



# teen space

A garage turned into a teenage retreat for the holidays gives teenagers their own space while keeping them on site

When the summer holidays roll around, after the pressure of exams and end-of-year rituals, everybody is ready to kick back and have a change of pace. Sometimes by changing your environment to create a fresh feel, everybody can get into a more relaxed mode even though they may still be home-based.

Changing your garage into a space for teenagers during the summer holidays can create a sense of freedom for the young people in your household while you still maintain a presence. Anya Brighthouse, our 'in-house make-over expert' came up with some great ideas to transform this suburban garage for a family of teenage boys and their friends. She worked together with the boys and their parents to create the 'new-look' teenage space without spending a fortune.

Using bits and pieces she found on site plus a splash of paint, some funky, bright fabric and the addition of the odd accessory, she has transformed the garage into a cool place to hang out. She found an old door up in the rafters, which she painted and placed on chillybins to use as a table for the TV, CDs and other bits and pieces. The great thing is, that all the accessories can be taken outdoors. The beanbags, which are made of hard wearing canvas, are washable and feature eyelets so they can be hung from nails on the garage walls.

The boys are rapt with their new space and so are their parents (who may even get the chance to entertain their own friends in there once in a while!)





“The result – a relaxed teenage space to call their own”

### Anya's task list

Our first big task was to clear out the contents of the garage and paint it. We used RESENE LUMBERSIDER 'TANA'. I found an old door up in the rafters which we painted as a table for the TV and bits and pieces. The old TV was bought for \$30 (and I love it!) and the chairs are old 'coolie' chairs which can still be found in junk shops and on TradeMe. The coffee table is an old 70s number - painted for a new lease of life. Flax mats on the floor come from SPOTLIGHT \$22 each, as do the flax ketes hung on the wall for extra storage – they were \$6 each. The colourful Pasifika fabric came from FARE PAREU in Otahuhu @\$6 per metre.

The waterproof beanbags can be hung by their large eyelet for easy storage (\$59 each). The striped squabs, \$29 each, are from EZIBUY. ARBUCKLES supplied the masses of 'beans' we needed to fill the beanbags. They took three bags of 'beans' for each beanbag, @\$22 each. Many thanks ARBUCKLES!

The lovely star cushions came from WALLACE COTTON @\$39 each - also the pavillion blue stripe napkins at \$19 for four. Final touches in the form of red hibiscus mugs from the \$2 shop and the melamine picnic ware from THE WAREHOUSE, prices starting at only \$1.49 a piece, completed the project.

### A FEW MORE TIPS ...

When filling beanbags do it over the bath with the plug in. Those little suckers can easily get away from you ...

Garage sales are great for finding coffee tables, coolie chairs, etc.

Get your teenagers to help you paint the interior of the garage.

Fabric drops can be pinned to the rafters with upholstery nails or thread a piece of dowel at the bottom (this will keep the fabric anchored) and makes it easy for rolling up later and tying around the rafters when wanting to put the car back in!

Cushion covers don't always need invisible zips - just slip stitch by hand the opening side once you have filled it.

### Have on hand - when teenagers are just hanging out

- Apile of games, including 'Set', 'Phase 10', 'Hit the Deck' (my teenagers' favourites)
- CDs and DVDs
- Musical instruments
- A popcorn, milkshake, waffle, toasted sandwich maker

A great idea is a teenage edition of 'Table Topics'- a Perspex cube containing loads of questions designed for teenagers to spend time talking with their closest friends, ponder some fun questions and liven up the conversation.

**Family & Teen Table Topic Cubes available from Parents Inc. Special price this issue \$35. See resource page to order.**







### Whenever teenagers gather

Remember the rule that whoever is on the 'patch' first, tends to own the territory. It doesn't matter if it is a teenage camp, a classroom or your lounge, if you just let people wander in then they will establish an element of control. So it is very important when your teenager's friends come, even just to visit and hang out, that you welcome them, make them a drink, offer some food, ask them about themselves and establish the relationship. The message is - they have come into your home and they

are welcome. Even if the teenagers drift into their own space, you have created an 'entry' into their group which gives you the opportunity to pop in with a snack or to check with them about what their plans are next.

*"You wouldn't do that, would you guys?"*

Have a presence in the home but be in the background so the teenagers feel they have the dignity of a certain amount of privacy without you 'hovering'. However, they also know you are on site. Just make one or two rules so that a certain amount of respect has been established. These could include noise levels (for the sake of the neighbours), which bathroom to use, reasonable time to be winding up. Sometimes a positive statement about their behaviour with an almost innocent tone, "you wouldn't do that, would you guys?" is enough. ■

### Where to get stuff

**ARBUCKLES**  
[www.arbuckles.co.nz](http://www.arbuckles.co.nz)  
 0800 100 999  
 stores nationwide

**RESENE**  
[www.resene.co.nz](http://www.resene.co.nz)  
 0800 RESENE  
 stores nationwide

**THE WAREHOUSE**  
[www.thewarehouse.co.nz](http://www.thewarehouse.co.nz)  
 stores nationwide

**EZIBUY**  
[www.ezibuy.co.nz](http://www.ezibuy.co.nz)  
 0508 500 500  
 stores nationwide

**FARE PAREU**  
 469 Great South Rd  
 Otahuhu, Auckland

**SPOTLIGHT**  
[www.spotlight.co.nz](http://www.spotlight.co.nz)  
 Stores nationwide

**WALLACE COTTON**  
[www.wallacecotton.co.nz](http://www.wallacecotton.co.nz)  
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 7b Enterprise St Birkenhead,  
 North Shore, Auckland

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