

# 6 Storage Hacks For Your Survival Stockpile

*One of the problems we all face is where to store our stockpile of prepping supplies.*

Unless you are fortunate enough to have a really big home, you probably don't have enough storage space as it is; then when you try to put several months to a year's worth of extra food in there, you can feel like the walls are starting to cave in. If you just had more space...

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I've dealt with that problem too. While I have had a big house for a number of years, it doesn't have a basement. Where I live, we can't have basements due to the high water table. So, my preferred storage place for my stockpile (the basement was totally out of the question. I had to come up with alternate ideas, and my kids weren't going to go along with the idea of stealing one of their bedrooms, in order to convert it into a pantry.

## Where Not to Store

Before getting into the ideas I want to share with you; I want to take a moment to talk about some of the areas people use for storing their stockpile, which I don't agree with. Each of these has problems; and while they might work in an emergency or work for certain types of food, they really aren't ideal for general food storage.

- The Attic – Besides the basement, the attic is the main storage area in most homes; at least those which have an easily accessible attic. But the attic of the house is the hottest part of the home, easily running 20 degrees

hotter than the floor below, especially in the summertime. This can shorten the life of foods stored there. It can also freeze in an attic, although that won't happen in most homes, even in a cold climate. However, the attic can be used for storing non-food items, like toilet paper.

- The Garage – Basically the garage has the same problem as the attic, although not as bad. Garages are not heated or air conditioned, even though some are finished out with drywall to look like another room of the house. The only things I used the garage to store were non-food items, like laundry soap, canning jars and trash bags.
- Rental Storage Unit – Again, the problem here is heating and cooling. There are some which are temperature controlled; but they are rather costly. If you're willing to pay that price, then by all means rent one; just make sure that the food is packed in such a way that people can't tell what it is.
- Sheds and Shipping Containers – This is another tempting option, especially if your home doesn't have enough storage space. But once again, we're looking at problems with heating and cooling. You might also find that you have a problem with creepy-crawly things getting in there or rain leaking through the roof.

I'm sure there are other places which you should be careful about using for storing your stockpile. These are just a few of the more common ones I see people talking about, which I would counsel people to avoid.

## **Places Where You Can Find Hidden Storage**

The average home has a lot of wasted space in it. We just don't see it. Part of that is because we're used to seeing our home in a certain way. Part is because we don't understand how

our homes are built and another part is that we just haven't bothered to look. So I want to show you a few that I've found, hoping that they can help you with your own survival storage problems.

## Under the Stairs

Any two-story home has space under the staircase. The question is, is that space being used? I've seen a lot of homes where part of the space is being used for a coat closet; but what about the rest of the space? Typically, that's just going to waste, left empty.

If you already have a closet under the stairwell, you can access that extra space by installing a hatch in the back or side of the existing closet. That will even serve to keep the new storage space hidden, even as people are getting their coats.



If the home has an angled or switchback stairway, chances are that there won't even be a closet. In that case, you could install a built-in bookcase, which swings out to expose the storage space behind.

## Inside the Walls

The interior walls of a home have 3 1/2" of dead space inside them, with nothing taking up that space but a few wires, heat ducts and pipes. This 3 1/2" dimension is created by the framing studs, which are spaced every 16 inches. So, if you cut off the drywall, you can build shelves in there, giving

you a great place to store canned goods. This works out especially well behind bookcases and other large wall units, where the shelves in the wall can be hidden by other furniture.

The trick here is to figure out where the wires, air ducts and pipes are, before punching a hole in your wall. If there are any of those things hiding in the section of wall that you want to use, you either have to build around them, move them, or put your hidden shelves elsewhere.

- Wires – Look to see where light switches and electrical outlets are. A wire will usually go straight up from any light switch, to the ceiling, although occasionally it will run horizontally over to a wall outlet. There will also be a wire running from electrical outlet to electrical outlet, around the perimeter of the room, connecting them all together.
- Heat Ducts – Places where heat ducts may be hidden in the wall are easily spotted, because of the vent mounted in the wall. If you have a place where there is a heating vent in the wall, you can pretty much be sure that there will be a heat duct in the wall, using the space between the adjacent studs.
- Pipes – If you have a single-story home, than the only walls that are likely to have pipes in them are the bathroom walls, behind the sink, toilet and tub and the kitchen wall, behind the sink. Some of these will be 2" vent pipes, running up through the roof. You should be able to see them poking through the roof from outside. There will also be smaller ones, brining hot and cold water to the sink and tub, up from the foundation or basement.
- More Pipes – If you have a two-story home, it gets a little more complicated, because you have fresh water and drain pipes in the first floor walls, leading up to the upstairs bathroom. The trick here is identifying the

wall which is directly below the upstairs wall that has the pipes in it (as mentioned above). As long as you avoid that wall, you should be good.

To make this space into a shelving unit. All you have to do is trim out the studs, add a frame around the opening to match the room's trim and cover the inside of the drywall. Caulk all the corners and edges and paint it. It should end up looking like something the builder did.

## **Another Idea for This**

I like building spaces like this on the inside of my closets, on either side of the folding doors, as well as above the folding doors. Even when a thorough search of a house is performed, few people think of looking at that wall. It's a great place to store guns, where people won't think of looking for them.

## **Bookcases**

Speaking of hiding shelves with bookcases, the bookcases themselves might be able to be used as storage space, depending on the kinds of books you have. Most bookcases are 11 to 12 inches deep. But if you've got it filled up with paperback books, you've got an extra 5" or more of depth that's not being used. Simply pull the books forward to the edge of the bookcase and you can store food behind them.

If you want to take that a step further, buy some foam-core and some contact paper that matches your bookcase. If you can't get an exact match, go for something a bit darker, as it will be in shadow anyway and that will look right. Cut the foam-core to fit between the shelves and cover one side with the contact paper. Then you can stack food in the back of the shelves, putting the foam-core piece in place, before stacking your books in the shelf.

## Under the Beds



A lot of people have talked about using the space under your beds for storage

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Modern beds don't use a box springs anymore, as the springs have been incorporated into the mattress. Rather, that's just a box. Take a look inside one sometime, looking through the bottom; all you'll see is empty space and a few thin pieces of wood to support the mattress. You can make use of all that space, by modifying your bed.

What you need to do is build a large plywood box, which takes up the space the other box was using, as well as the space below your bed. Use 2"x 2" dimensional lumber in the corners, as well as around the perimeter at the top to give it strength. Then either make a pair of hinged doors or one piece that drops in place for the top. Be sure to support this, both with stringers underneath it and with some sort of a center support, to hold up the weight of the mattress with you on top of it.

You'll be amazed how much space you can create in this way. A queen sized bed will yield 50 cubic feet of space. That's a

little over half the volume of an average closet, stacked up to the ceiling. You can fit a lot of food or other supplies in that area.

All you have to do to hide what you've done is to attach the bed skirt that comes with most better comforter sets. If you don't have a skirt for your bed, you can accomplish the same thing by buying fabric which will go well with your comforter and stapling it to the top of the box, draping over the sides to make a skirt. Darker colors will be less noticeable for this than lighter ones.

## **Build a Root Cellar**

The old root cellar was a great way of storing food. Of course, if your home doesn't have a basement, because of a high water table, you might have a bit of a problem putting in a root cellar and not having it flood. But there is an answer to this problem.

There is a company which is manufacturing spherical fiberglass root cellars for people to install in their backyards, in lieu of using a normal refrigerator. Supposedly, these will maintain a 55°F temperature, year round. Being fiberglass, it would be waterproof, allowing you to fill it up with food and not have to worry about the food getting wet.

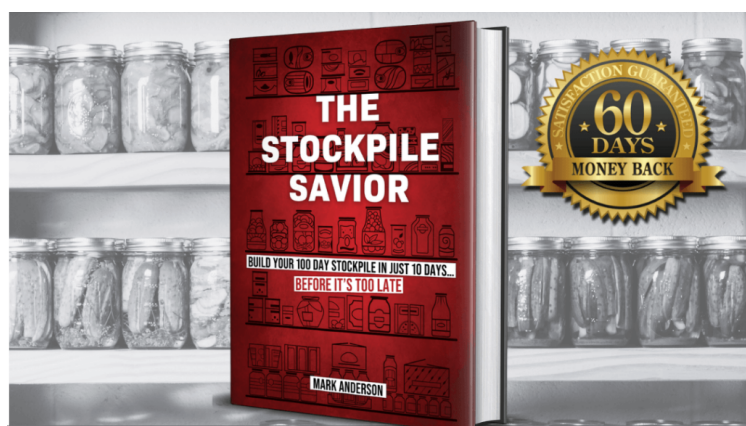
If you don't have the problem of a high water table, then you can build a root cellar out of cement block, with a cement floor and roof. Not only is that stronger and less expensive, but it will also give you a lot more storage space than the fiberglass ones can.

## **Bury it**

Perhaps one of the simplest ways to gain storage space for your prepping supplies is to simply bury them. Many of us store our dry foodstuffs in five-gallon plastic buckets

anyway, and those are totally water and moisture proof. So, instead of stacking them up in the basement you don't have, dig yourself a series of holes in the ground and bury them individually.

If you're going to do this, I'd recommend burying them in a grid pattern, with careful measurements. That way, you won't have to go digging all over your yard, trying to find your buckets. Make yourself a little map, telling you what you have buried where, so that you can find exactly what you need, when the time comes.



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