

Utility Shelves

Lumber



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Here's a quick remedy for all the times you've tripped over paint cans or garden hoses lying on the floor in the basement or garage. This shelving unit is extra handy in a space where the ceiling joists are open overhead, though a minor modification would make it work in any informal room or workshop where the ceiling is in place.

Materials Needed

- Two (2) 8' 2 x 4s
- Four (4) 8' 1 x 4s
- Two (2) 4' 1 x 12s
- Four (4) ¼" x 6" bolts
- Eight (8) ¼" flat washers
- Four (4) ¼" flat or wing nuts
- Six (6) 16d nails
- Eight (8) 10d nails
- ½ lb. 8d nails

Tools

- Circular or hand saw
- Drill
- ¼" drill bit (long enough to go through a 2 x 4)
- Hammer
- Adjustable wrench

- 2' level
- 6" bar clamp (optional)
- Safety glasses

Instructions

The length of the shelves shown is 4', but because of the 1 x 4s used as bracing, maximum width is actually around 8'. In the example shown here, the center two shelves are adjustable, and by drilling a few extra holes you can make all the shelves adjustable.

- Cut the two vertical 2 x 4s so you have a minimum 3" of overlap with the ceiling joists where 16d nails (3 nails per board) are used to attach them.

- Choose your location and clamp the 2 x 4s in place temporarily to get measurements. Once the location is final, and the 2 x 4s are completely vertical (check the front and the side with a level at least two feet long), nail them in place and drill the holes for placing the shelf braces.
- Use ¼" bolts in the holes to hold the bracing. (The bolts will need to be fairly long to go through the 3½" width of the 2 x 4, plus the 1½" width added by the two braces.) A six-inch bolt will allow space for a washer under both the head and the nut. If you prefer, the adjustable shelves can be attached with wing nuts instead of flat nuts.
- Drill holes and attach the braces on one 2 x 4 first. Then position one brace temporarily and make sure it is level. Mark and drill holes in the second 2 x 4. (If you have no helpers, a six inch bar clamp, set loosely, makes a good extra hand.)
- Once the adjustable shelf braces are in place, you can use 10d nails to attach the non-adjustable shelves, using the same technique to make certain the shelves are level.
- Use nails to secure the shelves to the 1 x 4 braces.
- No finish is required for utility shelving, but you may use some heavy duty clear finish or paint if desired.

