usable paint swatch. Apply a small amount of each paint color to the transparency and label it with the brand and color name or number. When you are ready to choose a paint color use the transparency as an overlay to find the correct color quickly and easily.
- An empty CD case can be used as a palette to mix custom colors.
- When creating custom colors, remember to jot your “recipe” down for future reference.

Related Links

[Paint Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Confessions of an Acrylic Paint Addict](#)

Templates

By Melissa Fortenberry

Most beginning scrappers find that their love for scrapbooking is accompanied by a lust for scrap supplies that might be even greater than the love for their hobby. Before long, one accumulates more supplies than he or she knows what to do with. Some of the most versatile supplies are scrapbooking templates. As these are not consumables, such as paper and adhesives, long-term storage options will soon be necessary. It is important that it is an organization and storage solution that works for you.

Organization

Before looking at storage options, you first need to examine what kinds of templates you have and how many of each type there are. Most collections will contain a variety. The most common categories of templates are listed below.

1. *Alphabet templates* – These can be used to create titles and page elements.
2. *Shape templates* – There are a variety of shape templates on the market from the simple ones used to make circles and similar shapes, to paper doll templates to chalking templates to page design templates.
3. *Journaling templates* – These can be used to create text boxes and guide your journaling lines in any number of shapes in many varieties of themes.
4. *Embossing templates* – These are usually smaller templates made from metal. Their purpose is to create a raised design on paper (usually cardstock) and are used with an embossing tool.

These categories can be further organized by grouping them with other similar templates. For example, all similar sized products could go together, all items by the same manufacturer, or all in a similar design. Design categories could include alphabets, florals, envelopes, basic shapes, journaling, paper dolls, holiday, page layout/color blocking, frames, tags, etc.

Once you've decided how to categorize them, next decide whether you want to store them all together or if you'd prefer to keep each type of template stored separately. The size of your collection will likely be the deciding factor. There would be no need for four separate storage solutions if you only have a few from each category.

Storage

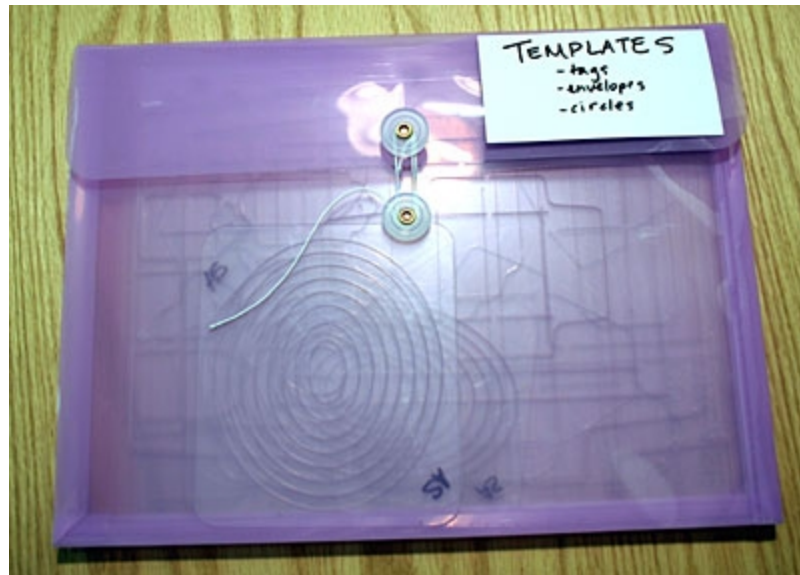
Since templates are in all different shapes and sizes, the most extravagant template collectors may need a combination of storage and organization options to best fit their needs. Here are several effective options for template storage:

Accordion Folder – This is a storage solution that is divided into compartments. Each compartment has an index tab that can be labeled. Each category of templates can be divided into compartments so that like-

items are together. Office supply companies along with scrapbook supply companies make these products.

Hanging File Folders – Similar to an accordion folder, but less portable, you can store each template or category of templates in manila file folders and put them in a hanging file system.

Envelopes/Zipper Baggies – Appropriately sized envelopes or clear zipper baggies can be used to separate the categories of templates you have. For example, all shape templates could go into one envelope, all alphabet templates from one manufacturer in another, those by another manufacturer in yet another and so forth. You can also use one envelope or bag for each template to keep them from getting caught on one another. Label each envelope or bag and store them in file folders, a large bin, or a drawer so you can easily flip through them.



Page Protectors – Template collections can also be comfortably stored in 3-ring binders. Most large templates include three holes in them to be easily added to a 3-ring binder. For smaller templates, use page protectors with storage pockets such as photo sleeves, baseball card protectors, and specialty scrapbooking storage page protectors. A zippered binder is nice to keep the templates from falling out of the binder and getting lost.

For small or moderate collections, one large binder could be used to hold all the templates in one place. Add labeled tab dividers to separate each category of templates. If your collection includes a wide variety of templates such as paper dolls, their clothing, journaling, color blocking, frame, tag and/or alphabet templates, you can give each category or type of template its own small binder. This would make finding just what you need faster than if they were all stored together. It would also make preparing for a crop easier and lighten your load considerably as you would only carry with you what you would need. Since binders come in several different sizes, there should be one available to fit any size collection.



Photo Box - Perhaps you have a large collection of brass embossing templates, which are smaller in size than typical shape and alphabet templates. A photo box or recipe box works great for these with each template separated by a labeled index divider. This will make them very easy to look through but it may not be the ideal solution for the scrapbooker who frequently travels to crop away from home.

Whichever solution you decide to use, it is important to make sure it works with the supplies that you currently own and that it is something that you can comfortably work with. It is also important that it can accommodate more supplies as your collection grows over time.

Additional storage tips:

- Some templates already have the three holes punched for storage, those that don't can be either punched or stored in page protectors.
- Slide your template between two sheets of cardstock to put it inside the page protector. After it's there, just remove the cardstock.
- Quick Load page protectors have an opening running down the front inside edge that makes it easier to slide the templates inside. Simply peel back front, insert the page and close
- Templates that have holes punched can be stored with a divider sheet between each to prevent them from getting caught on one another.
- Add index tags attached along the edge to label templates.

Related Links

[Template Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Using Templates in your Scrapbook Pages](#)

Adhesives

by Denise Gormish

Imagine yourself in your scrapbook space. You've toiled hard on your layout design. You have your paper, photographs and embellishments all laid out and you are ready to glue it all down. Alas, you can't find your adhesive. Don't get caught! Proper adhesive storage will keep the momentum going and get your pages finished. How do you store adhesive so you can always have it available?

Assessment

Before designing a storage plan for adhesives, consider three issues related to adhesive storage.

Adhesive Shape - Which types of adhesives do you own? What size and shape are they? Popular adhesives include the following:

- Mounting Glue (tall wide glue bottles)
- Glue Sticks and Glue Pens (tall narrow containers)
- Adhesive Dispensers (large plastic dispensers)
- Sheet Adhesives (large flat sheets)
- Mounting Foam (medium or small flat sheets)
- Mounting Squares (medium-sized box)
- Glue Tape (medium- or large-sized roll)
- Adhesive Dots (medium-sized roll)
- Adhesive Spray (tall wide spray can)

Proximity - What items do you need to keep within easy reach while working? Are there items that can be stored away? Consider what items are used frequently and which items are used sparingly.

Location - Look at the list of adhesives and determine if you can keep your adhesives in one location or whether you need to have several locations. Your answer will depend on how many adhesives you have and what kind they are, how many of them need to be within easy reach, and how much available space you have. If you need more than one location, consider the best combination of storage options.

Storage Solutions

Having done your assessment of your storage needs, evaluate the different types of storage solutions. As you read each storage solution, consider whether they meet your needs for location, proximity and adhesive shape.

A box, bin or basket - Depending on the size and shape of the box, bin or basket you choose, it may be all you need to hold all your adhesives. You can place it on your scrapbook workspace within easy reach or it can be stored away and retrieved when needed. If the container you've chosen isn't quite large enough for larger or odd-shaped adhesives such as spray or large sheets, you may choose to store them in a separate, more appropriate container.



These can also be a very inexpensive storage solution. You can purchase them on sale or pick them up at a second-hand store or rummage sales. For function and beauty, purchase or reuse a beautiful basket that fits your style, or decorate a storage container to match your décor.

A drawer, preferably with separate units- A drawer can be a convenient storage solution, especially if it is within reach of your scrapbook workspace. If the drawer has a divider, individual items can be organized in the dividers. If it doesn't have a divider, use a divided narrow container such as those often used to organize office desk drawers, and insert it into the drawer. It will keep the different adhesives organized by type and/or size and can also be removed from your drawer when needed. Most adhesive styles will fit well inside a drawer. Look for a drawer deep enough to house adhesive spray and bottles of glue so they can stand up. Sheet adhesives and mounting foam can lay flat on the bottom or filed vertically toward one side of the drawer.



When considering drawers, think about both desk drawers and stand-alone carts. Often divider inserts can be purchased at an office supply store for either a desk drawer or cart drawer.

A tin or paint can - A tin or paint can will not solve all your adhesive storage needs. It will, however, take up only a small space and provide quick access to some adhesives. For those short on space, a tin or paint can could easily be stored away and retrieved when needed. While working, place it on your work space within easy reach. A tin or paint can makes a great storage solution for tall narrow adhesive dispensers such as mounting glue and glue sticks. Bulky or shorter items may fall deep into the can or not fit well.



Save and wash the standard round tin cans from the soups and vegetables in your pantry. You may need to file down any sharp edges inside the can before using them. Quart-sized paint cans can be purchased at hardware stores in the paint department. Decorate the tin or paint can with paint, patterned paper and/or ribbons for an attractive touch.

File folders or page protectors – If you've chosen another method of storage for most of your adhesives, but are still left with flat adhesives like sheet adhesives and mounting foam, add them to a file folder or page protectors in a binder with other supplies. Clearly label them so you can quickly find the flat adhesives. You can then retrieve them when you need them for a layout.

Proper adhesive storage is imperative to effectively work on your scrapbook pages. Some scrappers will favor a system that keeps all their adhesives close at hand.

Others will favor a system that keeps the important adhesives at hand and allows for storage and quick access of the less frequently used adhesives. In either case, implement a solution that ensures that your adhesives are nearby while you are working.

Additional Tips:

- Keeping all of your adhesives in one place, such as a box or drawer, makes it much easier to choose the right adhesives for each project, rather than searching for several kinds in different places.
- Store liquid adhesives with the top side down and with the cap securely on to keep the top from clotting. Keep a safety pin or needle nearby to clean out the nozzle when necessary.
- When using a basket, chose one with a folding handle. The handle can be placed up for carrying and then placed down when you need to access your adhesives.
- Return adhesives to their proper location after each use. This will make it much easier to find them later.
- For popular adhesives, keep an extra supply in storage.
- Nothing is worse than running out of adhesive in the middle of a project. Keep track of what you have in stock so you know when you need to purchase more adhesive. Make a list of your adhesives and keep it in a safe location (bulletin board, envelope, note pad, etc.). Make notes when you are low on an adhesive so you'll be prepared to purchase some.

Related Links

[Adhesive Product Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Adhesives Comparison](#)

Tools

By Denise Gormish

One big challenge everyone faces when organizing a scrapbook space is how to handle the tools of the trade. There are a wide variety of tools used in making scrapbooks. Many scrapbook tools are small and easy to misplace if they are not stored well. Other scrapbook tools are large and bulky, which makes them difficult to store.

Here are some of the tools to be considered:

Small items

- [Anywhere hole punch](#)
- [Eyelet setter](#)
- [Paper piercer](#), safety pin and/or [needle](#)
- [Rub-on applicator](#)
- [Paintbrushes](#)
- [Scissors](#)
- [Basic journaling pens](#)
- [Small hammer](#)
- [Craft knife](#)
- [Stapler](#)
- [Adhesive Remover](#)
- [Engraving Tool](#)

Large items

- [Paper cutter](#)
- [Ruler](#)
- [Cutting and/or eyelet setting mat](#)
- [Personal die-cutting machine](#)
- [Labeler](#)
- [Xyron](#)
- [Sewing machine](#)

If you have a designated scrap space, you can often leave them stored on your desktop in an appropriate container. However, if your scrap space is in a dual-purpose room accessed by other people in your household, you may need a solution to hide them away when they aren't in use. Whether your tools are large or small, hidden or displayed, there are several ways you can keep them all contained and convenient while you work.

Small Tools Storage

Small tools can be stored either as a group of tools or as individual tools located with or near their complementary scrapbook supplies. Alternatively, you may choose to implement a combination of the two methods. Using the descriptions below, assign your tools to their best location.

Stored as a group. Using the products listed above as a guide, gather all your small tools together. Look at them as a unit. Since they are small, it would be possible to place them all together. Most of the small tools are medium in length and narrow. This shape allows for several storage options.

Tin, paint or storage can - Small items can be stored upright in a can. A can could either be left on your desk or taken out of storage when you begin working. If you have several small tools, you may need more than one can. To enhance your décor, decorate the storage can.

Turnabout tool holder - These holders, often used for office supplies or kitchen utensils, are similar to a tin or paint can but they have extra slots to keep items separated. They also rotate, giving you easy access to all sides of the container. The holder can be left on your desk or placed in storage and taken out when you begin working.



Drawer - Small items can be laid flat within a conveniently located drawer. If the drawer has a divider, individual items can be organized in the dividers. If the drawer doesn't have a divider, a divided container, such as a silverware organizer, will work to keep loose round items from rolling around in the drawer. The containers could also be removed from your drawer when needed. Often-used tools should be placed near your workspace and made easily accessible while working.

Basket or shallow plastic bin - A small basket or shallow bin should hold most small tools. It can be left on your desk or taken out of storage when you begin working. For function and beauty purchase or reuse a beautiful basket that fits your style.



Shelves - A small shelving unit can be used for tools. A wooden, plastic, or even metal shelf, preferably with several cubbies, can be placed on top of your desk or mounted on the wall near your desk. Choose a shelf that is deep enough for your tallest tools. Tools can be laid flat inside the cubbies right within reach of your workspace.

Stored Individually – Another option is to store each tool with or near its complementary scrapbook supplies. Look at each of your small tools. Consider where it is used most often and where it would be easily found. For example, the paintbrushes would be stored near the paint. If your paints are held in a storage box, place the paintbrushes in the box too.

The advantage of storing the tools with its complementary product is that they are kept together and are easily available when needed. The disadvantage is that sometimes it is hard to find a storage solution near the product. In addition some tools are versatile and may have more than one complementary product.

Consider how you use each tool and when it is needed. You may find that you need to store some tools with complementary supplies, but others are so versatile, that you need them close at hand for nearly every layout you create.

Large Tools Storage

Larger tools are bulky and sized differently, making their storage solutions more difficult. Often these tools are used on every layout so they need to be close at hand while working. Here are some suggestions:

Table - Large tools like a paper cutter or sewing machine may have no better location than right on your desk. A large paper cutter or sewing machine would need a stable surface as well as easy access. If you can find a workspace table large enough to hold your large tools, take advantage of the convenience. If you can't find a spot on your workspace for a large tool to permanently reside, it can be stowed underneath or next to your workspace and still be easily accessed when you begin working. If your scrap space is large enough, you may want a separate counter space or table where you can store these large tools, while keeping your layout-creating workspace clear.

Large basket - A large basket near your scrapbook area could hold a regular-sized paper cutter, ruler and mats. A long, narrow basket would be most helpful for storing a paper cutter and ruler.

Drawer – A variety of tools such as a paper cutter, ruler and eyelet setting mat could be stored inside a long drawer. Usually these items are big enough that they don't need a container to hold them inside the drawer. Punches also can be stored together in a shallow drawer.



Magazine holder - A vertical file holder can hold a regular-sized paper cutter, ruler and mats. The holder could also be kept in storage when not in use to keep your desk space uncluttered.

Paper tray - If you are already using stacks of paper trays for paper or other supplies, consider using the top tray for large tools. The tools could sit on top of the paper tray, providing quick access to those tools.

The challenge of organizing and storing tools is complicated by the various tool sizes. From small to large, scrapbook tools can easily take up a lot of space. By separating them into large- and small-size groups, you can identify the best storage solutions for those sizes. Then look at each tool individually and decide how to best store them depending on needs of available space, accessibility and location. There are many options to choose and you are sure to find something that fits your needs.

Additional Tips:

- When using a drawer, chose one close to your workspace that can be left open while you're working. If you can leave it open, it will be more convenient than if the drawer is located in front of you and underneath your workspace.
- If you use a particular tool on nearly every layout (such as scissors, a paper trimmer, a black pen, etc.) keep them in a container that can stay right on your desktop. You will save time by not needing to constantly take them out and put them away while working.
- For less frequently used tools, keep them in storage. Items such as punches, embossing powder, chawks, labeler, die-cutting machine, etc. don't need to be as close at hand and can simply take up precious workspace. Keep these stored away on a shelf or in a drawer until you need them.
- Even if you normally store your paper cutter when you're not working, designate a spot to put it while you are working. Use that spot every time you finish using your paper cutter. In this way, you will save time searching for your paper cutter while working.

- Baskets are wonderful but can get costly. Check for them at craft store sales, garage sales and second-hand stores. You can always refurbish something to suit your tastes.
- Unused paint cans from a hardware store make cheap storage cans.

Related Links

[Scrapbook Tool Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Basic Scrapbooking Supplies](#)

Pens and Pencils

By Gwyn Calvetti

Scrapbooking conjures up images of stacks of gorgeous papers and photos, adhesives and trinkets galore. Pens and pencils seem utilitarian next to all this, but with organization that places them at hand, they can add much to your designs. Organize your writing tools well, and they will make a bigger impact in your work by being up front and available. You may even find that they deserve starring roles on some of your designs!

Organization

Organizing experts always stress evaluating the needs first before buying your first storage container. Pens and pencils are no exception to this rule, even though they are likely to be among the smallest of your supplies in both size and number.

Asking yourself the following questions is the first step toward developing an organizational system that will meet your needs best. *What are the most common uses made of your pens and pencils? Do you attend crops outside the home often? Where are you most likely to work with your writing implements?* The answers to these questions will give you valuable information for how you use your pens and pencils and how they can be stored and accessible when you scrapbook. For instance:

- Frequent traveling to crops requires specialized storage to keep the pens and pencils contained.
- Using your pens and pencils for hand lettering and hand journaling may dictate their proximity to other tools, such as rulers, lettering templates and gum erasers.
- Using pens and pencils to create artistic elements suggests keeping them visible and accessible, perhaps arranged by color families.
- If you are a "supply collector," keep in mind you will be adding to your collection and need to keep it all organized and stored. Your system will need to allow room to grow.

Keeping these ideas in mind will help you avoid buying an organizational tool or system that looks cool but is ineffective for your specific needs.

As well your own pen- and pencil-using habits, you'll need to consider the storage needs of the pens and pencils themselves. Pens have specific storage requirements if you wish to maintain them optimally.

- Marker-style pens and pens with writing tips on both ends must be stored horizontally to keep the ink distributed evenly. Attempting to store them vertically can result in all the ink "pooling" on the downward tip, with the other end drying out. In addition, any type of pen that requires you to shake before use, such as metallic paint markers, should be stored in the same manner.
- Ink pens such as gel pens, Zig Writers and similar pens should always be stored so that they are vertical, with the writing end down, cap on.

- Pencils can be stored vertically or horizontally. If they are stored vertically, place them in the storage container with the sharpened ends up. This way, you have less chance of the sharpened tip breaking off, requiring additional sharpening before use.

Storage

You've looked at your supplies and how you generally use them. Now comes the fun part: choosing how best to store them. You have many choices available. Some are low tech, and require not much more than your time and effort. Others are highly specialized designs unique to the needs of scrapbookers. Take a walk down the aisles of your office supply or specialty art supply shop for some storage ideas with a little more panache. Many of these are inexpensive and they'll corral your pens and pencils with style. You decide what will be best for your space.

Tin cans - The old summer camp standby is still a great one: cheap, economical and allowing for endless variation. Save old juice or soup cans, using a file to remove any sharp edges inside. They can be anything from simple containers to altered works of art. Some ideas to personalize your storage include:

- Use fabric, paint or paper scraps to decorate the outside.
- Color coordinate your containers by color family; red pencils and pens in a red-decorated can.
- Stack the cans and tip them on their sides. Wrapping with heavy hemp or other decorative fibers and sealing with glue will create an attractive corral for your writing implements needing horizontal storage.

Shoe holders - Remember those plastic devices with pockets, intended to hang inside the closet door and hold your shoes? If you have lots of pens and pencils that can be stored vertically, this could be a great, inexpensive option to place on a hook on the wall near your workspace. Use old letter stickers to dress it up by labeling the pockets, accenting perhaps with forgotten "back to school" stickers in your stash.

Plastic school boxes - These are a staple in many households, and are a great choice for inexpensive storage, especially for those markers and paint pens that must be stored horizontally. Consider taking some of your ribbon stash and wrapping and gluing it around the lid in a color that corresponds to the color family contained in the box. The boxes stack easily, taking up less space on your table. They are easy to transport to a cropping party without fear of spilling. For a more permanent scrap space, a set of plastic drawers will work as well.



Store display racks - The hobby/craft/art supply stores have specialized containers for displaying pens and pencils. Ask the store manager to keep you in mind if they ever discard these. You can use papers and spare embellishments to dress them up to match your workspace décor, and the price can't be beat.

Desk accessory sets - Any office supply store will have a variety of desk accessory sets that are stylish and coordinated. These sets include pencil caddies, divided desk trays perfect for storing the markers, and attractive multiple cup pencil holders.

Kitchen organizers - Don't overlook possibilities intended for your kitchen counter. Turnabout organizers designed to hold items such as wooden spoons and spatulas work well to keep your writing tools at your fingertips.

Clear acrylic boxes - Office supply and storage stores have these in clear or colored choices, available in a variety of shapes and sizes. Fill the bottom of one with a layer of dried beans or marbles, and you can place all your vertically-stored writing implements in clear view.



Specialized scrapbooking storage - Many companies have responded to the growing needs of enthusiastic scrapbookers with systems designed for the hobby. Magnetic wall storage systems with modular units can be arranged with caddies to hold both your vertical- and horizontally-stored pens and pencils. Other companies selling cropping totes have options for removable pen-storage cases, with loops to hold the pens in place. These systems are a good choice if you travel to crops often. There is also a line of scrapbooking furniture that has drawers sized for the most common needs, and drawer trays will keep the pens organized and at your fingertips.

Taking the time to organize and store all your pens and pencils will pay off. Your writing implements will be easy to find and you'll know exactly what colors and styles

you have. Proper storage will prolong the life of them as well. Organizing your supplies takes time, but it pays off later when you're trying to find that .02 Zig marker to finish off your journaling!

Additional Tips:

- However you choose to store your pens and pencils, consider keeping them located where you can see them as you work. You'll be more likely to use them.
- Consider organizing your pens and pencils in ROYGBIV order: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. Not only will this create an attractive rainbow effect, it helps you see at a glance exactly what your choices are within a given color range.
- If you use journaling pens with a variety of pen tip sizes, consider sorting them according to size, with large points in one container and smaller points in another. Use a tag to label the point size and tie it to the storage container with a ribbon.

Related Links

[Pen & Pencil Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Hand Lettering](#)

Stickers, Die Cuts and Rub-Ons

By Andrea Steed

The volume of stickers, die cuts and rub-ons that can accumulate among your scrapbooking supplies can be quite overwhelming. Not only that, but it can be extremely difficult to find what you are looking for if they are not organized well and stored in a convenient place.

Organization

To organize your stickers, die cuts and rub-ons (or any relatively flat embellishments) begin by categorizing them. Separate them into piles by color or theme. You can also sort by type of embellishment, with categories such as borders, tags, frames and word sentiments. Another option is to sort by manufacturer to keep coordinated items together. Choose categories that will complement your style of scrapbooking, so that you'll be able to find what you are looking for. For example, categorize a sheet of red flower stickers in the "red" category rather than a "flowers" category if you are more likely to use it because of its color than its shape. Here are some sample lists of categories to use to sort stickers, die cuts and rub-on embellishments:

Color

Red
Orange
Yellow
Green
Blue
Purple
Pink
Brown
Black
White

Type

Tags
Borders
Frames
Words/Quotes

Theme

Animals
Alphabets
Baby
Birthday
Boy
Christmas
Fall
Family
Flowers
Friends
Food
Girl
Inspiration

Love
Memories
Nature
Sports
Summer
Travel
Winter
Miscellaneous

These types of embellishments often come in sheets with several coordinating stickers, die cuts or rub-ons. Look for general categories that the entire sheet would fit into. If one particular sticker on a sheet fits another category better than the rest on the sheet, you can trim it out and re-categorize it individually.

Once all of the stickers and other flat embellishments are organized into piles, you can begin to put them into a storage system.

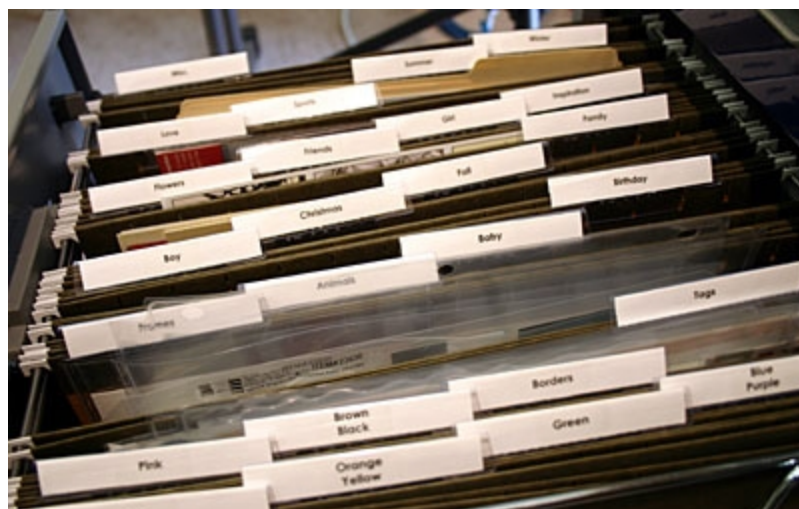
Storage

As you look for a storage method, keep in mind that the more convenient it is to browse through the stickers and assorted embellishments, the easier it will be to see what you have available. There are several ways they can be stored in both portable as well as more permanent containers.

Accordion File Folders – Accordion file folders are a fantastic portable way to store flat embellishments such as stickers and die cuts. They are available in several sizes including as wide as 15", which easily accommodates the 6" x 12" sticker sheets that are so common. Larger accordion folders made to contain 12" x 12" paper can also be used. Accordion-style folders have several compartments, often with tabbed dividers so you can easily label and separate your categorized embellishments.

Envelopes – An oversized envelope is another easy way to house each category of flat embellishments. Label the outside of each envelope with the category name so you'll know what is inside. Standard 9" x 12" manila envelopes work well. There are also several brands of more durable plastic envelopes made specifically for scrapbooking supplies. These containers are often transparent and come in sizes that accommodate up to 12" x 12" sheets of embellishments. Once each category is in an envelope, you can store the envelopes in a box, basket or bin, so you can easily flip through and choose the appropriate envelope for your project.

Hanging File Folders – Legal-sized folders in a hanging file are a very convenient way to store stickers, die cuts and rub-ons. The ability to choose a standard file cabinet or a portable file container makes this an option for both a permanent scrap space solution as well as a portable one. Hanging files allow you to flip through the embellishments sheet by sheet from above, which eliminates having to pull everything from a category out in order to see what's there. You can also buy specialty 12" x 12" hanging folders and file cabinets to accommodate larger embellishment sheets.



Page Protectors in a Binder – To have all of your stickers and die cuts at your fingertips, put them into page protectors in a 3-ring binder. This can be done with both standard 8 ½" x 11" protectors as well as specialty 12" x 12" binders and page protectors. You can also make use of various-sized pockets made for photographs, baseball cards, etc. to store smaller die cuts and stickers.



Create tabbed dividers to label each category, so you can instantly flip to the type of embellishment you need. This storage method also protects the stickers sticking to each other, since only a couple of sheets are stored within each page protector. The binder can be stored on a shelf and is easily accessible as well as portable.

Pegboard or Bulletin Board – If wall space is abundant, you can display your stickers and die cuts in plain view just as they would be in a store. Mount a pegboard with small hooks to the wall or the back of a



closet door, and hang the embellishments directly from the pegboard. A cork bulletin board can also be used in the same way — just don't overload each thumbtack. For items that don't have a ready-made hole for hanging, punch one or place the item in a zipper baggie with a hole punched in it.

There are all sorts of file cabinets, binders, bins, and folders than can store your stickers, die cuts and rub-ons. Look for one that fits your budget and decorating theme, and will be a functional way for you to access your supplies as you scrapbook.

Additional Tips:

- If a sheet of stickers or die cuts is too long or wide to fit into the page protector, envelope or hanging file, cut it down (between stickers) into two pieces so that it will fit.
- Separate alphabet stickers from regular stickers.
- Save money by buying inexpensive page protectors in bulk to store your stickers and die cuts in a 3-ring binder.

Related Links

[Sticker Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Using Stickers in your Scrapbooks](#)

Photographs

By Andrea Steed

Most scrapbookers don't immediately scrapbook every single photograph they take, which means there are double prints, prints that won't be included in a scrapbook, or prints that are waiting to be put into a layout that need to be stored somewhere. Whether it is several decades' worth of prints, a pile of recent photographs, a hard drive full of digital images, or a combination of these, it's important to safely store your photographs. Then you can be assured that they will be preserved, whether they ever make it into a scrapbook album or not. The question then is how to store them and organize them so you can find what you need when you are ready to use them.

Here are several suggestions for storage and organization in regards to your prints, negatives and digital images.

Organizing and Storing Prints

Organize

The way in which you use your photographs and the type of photographs you tend to take will help determine the best method of organizing them. What are you typically looking for when you go searching for a photograph? Do you want to find a photograph from a specific year? Are you looking for photographs of one particular person? Do you tend to search for photographs from a specific event?

The volume and origin of the photographs also will play a part in how you organize them. For instance, if you inherited several years worth of photographs from a relative, but don't have any way to know when they were taken, you may prefer a non-chronological organization method. On the other hand, if you are organizing photographs that you took yourself within the last couple of years, you're more likely to want them organized in chronological order, so you can continue to add to them easily. Below are several options for how to categorize your photographs so that you can more quickly find what you are looking for.

By date. If you organize your photos as they are developed, chronologically may be the easiest way for you to organize them. Simply add them to a box or album as they are developed. If you are organizing old photos using this method, divide them first by year, then by season, and then by month and date if possible. Categorizing in stages makes it much less overwhelming.

By person. If you're creating albums for your children or are organizing old photos and want to create albums that aren't event-specific or chronological, organizing by person is another great way to sort your photos. A box for each person makes finding photos for an individual's album much easier. Once they are organized by person, you may want to sort them by date or by event to further categorize each collection of photographs.

By event or subject. A third way to organize your photos is to categorize them by event or subject. For instance, possible categories would be New Years, Birthdays, Easter, Summer, Vacation, First Day of School, Baby, etc. This method is especially helpful if you create holiday albums or like to make

pages of similar subjects spanning over multiple years or dates.

Label

Regardless of the method you use to categorize your photographs, make every effort to label them with as much information as possible. Names, places, events, and dates are all helpful information to include with all of your photographs so you (or someone else) will be able to identify them down the road.

The most fool-proof way to ensure that your photos will be identifiable for years to come is to write the information directly on the back of the prints. Other labeling systems such as notebooks, index cards and envelopes will work, but are only beneficial if they are never separated from the prints themselves. Always include the basics (name, date, and location) on the back of your photographs and you can add additional information in a corresponding notebook or on note cards if you wish.

To prevent damaging the photos as you are labeling:

- Use a fast-drying acid-free pen or a No. 2 pencil to write directly on the back of the photographs.
- Avoid writing with a ballpoint pen or overly-sharp pencil because the pressure exerted as you write can create indentations in the photograph that can be seen from the front.
- Make sure that the ink on the back is completely dry before stacking the photographs to prevent transferring any ink onto the front of another picture.
- Use a No. 1 or No. 2 pencil when labeling photographs printed on fiber-base paper. Most commercial photo printing is done on resin-based paper which is water-resistant. However, archival prints and heritage photographs may have a fiber base, making them porous. Ink used on the back of fiber-base prints may bleed through and ruin the front of the photograph.

Label your photographs as they are developed. Once you've gone through a stack of photos that are several years old, you'll realize how difficult it is to identify all of the important information. If you label them as they are printed, and before you put them into your storage container, you'll be thankful in the long run.

Store

There are several options for storing prints and the method you choose will depend on how you use your photographs. If you access them frequently to pull photographs for your scrapbooks, a box storage system will be a convenient solution. If you'd like to be able to store your pictures in a way that is easier to browse through them, you may prefer a photo album.



Photo boxes with index dividers. Most varieties of these inexpensive photo boxes hold several hundred 4" x 6" (and smaller) photographs and include index tab dividers to help you categorize the photographs within the box. They also usually come with a label on the front of the box to indicate its contents. Photo boxes are a great space-saver because they can store quite a few photos per box, and can be stacked for convenient storage.

Photo box with archival envelopes. In addition to index tab dividers, an envelope for each event or roll of film is another convenient way to keep groupings of photographs separated from each other. Make sure that the envelopes you use are archival quality to protect the photographs from damage. Also, label each envelope with information about its contents.

Photo albums with labels. If you'd prefer a more accessible way to look at your photos, archival photo albums with protective sleeves are another option. Available in all sorts of sizes and designs, many photo albums even come with space to label the photographs with a date and comments. If you make scrapbook pages using double prints, this is a perfect way to keep a full collection of all of your photographs in an easy-to-enjoy book.

Whether you store your prints in an album or a box, remember to place them in an area of your home where they will not be damaged by sunlight or moisture. Avoid basements and attics where the temperature can get very high or extremely low. In addition, keep them stored away from high-traffic areas to prevent spills, curious children or pets from damaging those precious photographs. Bookshelves, closets and cabinets are all fine options for storing your photographs.

Organizing and Storing Negatives

If you don't already keep negatives organized and stored safely, now is a good time to rethink your methods. It can save you frustration, time, and most importantly your photos.

Negative Sleeves – Archival negative sleeves that fit into 3-ring binders are a perfect way to keep all of your negatives collected and protected. As each roll of film is developed, slide the negatives into the next page of negative sleeves and add a small sticker label to the front of the sheet. On the label, write what the photos are of and the date that they were made. If the roll of film covers several events, add several stickers to label each section of photographs. This way, all of your negatives will be stored in chronological order. It only takes about five minutes to do each time a new roll is developed, and makes ordering reprints and enlargements a breeze.

Envelopes with Prints – Another convenient way to store your negatives is in archival envelopes with the prints that came from that roll of film. If you store your prints in chronological order within photo boxes, it's easy to add the negatives with the corresponding prints so both are available to you in the same place when you need them.

Some things to remember when handling and organizing your negatives:

- Wash your hands before handling negatives, and handle them by the edges only, to avoid damaging them with the oils from your skin.
- Keep your negatives stored in a cool, dry, dark and temperature-controlled environment.
- Use archival negative sleeves to keep your negatives from being damaged.
- If you choose to organize your negatives in envelopes or in a box, be sure that the materials you are storing them in are acid free and archival safe.

- Consider storing your negatives somewhere OTHER than where your photos are stored. In the case of a fire, flood or other natural disaster, you may be better off to have the negatives stored at a relative's house, in a bank safety deposit box, or another safe location.

Preserving and storing your negatives is worth the extra couple of minutes and little bit of space they take up. In exchange, you have an insurance policy of sorts and a handy way to reference your photos.

Organizing and Storing Digital Photographs

As the quality and power of digital technology improves, digital photography is becoming a more mainstream method of photography. Even if you haven't completely made the switch to digital, you may have a need to organize a collection of digital images. Organizing digital photos in a logical way is simple, and there are many options available.

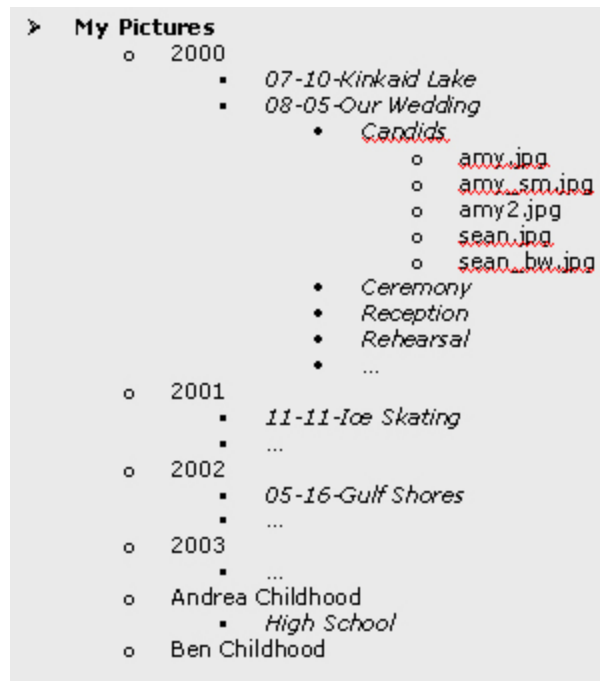
Folder Structure

First, determine your file folder structure. The way you set up your photo folders will help you find your photos easily when you need them.

Just as you categorize printed photographs, choose how you will categorize your digital images using the same principles: by date, by person, or by subject or event. You can then set up digital folders on your computer in the same way as you would use index tab dividers and labeled envelopes in a photo box to store actual prints.

This example folder structure shows folders divided by year, then event, and then sub-categorized if necessary for larger collections of photographs from one event.

Separate folders are used for collections of old photographs that are arranged by subject rather than date.



Naming

Using a standard naming system is another way to help you find your photos easily. Usually, computers will automatically list your folders in alphabetical and alphanumerical order. To see the folders in chronological order, name each event folder with the month and date before adding the descriptive title such as the folder named "05-16-Gulf Shores." This ensures that all of the folders are sorted first by year in the correct year folder, then by month, and then by date, making them fall into place in chronological order.

Determining a naming system for your photographs also requires some forethought. When you download your photos from a digital camera, the camera usually assigns a

name and number to them such as "image1456.jpg". You can leave the names as is, or choose to rename them to something that means more to you.

With the many previewing options available in image browsers and photo editing programs, renaming all of your digital images can be an unnecessary step, especially if they are stored in folders with descriptive names. However, if you do choose to rename images, or if you are editing and saving new images, devise a naming system that makes sense to you. Assign letter codes to edited images to let you know what changes have been made to the original image, such as:

image1456_web.jpg (web-friendly version)
image1456_c.jpg (cropped version)
image1456_bw.jpg (black-and-white version)
image1456_s.jpg (sepia-toned version)

Being consistent in your file naming will be extremely beneficial to you when browsing through your photo folders.

Storing

Although it is certainly convenient, it's probably not practical to keep all of your photos on the hard drive of your computer. Since photo files, the original images in particular, are such large file sizes, they will quickly take up space on your hard drive. To archive older photos, you can burn the file folders from each year or multiple years to a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM. If you have switched to digital photography, having a CD (or DVD) burner in your computer is a very good investment.

It's an easy and inexpensive way to archive, back up and share your photos. Even if you are lucky enough to have an extremely large hard drive with plenty of space, making CD-ROM copies of your photo files regularly to ensure backups is a great habit to start.



Store the photo CDs or DVDs in protective cases to prevent scratches and then file them into the CD-ROM storage container that works best in your space. There are all sorts of varieties including shelves, towers, and hard-case booklets. Office supply stores and the music and entertainment section of department stores will have an abundance of choices and designs for CD storage.

Organizing your photos will help you more efficiently and effectively access them over and over again. Knowing where to find them is usually half the battle, but with a system that works for you, you'll never have trouble finding the right photograph again.

Additional Tips:

- If you scrapbook in chronological order, as you have photos printed, put them into page protectors divided by layout right into your current album. Then you can easily see what layouts are ready to create.

- Those using digital photography can order prints based on their needs for specific scrapbook pages allowing them to choose the size and cropping before ever having the photographs printed.

Related Links

[Software Reviews](#)

[Scrapbook Supply Storage Solution Reviews](#)

[Photo Editing Software Tips & Tricks](#)

Magazines and Idea Books

By Andrea Steed and Lindsay Teague

Scrapbookers tend to accumulate magazines and idea books as quickly as they buy new products. Paper, stickers and embellishments are eventually used on layouts, but magazines and idea books seem to take up more and more space as time goes on.

Too often, a scrapbooker will browse through a magazine when it first arrives in the mail only to then put it on a shelf, never to pick it up again. While the magazines contain hundreds of ideas and information worth referring to, having them all just sit on a shelf makes it difficult to know which magazine to pick up when searching for a specific idea. Finding a system that helps you get the most out of these inspirational and educational books can benefit both your scrapbooking and your storage situation.

Essentially, there are three options for how to approach the magazine and idea book storage dilemma:

1. Clip your favorite articles and ideas to create a custom idea file and recycle the remainder of the magazine.
2. Index the articles and ideas that interest you so that you know which issue to pick up when you need an idea.
3. Keep only the most recent and favorite issues and recycle or donate the rest.

Compile a Custom Idea File

To really reduce the amount of space magazines and idea books take up, consider this approach and save only the articles and ideas that truly interest you in your own custom idea file. This is a four-step process, but is fairly easy to maintain once you have the system in place.

Step 1 – Read

Whether it is the day the magazine arrives or several weeks or even months later, the first step should be to read the magazine. Relax in a favorite chair, soak up the ideas and simply enjoy reading it. Then, unless of course you are instantly inspired to use an idea from the magazine, set it aside for a while.

Step 2 - Re-visit

Every three months or so, flip through the magazines that have collected. Decide if there are any articles or ideas that you want to keep for your own idea file. If there are, set it to the side for Step 3. If nothing jumps out at you, recycle or donate the magazine. After collecting three months of magazines, it's possible that some of the ideas will no longer be interesting to you. If it doesn't inspire you after three months, let it go.

If you subscribe to several magazines, you'll also find that many of the magazines cover similar material. Rather than keeping duplicate information, you can choose your favorite articles and toss the others. Make note of which magazine you tend to save the most of, because it might help you decide whether or not to re-subscribe to the ones you don't use as often.

Step 3 – Clip and Rip

Next, tear out any articles and individual layouts that strike you as interesting, or as something you'd like to try. As you tear them out, put them into piles by category. Choose your categories based on the subjects you tend to need ideas for or elements you struggle with creating. For example, if you're a theme-oriented scrapper, divide your clipped ideas by theme: seasons, birthday, holidays, baby, etc. If on the other hand, you prefer looking for ideas by page element, create categories such as borders, photo mats, title design, photo corners, etc. A third method of organizing is by concept such as in the example categories below:

Album Ideas - ideas for theme albums, gift albums, make your own album, etc.

Design Tips - tips for choosing colors, how to balance a layout, etc.

Journaling Ideas – journaling articles, layouts featuring journaling

Layout Design - layouts you particularly liked, sketches for layout design

Lettering Design – ideas for unique titles and lettering

Organization - ideas for supply storage, organizing scrap rooms, etc.

Photography - photography tips, photo pose ideas, etc.

Techniques - articles teaching specific techniques

Themes - layouts about birthdays, holidays, and other themes you often scrapbook

While you're creating this fantastic resource, don't limit your idea file to items only from magazines and idea books. Add your own sketches, scrapbooking "to do" lists, journaling and layout ideas. If you take scrapbooking classes or read articles online, add those resources to your idea file as well. Include inspirational jump-start items like greeting cards, non-scrapbook-related advertisements, and color schemes that catch your eye and inspire your creativity.

Step 4 - Assemble

With the ideas clipped and categories chosen, all that's left is to store the ideas in a way that is accessible and easy to use. There are a couple of options for how you can store your custom idea file.

Folders – Create a folder for each category and simply put the clipped ideas into the corresponding folders. Then you can easily reference the appropriate folder when you need an idea. The ease and convenience of folders allows you to add more and weed out old ideas in seconds.

3-Ring Binder – Instead of sifting through loose magazine pages, insert each sheet into a page protector within a 3-ring binder. You'll be able to see both the front and back of the pages (when needed). To save space you can glue two to three clipped layouts to a piece of scratch paper and insert the paper into a page protector. Use standard 3-ring tab dividers to separate the categories, and you'll have your very own organized idea book that is both convenient and portable.



You can also take this system a step further, and create a "Table of Contents" for each section so that you can find particular articles more quickly. Make a list of the articles and ideas that are included in each section, in the order that they are included. Page numbers can be added with small white labels to the outside of the page protectors, or to the magazine pages themselves. As you add new pages to your idea book, just add another entry to your Table of Contents.

A custom idea file can be a big project initially, but once you've gotten it started, maintaining your system shouldn't take much time. After you read each magazine, commit to spending 10 to 15 minutes cutting out or indexing the articles and making notes of favorite layouts, embellishments, tips, etc. to put into your idea file. You'll see that your file grows quickly and includes only information that specifically interests you. You'll also find that you refer back to those ideas much more often when it is in a format that is quick and tailored to your scrapping style.

Create an Index

If the thought of cutting and tearing up your magazines is simply too much to bear, you might be more interested in an indexing system. Instead of cutting out the articles themselves, you can begin to make an index of ideas that can direct you to the magazine you need. Indexing the ideas in your magazines and idea books allows you to keep them fully intact, while still being able to find the information you want quickly.

Index Notebook - To create an index, begin by following the first two steps for creating a custom idea file: reading and re-visiting your magazines. Then, instead of tearing out the ideas as suggested in step 3, keep a divided spiral notebook or 3-ring binder separated by categories and add notes to the appropriate sections. Draw sketches of layout ideas you like or make notes about journaling ideas, unique techniques or tips to remind you what the article is about. With each of your sketches and notes, include the magazine name, issue and page number for easy reference. The next time you need an idea for a journaling technique, you'll know right where to look.

Index Cards - As an alternative to a notebook, you can also use index cards and create a "card catalog" of the articles and ideas in your scrapbook magazines. Create information cards about each article or idea of interest based on the theme, technique, or topic it covers. For ideas that fit several categories such as a unique

technique and a great title design idea, create two cards (or as many you need) and place them in multiple sections. A recipe box or photo box is the perfect storage container for your index, and usually comes complete with index tab dividers. Alphabetize the entire collection, and you'll be able to quickly find the inspiration you need.

Computerized – Skip the paper index altogether and use the same plan to create a computerized index in a spreadsheet or word document. Then use the “search” or “find” feature to search for keywords such as “Christmas” or “Stickers” to quickly find articles that are relevant to your search. A computerized index is especially handy if you use your computer frequently while you scrapbook. However, if your computer isn't convenient to you while you scrapbook, it may not be a beneficial option.

To keep your index updated with the most recent trends and techniques, at the end of each year, consider starting a new notebook or card index for the following year's magazines. Or, keep a full index of the entire collection spanning several years and simply move older magazines to a less-accessible area to make room for the new ones.

Organizing years of magazines takes time--possibly more time than you have. Set up your index or idea file beginning with the most recent magazines you've received. It's much less overwhelming, and you can add to it as you receive each new magazine.

Stay Current

Remember that an organization system is only worthwhile if it's something you'll use. The hottest scrapbooking trends and styles change about every three months. If you like to stay current and try out what's new and don't tend to look back at old issues, consider your magazines disposable. Keep about three months of the most recent magazines on-hand, hold onto your favorite idea books that you can't live without and dispose of the rest by recycling, donating or selling them.

Magazine Storage Containers

If you've decided to keep your magazines, whether it's the full collection or just a handful of your favorites, you need a place to keep them.

One convenient way to store magazines is vertically on a shelf so that you can easily remove them as needed. However, since magazines are not rigid like books, you can keep them from falling over or bending by putting them into magazine holders before putting them on the shelf. Grouping the magazines in each container by type and/or year is a simple way to keep track of what you have and it allows you to easily remove old magazines to make room for new ones.

Office supply stores carry several varieties of magazine organizers. Most are narrow boxes with a diagonal cut to allow the magazines to remain contained but with the spine visible so you can see the issue information. Magazine organizers are made from all sorts of materials including cardboard, plastic, metal and leather. If your



magazine collection is visible in your scrap space, choosing a stylish organizer is a good way to add to the look of your room, while providing a functional organization container.

A second option for storing magazines is to buy magazine organizer strips. These plastic strips slide over the center seam of the magazine to hold it into place and then fit into a 3-ring binder. It's a great way to store several magazines or idea books in one large binder and still be able to easily leaf through each issue. Plus, if you like a uniform, uncluttered look to the items on your bookshelf, this solution also hides the spine of the magazines, making your shelf look nice and neat. Once the magazines are in a binder, remember to label the outside of the binder with the contents so you know what is inside.

Finally, you can also purchase magazine racks similar to those found in waiting rooms and store displays. They tend to have a larger footprint and higher price tag, but can be a fun addition to a scrap space. Some are countertop models, others are self-standing and some even spin. If you access your magazines frequently, it might be worth the investment to have them at your fingertips.

As you decide how to approach your growing pile of magazines, remember to consider your current habits when looking for a new solution. Determine whether your scrapbooking style and personality type will benefit from an indexed system or custom idea file. Scrapbooking is a creative process. If over-organizing your idea file means that you feel less creative, don't do it! Pick a compromise that works for you.

Additional Tips:

- Base your sorting, clipping, and indexing system on the categories that are most important to you.
- If space is an issue, be selective about how many magazines and idea books you keep.
- Start an idea file with your current magazines and see if you like the system. If you do, you can always go back and do the same for older magazines.

Related Links

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Workspaces

By Laura Arellano-Weddleton

You can never have enough patterned paper, and it seems like there's always a new tool or gadget that you just have to have. The most important scrapbooking tool you'll ever use, though, is your workspace itself. You'll be amazed at how an organized, functional scrapspace will make scrapbooking both easier and more fun.

There are many elements to consider when creating a workspace, such as ample desk space, adequate lighting, and comfortable seating, which all come together to create a great place for you to work. Here are some ideas to help you create your own ideal workspace.

Assess Your Needs

The first step toward having a productive workspace is to assess how much room you have. You may want to begin by sketching out the area and getting an idea of what supplies you want to keep where, where your workspace is going to be, where the computer goes, etc. This sketch is a starting point to give you an idea of what type of desk or furniture you can fit into your space and still have room for all your supplies.

If you are tight on space, you should first identify your "must haves" so you can be sure to include the essentials into your workspace design. For instance, so that you'll have enough space to spread your in-progress pages out on your desk, pound eyelets, and use your paper cutter, your actual workspace should be at least 15" wide by 30" deep. The surface you use should also be fairly sturdy, since you'll most likely be hammering or using heavy equipment like a die-cutting machine. Another essential to any workspace is good lighting. Make sure to plan space for a few lamps, especially if your space doesn't have great natural lighting, or if you work at night. You'll also want to have comfortable seating, especially if you sit while you're scrapping.

If you are using a shared space as your workspace such as a kitchen or dining table there are additional factors to consider. If your workspace serves double-duty as an eating area, have a system to quickly and easily put away what you've been working on. For instance, keep your work on a tray (the kind you might use for breakfast in bed) so that you can move your project while the table's being used and come back to it easily later. Also, invest in a large self-healing mat so that you don't damage your table.

Of course, the more space you can give yourself, the better! If you have enough room, think about creating more than one workstation: one for your computer, one for paper cutting and setting eyelets, one for putting together your layout, etc.

The next important step is to assess your own individual needs as a scrapbooker. Since you're designing your own personal space, it should reflect your unique needs. Do you like to stand when you scrap? Sit at a desk? Sit on the floor? This will help determine the height and placement of your workspace. What items do you use most often? You may need a desk with a drawer, or a place on top of, under or near the desk to store those things.

Furniture

Once you know what your “must haves” are, you can begin to look for furniture that will accomplish those requirements. Generally, scrapbookers have three options for creating an effective workspace: investing in furniture specially designed for scrapbooking, purchasing office furniture and adapting it to fit your scrapbooking needs, or creating your own desk or table from scratch or with found items.

Scrapbook-Specific Furniture

It's not surprising that nowadays there is furniture made just for scrapbooking. Furniture like this usually looks a bit like normal office furniture, but has some important differences. For instance, there's storage for unique scrapbooking items like 12" x 12" paper and deep shelves for storing albums. Unfortunately, because of the specialty sizes and design, they are usually more expensive.

Scrapbooking Armoire - A scrapbooking armoire will have just about every feature that you can think of to help keep you organized. In general, an armoire will have plenty of storage space, with extra-deep shelving and more workspace than traditional armoires. An advantage of armoires is that they have doors that close. This is useful to protect your work in progress, and is also helpful to keep the area from looking cluttered.

Modular Cube System - There are also modular systems built on a cube design made with scrapbookers in mind. These products have several unique components that all fit together, so you can design the combination that works best for you and fits your storage needs. Paper trays, drawers sized for embellishments and stamps, shelf space for albums and idea books are all options that you can choose from and add to as you need them. An advantage of these systems is that you can generally add on at any time, so you don't have to make a large investment all at once and it can grow with you as your needs change. They can also be rearranged, allowing more long-term flexibility in the design of your space.

Purchased Furniture

Several of the following options of office furniture or various types of tables will work just as well as the workspaces designed specifically for scrapbooking, at a more affordable price.

Computer Desk - With or without a computer at your scrap area, you can convert a computer desk or home office setup into your scrap space. The advantage to computer desks is the wide variety available. For instance, an L-shaped desk offers more workspace, while an armoire or a roll-top desk will close when you're done working. The amount of storage they provide also varies widely. Some desks will have shelving built in, and some will have drawers. Many models also have add-on drawers or filing cabinets that can be useful for storing supplies. These desks also fit a wide variety of decor, from more modern to vintage-looking.

The downside to computer desks is that they aren't built with scrapbooking supplies in mind, so it might be a challenge to find the right place to keep odd-sized items such as 12" x 12" paper, albums, and the like.

Modular System - Just as there are modular systems specifically for scrapbooking, there are also modular cube-style systems made for home

offices. While they don't have the "scrapbook" name attached to them, they are often just as effective in storing your supplies and creating an efficient workspace.

Table - A standard banquet-hall table can be used as the basic work space in your scrap area. Just add storage bins, shelving and drawers above and below the table to house your supplies. You can also make a temporary workspace by setting up a small folding card table (make sure it's sturdy) and then hiding it away when you're not working. A simple coffee table is also a great workspace if you are comfortable working while sitting on the floor.

Workbench – A workbench meant for woodworking might not be the first thing that comes to mind when trying to find a scrapbooking workspace, but it can be extremely appropriate. Workbenches provide ample sturdy workspace, and also are made with plenty of storage for small items. Drawers meant for tools will fit your scissors, paper cutters, hammers and eyelet setters, while organization compartments for screws and nails will work well for small embellishments. From a pegboard, you can hang sheets of stickers, embellishment packages and other tools for handy access.

Custom-Built Cabinets – Another option you have is to have custom cabinets built for your scrapspace. This option might be costly, but it has the advantage of being designed specifically for your space and supplies. This is also an opportunity for you to have the features of your scraproom that you might be dreaming of. For instance, you can have shelves and drawers built the right size for housing 12" x 12" paper or have shallow drawers installed that are perfect for housing stamps and small tools. Small details can also be added in, like undercounter lighting, or a built-in hole in the counter that drops into a trashcan in a cabinet below. If you can dream it, you can probably do it with custom cabinets.

Build It Yourself

If you don't want to buy what you need for your scrap space commercially, or if you can't find exactly what you're looking for, you can build your workspace from scratch. If you or someone you know is good at building projects, this might be a good option. In addition to building, many of the most fun, creative, and quirky spaces are made from "found" items and a lot of ingenuity. You can repurpose inexpensive rummage sale finds and items that you already have around the house to create a custom workspace solution. There are a number of easy projects that can really help make a scrap space distinctive.

Door and Filing Cabinet Table - An easy work surface that also has plenty of storage room is an old door over two filing cabinets. For a smooth and even work surface, have a pane of Plexiglas cut to the size of the door and lay it on top. This becomes a great surface for scrapbooking, and you can even decorate the underside of it with favorite photos and ephemera. A similar workspace could be created with stacked milk crates combined with a large piece of wood for the top of the desk.



Refinishing Old Furniture - You can easily find used furniture at rummage sales. Look for the potential that they have in the amount of workspace, sturdiness, and design. If you're willing to put the time and effort into refinishing, painting, adding hardware or repairing a piece of furniture, you can turn an old desk, dining or kitchen table into your ideal scrap surface.

Countertop - A pre-made countertop purchased at a hardware store and mounted to the wall is an easy solution to create a smooth workspace. Be sure to use large sturdy brackets and mount them into studs to securely attach it to the wall and ensure stability. You may need to use several brackets depending on how long of a countertop you choose to use.

Custom-Built Desk - It's easier than you think to build your own desk from scratch. It takes a little bit of effort, but if you try you'll be able to build the exact desk that you've been imagining, and not have to limit yourself to what's available in the store. A desk can be built out of pressed wood, which is what most desks you buy are made from. You can finish your desk by painting or staining it to match your scraproom's décor.



If you're building from scratch, it's especially important to plan the design carefully. Make sure that the desk that you're building is supported and is sturdy enough to support all of your supplies, and any drawers or shelves that might sit on it. Your shelves should be deep enough to hold your albums and whatever else you're planning to keep on them. You should also make sure that you can transport it somehow if you ever need to move it.

Once you've chosen your work surface, invest in a self-healing cutting mat to protect your desktop from damage. You may also want to purchase a roll of butcher paper to lay down for painting and other messy projects.

Lighting

Effective lighting is essential for a good scrap space, and is important to consider when putting a workspace together. You need to be able to see your pages clearly and the lighting should allow you to coordinate colors and papers with ease.

Just how many lamps do you need? First, you'll need a source of overhead lighting or, if your space doesn't lend itself to overhead lighting, a main source of light that will brighten the whole area. Second, you'll want to have a desk lamp that will light your main work area. If you have more than one workstation in your scrapspace, you might want to have a separate desktop lamp at each station. You may also want to add some accent lighting, or smaller lights to illuminate storage areas so that you can easily find what you're looking for.

Ideally, natural light is the best and most "true" form of light to use. If you scrapbook during daylight hours and have large windows in your space, you have a wonderful environment to start with. If you work at night or don't have windows available in your space, you can use a special lamp made specifically for artists and crafters that simulates natural light. These lamps are a great solution for task lighting, but can be fairly expensive.

Other, more affordable, options include standard table, floor and overhead lamps. Once you start looking, you'll be amazed at all the different options that are available. If you want to install a more permanent overhead lighting system, you might be interested in track lighting, which is easily adjustable. Once installed, you can move the lamps to shine on the area where you're currently working. Another type of lighting that is ideal for a scrapspace is undercounter lighting. These can be installed underneath your shelves and illuminate your whole workspace. There are a number of additional options, such as rope lighting or fluorescent lighting, which are relatively easy to install. Simpler floor or tabletop lamps also work and come in a huge range of styles, all which will give a different amount and quality of light, so be sure to choose carefully.

Adding white or clear bright white light bulbs and white lampshades to standard lamps is a good way to preserve the purity of the colors in your photos and papers. You can also choose your lighting conditions based on the type of lighting in which your albums will normally be viewed. Replicate that same type of lighting in your space, whether it is tungsten, halogen or fluorescent lighting to ensure that the colors will look similar where you work on as well as where you show your albums.

Seating

Comfortable and appropriate seating in a scrap space will vary greatly from scrapbooker to scrapbooker. It's important to know your own style and habits while scrapbooking. If you stand while you scrapbook, you can be flexible with the seating you choose, and can get by with a more basic chair or stool. If you sit while you scrap, you'll be spending a lot more time in your chair than if you stand. Sitters will want a comfortable chair that helps maintain good posture.



Go shopping for chairs in office supply stores, department stores, and even at rummage sales. Chairs that were once part of a dining room set can be reupholstered to match your décor. Adjustable office chairs that allow you to change the height of the seat, angle of the back, and placement of armrests will give you the most flexibility. If you stand while you scrap, a kitchen counter stool might be all you need for brief rests while you are working. Before buying, sit in several different chairs in the store to see which feels most comfortable to you and fits your body type. Some questions to ask as you shop for seating include:

- Does it have adequate lower back support?
- Is the seat height adjustable?
- Does it have arm rests? Do I want arm rests or will they be in my way while I work?
- Does it swivel, allowing me to move from one work station to another?
- Is it on wheels?
- Is it too large/small for my body type?

Make sure that the seating you choose is comfortable and supportive. You may even want to invest in ergonomic tools such as an angled footrest or lumbar support pillow to keep your body in alignment and prevent any injuries.

A well-designed workspace can make for a pleasant scrapbooking experience. You'll be more productive and have more fun when there's plenty of space to work in, good lighting, and comfortable seating. Remember that the best tool that you have to help create your scrap space is your own creativity. There aren't any hard fast rules to what makes a good, functional scrap space, so take these ideas and adapt them to what works right for you.

Additional Tips:

- When you're designing your scrapspace, make a list of the items that you're looking for and see what on the list can be found secondhand, at a yard sale or a thrift store. You can save money and have fun by finding things like desks, chairs, and lamps this way. Repaint and refinish a desk to look the way you'd like. Reupholster an old dining room chair to match your scrap space décor. Allow your creativity to go wild and you'll be surprised at how great secondhand items can make your scrap room look.
- If you have a chair on wheels, consider getting a plastic floor mat to put underneath it. This will make scooting from one workstation to another

easier.

- Don't be afraid of doing a project yourself, such as building your own desk or installing your own overhead lighting. It is worth the effort that you put into it, and you'll be more pleased with the results if you can make them exactly the way you want.
- Repurposing items is a great way to find organization solutions for your scrapspace. Items you might not think of that aren't normally used to keep scrap supplies organized could be just what you're looking for. For instance, a medicine cabinet meant for the bathroom might be the right size to house small embellishments.

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