

# UNIT I HOME ENVIRONMENT YOUR SPACE FOR LIVING

(Pep It Up)



Virginia Cooperative Extension Service  
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## MESSAGE TO 4-H MEMBERS AND LEADERS

In this capsule you can:

- Design a space to store your things
- Add a pretty object you have made
- Decorate your walls
- Set up a mini corner

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Other things you may do:

- Help a friend design his room
- Have a grandmother or a grandfather tell about their teenage room
- Read how teenagers in other countries design their space for living
- Visit teenage furniture display rooms or visit some friend or neighbor's room to see the kinds of furnishings used.
- Have a "talk-in" party using the room pictures you have collected; have friends note what they like or dislike in the pictures

Requirements:

This publication has been planned for younger members. You may take this capsule for several years until you have made the best use of the furnishings you have and until you have chosen or made the accessories needed to give your space for living the look which suits you. This capsule requires little expense and it will help you to:

- See what is needed and plan improvements
- Make the best use of furnishings on hand
- Learn how to use the space you have for your needs

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# UNIT I HOME ENVIRONMENT (YOUR SPACE FOR LIVING)

*Revised by*

*Katherine Habel, Extension Specialist, Home Furnishings*

Try writing out a description of your own space for living. List your likes and dislikes. Find a picture of a room you like. Write why you like it and clip or paste it to the back of the picture. List on a record sheet what ideas from the picture you might use.

These pictures can be the beginning of your reference file (cover an old notebook with paper or fabric to have a convenient place to hold your ideas).

## **IDEAS FOR ROOM DESIGNS**

What sort of room do you have? Is it half as mad and modern, sleek and sharp as you are? Or is it sort of so-so—not a disaster, but certainly not sensational? Perhaps “your very own space” will be a table, a shelf, or a windowsill. If you have a room of your own, you have lots of space to do your own thing. Maybe you have lots of talent and are just waiting for a good idea to come by. Or the opposite, millions of ideas but not much notion of how to put them into action.

What you need are some experiences to bring your ideas and talents together. Don't fail to ask your family and leader for help.

Everyone has some decorating talent if he or she knows what to do and how to do it. This capsule is chock full of ideas plus instructions that you can follow.

So whatever your taste or talent, you can bring a lively new look to your room. But first of all, what type of room would you like? Would you like . . .

## **Way Out**

A room so way out and wonderful that your friends are constantly amused and amazed by it? A room that's always fresh and changing—that you're always giving an updated viewpoint? A room that, more than anything, expresses **you** in all your many moods and moments (not to mention your many talents)? A room with . . .

- a low platform bed and fake-fur coverlet—and oceans of plastic pillows.
- a doorway decorated with a bead curtain made of synthetic beads strung on clear nylon thread
- one whole wall covered with aluminum foil
- orange-crate cubbyholes painted glow-in-the-dark colors
- a canvas butterfly chair autographed and decorated by your friends with felt-tip pens.

## **Romantic**

A room so romantic and feminine you feel ten times prettier there? A room where you can curl up and read, compose poems, and daydream for hours? A hideaway that shuts out the pressures and problems of everyday living—at least for a while? A room with . . .

- a cozy alcove bed bursting with flowers
- toe-cuddling carpeting in the softest blue
- a dressing table with a long skirt in a print that matches your alcove

- a hanging basket chair with a flowery cushion
- white curtains topped by a fluttery valance.

### Contemporary

A cool, crisp studio—contemporary and lively, but not disorganized? A room where you can work on all your projects (sewing, poster-painting, etc.) as well as sleep, study, play records, and practice cheers? A room with . . .

- a sofa-bed or studio couch rimmed by fat pillows in black-and-white patterns
- a fake zebra-skin wall-hanging
- a huge work table made with saw-horses (painted to accent the room) and a door covered with vinyl and decorative stick-on designs
- bushel baskets spray-painted different colors for storing supplies.

### Potpourri\*

A room to exhibit those things you love to make or collect, where your own thing is apparent to any visitor and is a real starter for conversation or sharing? A place that's fun to visit—but mindful that you have to live there? Something to make use of the furniture you've found or now have? A room with . . .

- a bed decorated by a half or full canopy (do-it-yourself)
- an old trunk from the attic or an antique sale given new life with instant antiquing kits
- a desk made from an unpainted chest (cut down or renovated to your needs)
- tin cans transformed into perfect night lamps
- a colorful riding blanket or patch-work quilt as a wall-hanging
- books, collections of favorite items on a shelf.

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\*A mixture, as of dried flower petals with spices, kept in a jar for its fragrance.

### Creativity

Creativity is your key to a successful home improvement project. Learn to make something out of throwaways.

Look around you once more. Look for old jars, bowls, tin cans, plastic or cardboard boxes, and food containers.

Learn to see everyday objects with a different use in mind. An old jar might be made into a pencil cup. A tin can may make a wastebasket. A cardboard box could be the basis for a jewelry box or drawer dividers.

Some shopping bags are so graphically **POW**, they can go up on the wall.



Look for the means of creating beauty. Save scraps of material, colored paper, old greeting cards, and magazine clippings. Keep a ready supply of adhesive-backed paper, paints, and varnish.

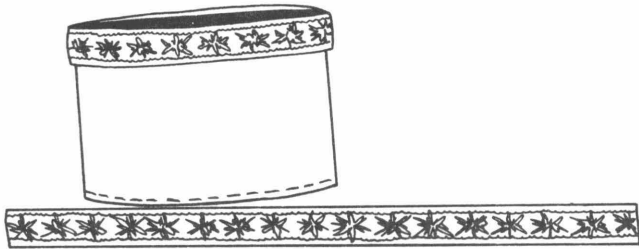
Nothing is more encouraging to a new decorator (that's you) than an instant success. What can you do to your room that's fun, foolproof, fabulous, and inexpensive.

Do you need space to store your things? For the collector who has gathered many dear items, the best storage place is shelves.

### Box and Shelf

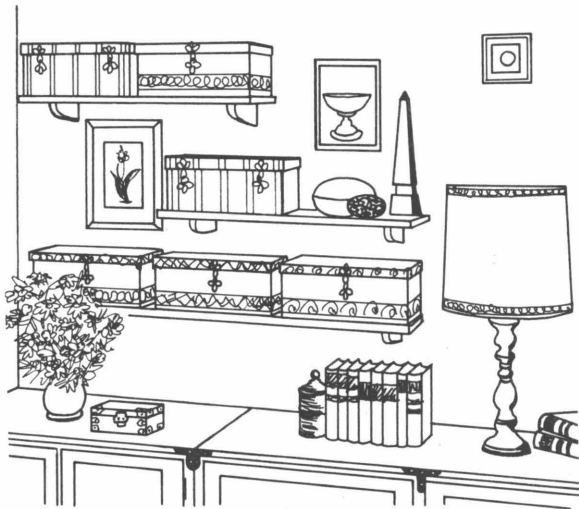
This box and shelf had a change of personality. Its new look was created by simply gluing tape around each piece. Use white glue and a box that will hold your choice items.

This was a hat box. The shelf was wood. The tape came from the sales counter.



### Shoebox Space Savers

Polish up your old shoeboxes with spray paint, trim with braid or tape, and fasten with frogs. You may have lost a shoebox, but you've gained space for sewing items, bills, pencils, and pens! Paint the boxes different colors as keys to the contents—red for bills, blue for pens, etc. Display the space savers on book shelves with other works of art!



### Wall of Cubes

Create a wall of cubes—a great idea for short-term use, or if you plan to take them along.

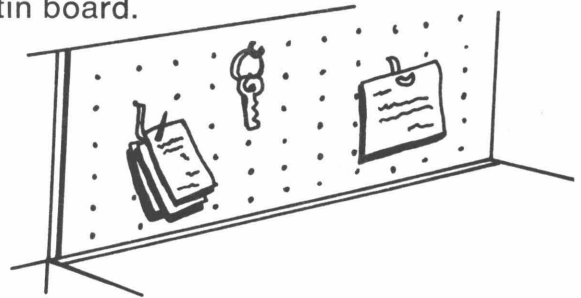


Several 14- by 14-inch cubicles (or boxes) with ends removed are the perfect solution of the problem of decorative storage. Arrange them side by side or layer on layer. Strong paper tape will help hold the boxes together. You will want to practice arranging your accessories for neat storage. This is a great place for books, records, and games. What you store in them and how much will depend upon how strong the cubes are. Later on, you may want to build them of laminar, a rigid clear-as-glass plastic.

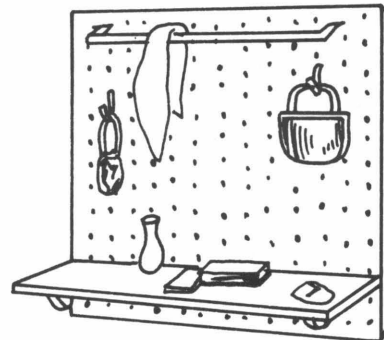
### Pegboard

Pegboard is great; could it do a job for you? Pegboard may be used in a variety of ways for hanging storage. Allow about ¼ inch of free space behind it for the inserted pegs. Wood strips attached to the back of the pegboard will be satisfactory. Another way is to hang the pegboard with hooks and picture wire. Many different types of hardware or pegs are available for supporting a variety of items.

Hang pegboard over a desk for use as a bulletin board.



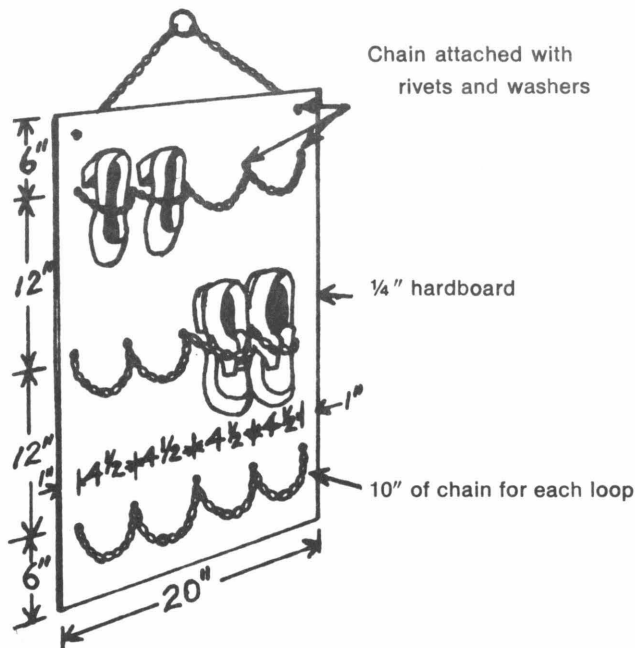
Perforated hardboard may be added to closets or other walls for convenient storage. You can buy many adjustable fixtures to use with this board.



Don't forget that a door can serve more than one need. Line the inside of a closet or cabinet door. Insert the proper hardware for shelf supports. A large section of peg-board behind a door is handy for hanging jackets, etc.

Here is a great idea. Sometimes you can design from a picture without directions (in the beginning, you might need help). Sometimes you will need to make a pattern.

Take this picture to the store to get supplies, or make a pattern from cardboard, use string for chain. The pattern will help you determine the materials needed.



A neat little organizer that keeps shoes off the floor, and . . . you can make-it-yourself. All you need is the right length of lightweight chain, a piece of hardboard or plywood, rivets, and washers. Follow the measurements in the diagram, then drill the rivet holes. If you paint the board, do so before attaching the chain. It can then be hung on a nail or clothes hook, or mounted

\*If you don't have a drill, take the board to a hardware store or woodworking shop and ask for help. Sometimes a large nail can be used to make holes—be careful not to split the board. Drill holes before painting.

to the inside of the closet door. A good project for the young handyman of the house to try.

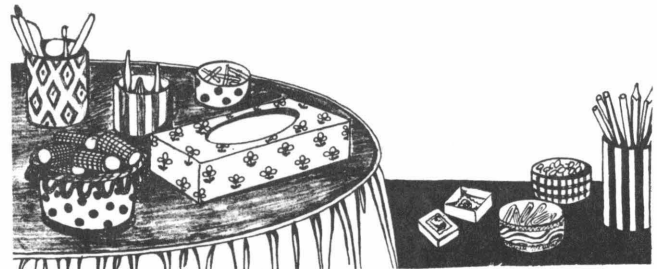
## ACCESSORIES

Add a pretty object to your room—these are often called accessories, and they give you something pretty to look at, enjoy, and maybe to use.

Grow a plant from an avocado pit or root an ivy sprig in a decorated flower pot.

Poke feathers or tall weeds (cattails, dried grass, or goldenrod) into shapely old bottles.

Make a desk set by covering cans and boxes with self-adhesive plastic. Use a soup can for pencils; tuna cans for thumb-tacks and paper clips; a ring box for stamps. Trim with fat yarn; use white glue\* to hold yarn in place. Make a dressing table set the same way. Decorate a tissue box with self-adhesive plastic. Turn a large ice cream container into a curler can; a nut tin into a bobby-pin bin; juice cans into holders for long lipsticks and blusher brushes; half a round oatmeal box into a container for nail polish.



The candy jar can become a glamorized apothecary jar. Cut ovals from colored-foil gift paper for sides, a neck



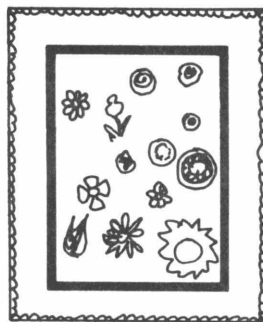
\*White glue can be used on wood, paper, fabric, and other porous surfaces. It is strong and dries quickly and clear.

band, and top circle. Glue to the jar. Edge all foil with self-adhesive trim. Fill with candy or that special item.

A cuphook or nail will hold your brush. After using the brush, return it to the hook. Make every effort to keep items in place.



A flower show of pins! Cover a piece of foam rubber with velvet, stick a variety of colorful brooches into the foam, and frame it with an old, decorative frame.



Posters, pictures, and hanging paraphernalia are what give a teen-room personality. They say a lot about the person who lives there. And for the decorator on a piggy-bank budget, they give a room instant z-i-n-g.

Do you have a zillion snapshots and photos you keep planning to put in a scrapbook? You know you won't get around to that before you're 30—and besides, why hide them away when there are so many display possibilities?

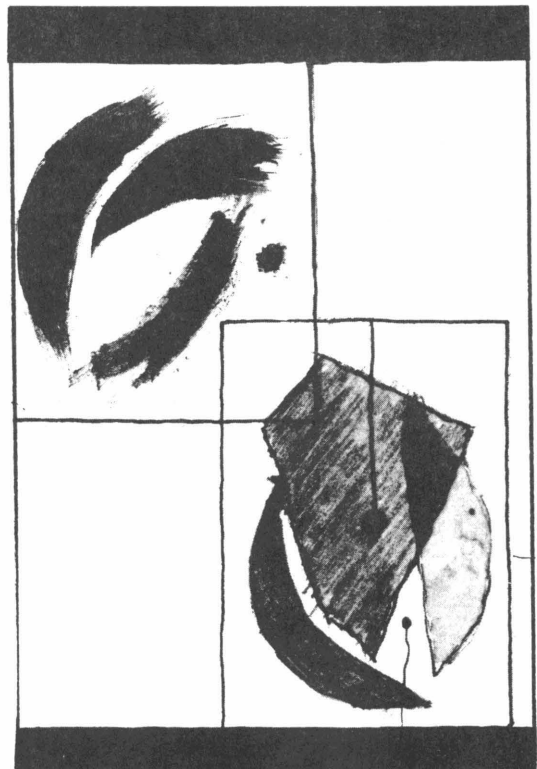
You could:

- arrange lots and lots of them in a collage in one huge frame.

- compile them by subject (the class play, your boyfriend, family trips, etc.) and place them in medium-size frames.
- make a “rogue’s gallery” by mounting photos (either individually or in groups, depending upon their size) in lots of small frames all the same size.
- scatter them (along with souvenir menus, party invitations, theater programs, and the like) all over a door.

Every time you see modern paintings do you think, “Why couldn't I do that?” Try it! Make a huge (3 by 4 feet at least) painting to go over your bed. Or, even easier, make a giant collage out of tissue-paper shapes.

To make a collage, first paint a canvas white or some other solid color. Then cut out lots of different sizes and shapes from lots of colors of tissue. Don't worry about how you'll combine them until later.



When you have lots of pieces to play with, start arranging and rearranging them on

your canvas until you have a composition that pleases you. Now paste them in place with rubber cement. To protect the paper, spray with a fixative. Remember, you don't have to fill every inch of canvas, and you'll find you get unexpected combinations when colors overlap—red tissues over lavender, for example, produces purple.

Ask your leader or Extension Agent to show the film\* entitled "Collage."

This example is not strictly a frame, but a great effect. Cut ¾-inch plywood to picture size and seal with shellac. Sandpaper the edges and stain them a wood color or paint jet black. Paste the picture on with wallpaper paste; spray with clear plastic spray; ring for hanging is a big brass drawer pull. See your Extension Agent for information to help you in this activity.

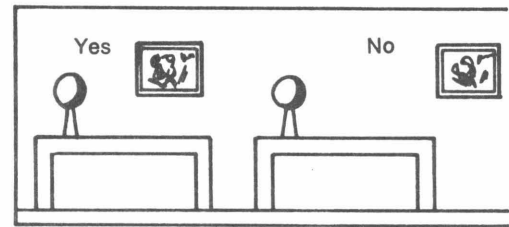


However you decide to decorate your walls, there are a few guides to follow for the best results.

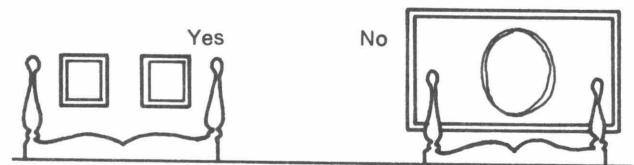
1. Place a picture, poster, etc., near an object. In other words, "anchor" it to a bed, desk, chair, lamp, or the like.

\*Available from Home Furnishings Specialist's Office.

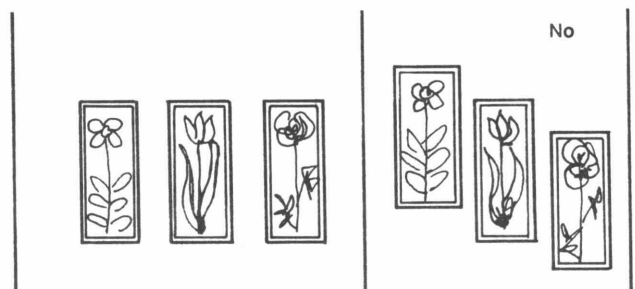
Don't hang it off in space where it looks lost.



2. Keep your picture in scale with the object it's anchored to. Don't place a large picture in a tiny space or a small picture in a large one (unless it's part of a grouping).
3. The trend today is to hang pictures fairly low. While they should be at eye level (not 2 feet from the ceiling or just above the baseboard), you spend most of your time sitting in a room, not standing. So hang them where they seem right, taking this (and no. 1, above) into consideration.



4. Stepped arrangements are out.



5. In a grouping, remember:
  - a. Anything goes—pictures, penants, maps, a school letter, etc.
  - b. In a simple, plain room that needs character, the more mixed up the

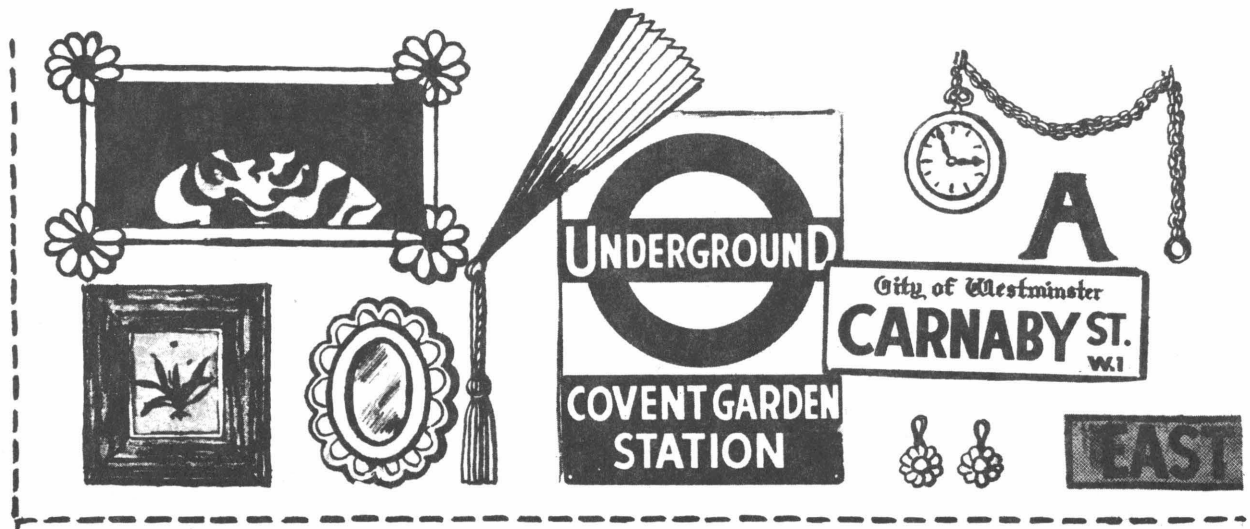


better—but in a room that’s already a jumble of different furniture, colors, and patterns, the arrangement should be simple. Simplicity comes from keeping all pictures the same size (such as travel posters), or all the same colors (black-and-white photographs, sketches), or all in the same frames.

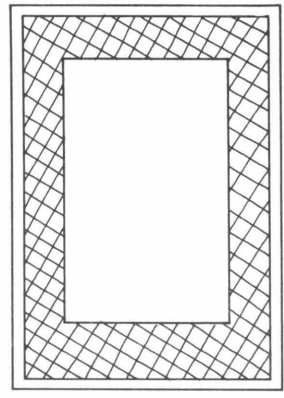
c. Keep it from looking top-heavy. This may mean placing the largest objects on the bottom, or the great-

est number of objects on the bottom, or some other eye-fooling trick.

d. So that it looks like a composition—and not confusion—line up the pictures and objects on at least two sides (the two sides could be top and bottom or bottom plus one side). By lining up, we mean you can draw an imaginary straight line containing the objects on two sides (see example).



Give an old mirror a facelifting with a “frame” made of fabric. Cut fabric to fit old frame, add braid or gimp around the edge, and cording to match around the mirror.



### MINI CORNERS AND HOW TO MAKE THEM

This is a special design activity—use information learned from activities in **Design in Space** and ideas gained from this capsule.

What’s a mini corner? It’s a whole lot of living tucked into a tiny space. Mini corners are for girls and boys who aren’t about to redecorate their entire room but who do want a special spot for something. It could be a place for sleeping, or putting on a record. You can even study mini style. You might want to call for help on planning this activity.

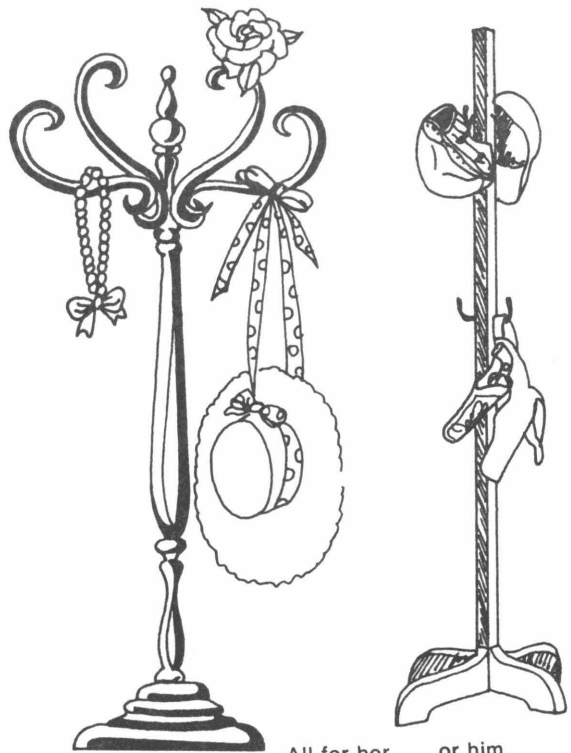
## Beauty Spot

If you're on a well-groomed kick, you might as well go all the way with it. After all, the total look calls for total organization. You probably have the perfect scarf for that dress—you just can't find it! Or a tie for that special shirt, just like Dad's!

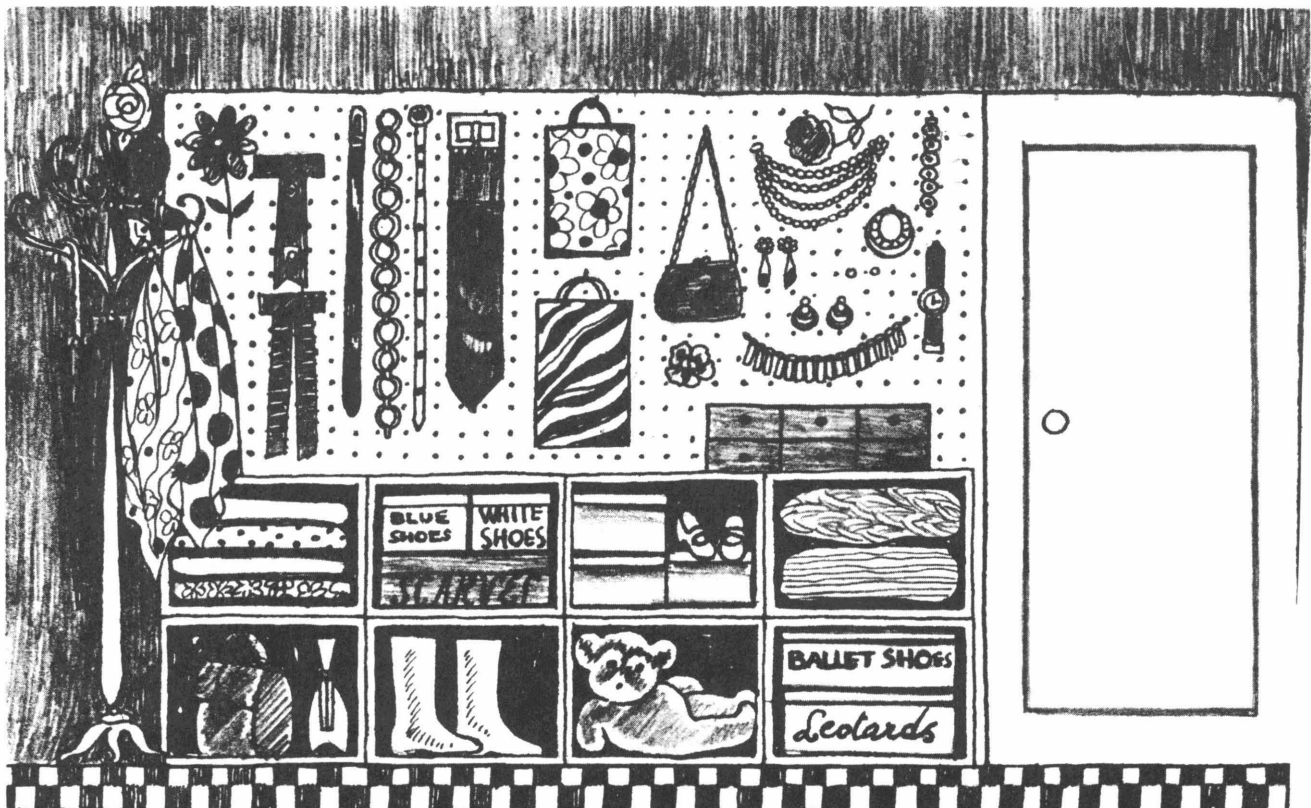
Treat yourself to a complete beauty spot—a combination closet and cosmetic corner that's as pretty as it is useful. With clothes as colorful as they are today, your corner will be as gay as a gallery wall of posters.

Combine wood crates and pegboard and you get hanging space for hats, headbands, hairbows, bangles, belts, purses, pins—plus cubbyholes for corralling everything from monster shoes to shower caps.

Plan by first picking a spot. A small wall will do—one 4 to 6 feet wide, say. Now, gather your materials.



All for her . . . or him



## Materials You Need

**Wood crates.** You may find wood crates at your local grocery. Get enough to fill your space entirely, or, if they don't fit exactly, fill the opening with a clothes tree, laundry basket, or similar item.

**Pegboard.** Get enough pegboard to cover the entire area from floor to ceiling, side to side. Pegboard comes in 4 by 8-foot panels and is quite inexpensive (about \$5.75 a panel). You can buy it, and have it cut to fit your wall area, at a lumberyard. Sometimes (depending upon the particular store's policy) you have to buy a complete panel, even though you need only half of one. It's still a bargain, however, and you can always use the remainder on the inside of a closet door, over a desk, etc., or give it to a friend for their mini corner.

Standard ceiling height is 8 feet, so your panel will probably fit lengthwise. Don't worry about baseboards getting in the way, because the pegboard will stand out about an inch from the wall. And if your ceiling is more than 8 feet high, that's okay, too. The pegboard doesn't **have** to go all the way to the floor—just to the top of the crates.

For the proper width, measure the area in several places, as walls aren't always perfectly aligned, especially in old houses. Then select the **narrowest** dimension for your width so you're sure the pegboard will fit.

5 to 8 strips of wood. These strips form a frame (with vertical supports) to hold the pegboard away from the wall so you can slip hooks into it. The number of vertical supports will vary with the size of the area being covered, but they should be spaced 2 to 2½ feet apart. The four strips for the frame should be 3 inches wide, 1 inch thick, and of such length that they make a frame slightly smaller than the wall area you are covering. The support strips should be just as thick and wide, but a few inches shorter so they will fit inside the frame. (It sounds

impossible, but look at the sketch and you'll see how simple it is.)

**Nails.** Your lumberyard will give you the right type for attaching the frame to your walls. Besides these you'll need headless nails for attaching the pegboard to the frame so the nails don't show.

**Paint (plus primer).** You'll probably want to paint both pegboard and orange crates. Any type or color paint is fine, but for raw surfaces such as the wood crates, you should apply a primer-sealer first (otherwise the wood will absorb all the paint). The primer can be put on quickly, even haphazardly. It dries to the touch in minutes but needs overnight drying before paint can go over it.

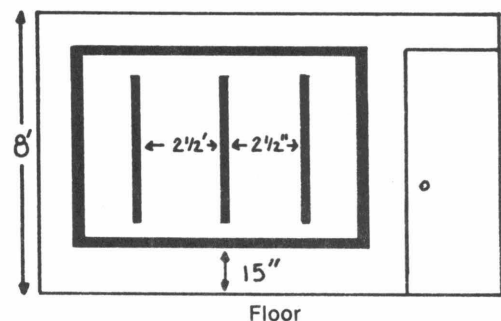
**Self-adhesive plastic.** Many decorator types and styles of this material are available for covering the tops and shelves of crates (wallpaper or fabric could be used).

**Sandpaper.** Get enough sandpaper to smooth especially rough areas on the crates.

If you think you want to make a mini corner, sketch a plan; use your ruler for figuring out correct measurements for boxes and pegboard.

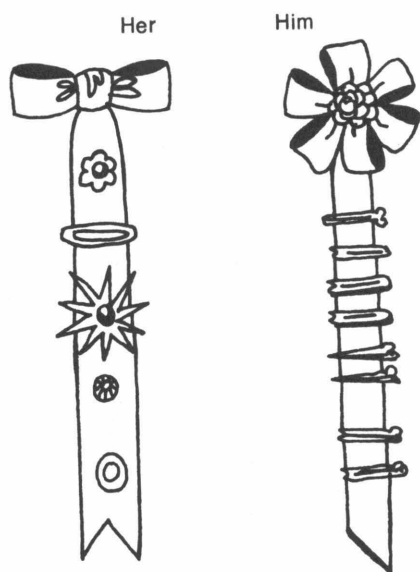
## How to Begin

1. Sand the crates and coat the tops, shelves, and all surfaces that will show with primer. (Since most of the outsides will be hidden, there's no point in priming or painting them.)
2. Make your frame-with-supports by nailing wood strips to the wall, as shown in the sketch. The bottom of the frame should be about 15 inches from the floor.



3. Put up pegboard by nailing it to the wood strips. Nails should be spaced about 6 inches apart.
4. Paint pegboard and crates the same color or a contrasting one. Since the tops and shelves of the crates will be covered with self-adhesive plastic, you don't have to paint them. They should be primed, however.
5. Cover the inside shelves of crates with self-adhesive plastic. Fit the crates against the wall. If they seem tippy (because of carpeting or because the floor's not level), nail them to the pegboard about 15 inches from the floor (where the bottom of your frame is, remember?). Cover the tops of your crates with one long sweep of plastic lining. The surface should be nice and smooth for this or each little bump will show through.

And that's it! Now you're ready for hanging. Pegboard hooks come in dozens of shapes and sizes for just about every conceivable doo-dad you'd want to dangle. Try hanging ribbons (or felt, velvet, or gros-grain) from a hook to hold pins or hairclips, tie pins and badges.

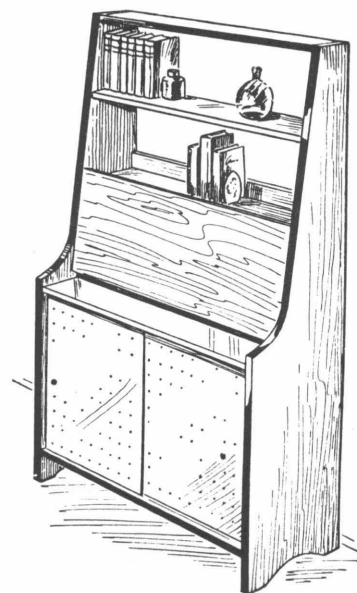


File shoes below in clear plastic boxes—3 for \$1 in the dime store. Wrap shoes in colored tissue, first, for an artistic touch. (Choose a color that matches your shoes, so you don't have to open the box to know which pair is inside.)

Round out the entire project with a full-length mirror—you can get one for as little as \$5.

Now you are ready for a more difficult experience. If you share a room, talk over your ideas with your family. Begin thinking of your space for sleeping, studying, dressing. In Unit II, you will learn to create a space of your own; you will build on the things you have learned in this capsule.

For example, in your next capsule, you will learn to set up a study center. Would you like to make a space-saver desk?



Some activities you might do in Unit II or Unit III:

- Set up a study corner for your storage
- Hunt down antiques
- Refinish furniture
- Play with light
- Make a throw rug
- Make curtains
- Make color plans
- Arrange furniture
- Decorate walls with paper

## A WORKSHOP EXPERIENCE



There are no colors or prints in the room. That's because we want YOU to experiment by filling them in. Imagine this room in pretty, water-color pastels. Then see it in a black and white plaid. The fabrics and patterns you use will create the mood that represents your taste and personality.

Use tracing paper and make many copies of this room. Then sketch in fabric designs and add color to give each copy a different atmosphere. Draw in other accessories if you like. Make one version warm and earthy. Make another cool and serene. The possibilities are endless! After you've made up a bunch of these tracings, see which one you like best.

The daybed could be your old twin bed designed by adding bolsters and slip-covering with fabric, and good looking

pillows stuffed with polyester fiberfill or cotton batting. Create a window seat out of a ledge that would otherwise serve no useful function. There's also the crocheted rug which unifies the space. The director's chair has a new cover. The wall units, made of molded plastic units, can be joined to form any shape to fit a space to suit your needs.

If you need some help in planning colors and fabrics, look around you. Check fabric stores for the latest styles. Go through magazines and visit furniture stores to see the newest trends in furniture. Take time in buying fabric for your room. Read labels and check out all words you do not understand. You might want to make a list of these for future references.

This is my idea . . . . What's yours?

## IT'S FUN TO CHOOSE THINGS

It is just as important to purchase the right article for your home as it is to make a suitable one.

Talk it over with your mother and decide what you need, and what you can afford to buy. Your mother or advisor will be able to give you some points. You will probably want to take your mother with you when you shop. Choose an article which will go with what you already have. You may want some help with size, proportion, and good construction. Visit with your Extension Agent and ask for publications.

In order to complete this special activity, you must choose one article which you will purchase already made. It's fun to choose things.

### SOME SUGGESTIONS ARE:

- Black board
- Bulletin board
- Book shelves
- Wastepaper basket
- Book ends
- Laundry bag
- Shoe bag or rack
- Place mats
- Picture
- Cushion
- Curtains for your bedroom
- Scatter rugs
- Bedspread
- Drawer dividers for your dresser, chest or desk
- Sheets and pillow cases

What did you purchase?

Describe it.

Why did you select it?

Where will it be used?

How much did it cost?

Does it go well with your other colors and patterns?

How will you take care of it?

## MY RECORD

Write a letter to a friend describing your pretty place, your very own mini-maxi space. Be sure and tell them what you enjoyed most about this capsule.

Add Color



