

Room to Spare

What do you do with that extra room in the house? The one that has no real purpose except to collect things? Or, you may have an empty room or two when the last of the kids have moved out or gone away to school. We end up with lots of remnants of their lives, but no kids. This room becomes either a shrine with no real purpose or a place to collect all the things we don't know where to put elsewhere.

We are so often cluttered with the stuff that gets left behind from grown children as they get established elsewhere on their own. They like to have the unpaid additional storage space in a parent's home or they just don't want to make any decision about what to do with their things. So, their things are left taking up lots of precious space, even though the stuff may not be so precious to anyone anymore.

What to do with a spare room:

1. **Dump the junk** — Don't waste that spare room with an accumulation of junk. It won't go away on its own. Make a plan to clear out the clutter and disperse of the goods to people who can better use them. Your home's square footage is too valuable not to be using it.
2. **Guestroom** — Create a spa-like retreat for your guests. Include reading materials and brochures for local activities. Have some hotel-like amenities ready to go in a decorative basket so they feel welcome, knowing you have thought of their needs.
3. **Craft or hobby room** — You finally have a place to do your scrapbooking, sewing, or painting! Let this room be your private studio where creativity flows.
4. **Gifting** — Have a room just for gift giving. Keep ribbons, gift bags, tags, and wrapping paper in the room along with any items you have purchased ahead of time for gifts. Don't forget the scissors and tape. So, whenever you need a present, it will be a snap to put one together.
5. **Exercise room** — This does not mean you have to have all the big equipment that you find at a gym, but if the area is designated as a workout space, you are more likely to do your yoga, pilates, and strength training. Clear out the room and put your yoga mat, weights, TV, audio equipment, and workout DVDs in it.
6. **Home office** — Instead of letting paper pile up on your coffee table or kitchen counter, set up an area to pay bills and answer mail. Put everything you need for these activities in the room including a desk, stamps, stationary, and pens. Create a simple filing system and get a jump on tax preparation for next year.

7. Meditation room — Oh to have some peace and quiet—create it! Don't allow anything in this area that doesn't bring you peace and tranquility. Some suggested contents include a water fountain, floor cushions, candles, incense, and chimes. Selected reading and audio materials will also set the mood. A serene start or end to your day, or a quick get away to rejuvenate.

8. Room to spare, room to share — Create that media room, music, pool, puzzle, card, or board game room and invite friends over for a night of fun and hospitality.

9. Renovators rescue — Use the empty room as the spare room to hold addition furniture, etc. when you are renovating. Flooring especially is difficult, as you need room to move all your stuff. When all your renovations are complete, rework your spare room into one of the above suggestions.

Often your spare room can be used for several of these purposes. So, next time you walk by that room, stop a moment to think about the possibilities. Take the next steps today to give that spare room some real purpose and turn it into a room that will give you a feeling of satisfaction and relaxation.

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