

We've Entered the Space Age

Seems like for just about every woodworker, space is an issue. And based on a cursory literature search, seems like space has always been a woodworker's concern. You run into space issues and stories every month in one or more of the following ways.

- a. A magazine article features some exotic wood shop created by a retiree in a new 50' x 60' heated and airconditioned shed with a myriad of windows to let in the sunlight. The layout is well planned and optimized in 14 dimensions. All the equipment is connected to a dust collector in a soundproof booth. You think, "boy I wish I had that much room (or money)." A similar sensation can occur when you visit the shop of a fellow EMGW member. My own basement shop has expanded in space over the years in a haphazard manor – I know where everything is, but the layout is far from optimal and I know that if I optimize the layout now, I will never find anything ever again.
- b. You read your third article of the month on how to have your two-car garage double up as a workshop. All you need to is put all your equipment on roll-away carts, store your lumber on overhead racks located above the garage door rails, insulate the walls if you live North of Atlanta, and switch to a Smart car or Mini Cooper for your transportation needs.
- c. Examine the latest "two-fer" at your favorite tool store. Yes, a jointer/planer can both joint and plane while taking up the footprint of just one device; and yes, you can install a router in your table saw extension and save even more floor space. Reminds me of my fascination long ago with blivets. A blivet is ten pounds of stuff in a five-pound bag.
- d. Clever DIY woodworkers publish articles on how to build a bench with a rotating top so you can bolt a jointer on one side and a belt/disc sander to the other and how to make the most use of the space under any workbench or workstation via cabinet shelves and/or drawers.
- e. Another favorite theme involves shelf systems of various types. Wall hangings can store lots of tools in minimal wall space and obviously don't take up floor space. A wall-mounted tool cabinet is one of the first things I built for my basement shop. It has four pegboards on two doors – one left and one right hinged; I thought it very clever at the time. Another space trick: hang your dust collector on the wall.

The solutions are endless in number. But, I sometime wonder if working with only hand tools wouldn't eliminate space concerns while simplifying my budget challenge at the same time.