

THE BUFFALO NEWS



Some people stash nothing under their beds. Others use the space to store an array of items – some rather unusual. File photo from L.L. Bean.

From clothes to clocks, what's hiding under your bed?

By Susan Martin (http://buffalonews.com/author/susan_martin/) | Published January 19, 2017 | Updated January 19, 2017

The other day, while lifting up the comforter in search of a dropped earring, I started thinking about all the things people stash under their beds. Out-of-season clothing, table leaves, ironing boards, toys, foldable exercise equipment, rolls of wrapping paper, monsters ...

It's tempting – Out of sight, out of mind! – and retailers make it even more so.

That's because the storage options are so many: Under-bed storage boxes come in plastic, cotton canvas, linen, wicker and more. Some are see-through; others are solid. Features to choose from include split lids, locking buckle or zipper closures, wheels, built-in cedar wood and divided compartments – including some specifically designed to hold gift-wrapping supplies or multiple pairs of shoes. Archival garment storage boxes are made for storing items such as christening gowns and other collectibles.

In addition, some beds have built-in drawers or even storage space that can be accessed by lifting the slatted base that holds the mattress.

Of course there are reasons *not* to use this space. A bare, clutter-free floor is easier to keep clean through proper dusting and vacuuming – one of the important steps in reducing allergens. And then there's the matter of feng shui – the ancient Chinese art and science of placement, a process to create balance and harmony in the home.

Will storing things under the bed interfere with creating this balance and harmony? I wondered. So I called Linda Ellson, a local certified feng shui practitioner and owner and president of Feng Shui Your World.

“Ideally, in feng shui circles, you should have absolutely nothing underneath your bed. The whole thought and theory is that, whether we realize it or not, we're very connected to our beds because, on average, most of us spend eight hours a night sleeping. Some lofty thoughts and ideas on feng shui are that whatever is underneath your bed goes into your consciousness. Ideally, there should be nothing under there so that the energy freely flows and circulates,” said Ellson, who stores nothing under her bed and uses a Swiffer on the hardwood floor once a week.

“When we have lots of stuff stored underneath our beds, it's kind of like congestion down there. It's confusion; it's things that are ‘stuck.’ It can really contribute to people not having a restful sleep. I'm not a feng shui detective who comes in and checks every nook and cranny, but if I'm working on a person's home and they're telling me that they are having sleep disturbances, I'm asking what's under the bed,” she said.

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In one clutter-clearing inspiration group she headed years ago, Ellson said a participant in the group stored, among other things, a clock that her boss had given her 20 years ago earlier. She had long left that job and, as it turned out, was looking to leave her current job for a new one.

“The clock was symbolic of a couple things. No. 1, the clock wasn’t working anymore so it was somewhere stuck in time. It came from a boss she never adored in the first place – and she didn’t even work there anymore. Now, many years later, she was trying to get a new job. I said, ‘Get rid of the clock! It will move the old boss energy out. Let’s move forward in time.’”

Lo and behold a month later, the woman found a new job. “Coincidence? Maybe. But it’s really, really interesting,” said Ellson, who is also a licensed real estate agent with Hunt.

Ellson also said that storing old bills and financial papers can be negative – especially for those worried about money. “You’re always going to be thinking about money; whether you realize it or not. In the bedroom we’re trying to create this quiet, enclosed retreat space that’s really about connection, rejuvenation, intimacy and just checking everything else at the curb. Financial papers, an old gift from a boss, old love letters –it’s not the space for it,” she said.

“The reality is we all have to put stuff somewhere. If you are tight on storage, I will say ‘Minimally, you can store bed linens or other linen-y type stuff under the bed.’ But ideally, nothing is under there. It’s just free-flowing space,” she added.

I confessed to once storing an ironing board under a bed. She laughed and said she would issue me a permission slip – as long as I used the ironing board to press my linens.

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