



# The San Diego Union-Tribune

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## Hobby haven

Build a craft room and cultivate your creativity

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If you're like most Americans, you've probably found yourself stuck at home with extra time on your hands — and a lot of concerns on your mind — due to the pandemic these past several months.

Why not turn that nervous energy

and those surplus hours into a creative endeavor that brings you joy and sharpens your artistic or inventive skills? All you need are the right supplies and the spare space in which to practice your preferred pastime. Together, they'll make for a great hobby room that can come in handy these

days.

"There are moments in the day when you just need to take a break, escape from technology, a messy house or an argument, and find calm within yourself. This is where an arts-and-crafts room can help," said Azizi Marshall, a licensed clinical professional counselor and founder/ CEO of the Center for Creative Arts Therapy in Chicago. "Har

Nessing your creativity, especially during times of stress and imbalance, can boost self-esteem, allow for emotional release, increase

dopamine levels, reduce stress and provide a space in your home where you can connect with your feelings and express them in a safe and meaningful way."

From oil painting and sculpting to model making and woodworking to jewelry crafting and sewing, a designated hobby room can be the perfect place to unleash your imagination and stay productive with your interests.

Jackie Silver, a homeowner in Tampa, Florida, can vouch for a craft room's value.

"I set up a small extra bedroom in my house as my art room where I like to paint canvases. I chose a room with lots of natural light that has a sleeper sofa," she said. "I set up my easel on a small table in front of the couch and have all my paints, brushes, water cup, towels and other supplies that I need right at hand on another side table. And if we ever need that room to accommodate visitors, I can easily stash the supplies in the closet and quickly convert the space into an extra bedroom."

It's crucial to choose the right available area for your hobby room, said Kirsten Fisher, a certified professional organizer, who is founder and CEO of Imagine Home Organization, based in St.

Petersburg, Florida.

"Spare bedrooms work particularly well because they have a closet to store extra items you may

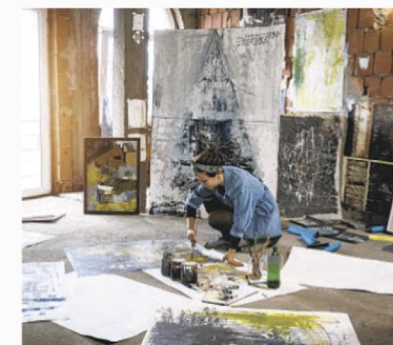
not want visible all the time," Fisher said. "One client of mine liked to sew and create with polymer jewelry, which she did in her spare bedroom; her closet was employed to store lesser-used items like craft books and large tools. We set up separate tables for each type of work she liked to do and added elements such as extra lighting and comfortable chairs."

If you lack an available bedroom, an office, playroom, basement, butler's pantry, or closet can become a craft space.

"I recently created a beaded jewelry retreat out of a small walk-in closet. We took down the rods and shelving and replaced it with an Elfa system allowing for a worktop with drawers underneath for storage," Fisher said. "We installed shelving and utility boards with hooks."

Jennifer Dye, senior project manager at Maydan Architects, an architecture and design firm in Palo Alto, said the best-designed hobby rooms are masterfully organized.

"You should have a wall with shelves for bins and containers, pegboards and other systems that keep clutter to a minimum. You also need ample counter space and, if possible, different surfaces capable of handling different projects," noted Dye, who suggested using clear storage containers to spot needed items quickly. "If necessary, I also recommend having many electrical



A creative space in the home is a good stress outlet.

outlets to prevent tripping hazards, using easy-to-clean surfaces and floors, and adding a sink for quick cleanup of art supplies."

Marshall advised selecting a room or area next to a window that looks out onto nature and provides ample sunlight, which can help fuel your creativity.

"If you don't have access to a view of the outdoors, you can hang up images that you find relaxing and inspiring. And if you lack a door for privacy, listening to music with headphones can help keep out noise distractions," Marshall said.



Storage and natural light are key to a good, functional hobby space.