

## 5 Things You Should Avoid Storing in an Attic and Some Better Alternatives.

As mortgage rates climb and people look to save money on their housing, many consider downsizing the best option. Downsizing can come with a lot of benefits, savings being the main one, but it's also a big adjustment as people will have a lot more items and valuables in their homes than they think.

The attic may seem like a perfect solution to this problem, however, there are some limitations to what you can store in an attic. Self-storage comparison site [Compare My Move](#) has put together a list of 10 things you should avoid storing in an attic, and the reasons why.

### Important Documents & Old Photographs

When storing items in an attic, you need to think of three things, temperature, moisture, and pests. Because of the way attic insulation works, either trapping the heat in the house when it gets cold or trapping the heat in the attic when it gets warm, the change in temperature inside an attic varies massively from season to season. This can be very harmful for documents and photographs, as in order to regulate temperature, materials that are used in these items expand and retract. If they are doing this too often, due to the varied temperatures of attic storage, it will cause advanced deterioration.

When storing important documents and old photographs, always think about the temperature of where you are storing them. A small cupboard or drawer in a lived-in part of the house is better for helping regulate temperature, or you could look at specific [temperature-controlled storage](#), however, this would only be necessary for old, or fragile documents and photographs.

## Seasonal Decorations

The main issue with storing seasonal decorations in your attic is that they'll take up more space for longer periods of time than most other things you would store in an attic. Taking up space doesn't only affect the number of things you can then store in your attic - it can also have an impact on the insulation. A lot of people may think that the more items in an attic, the better the insulation of the attic, however, this isn't necessarily true as having consistency in material and density is the key to insulation, and this is something that seasonal decorations lack.

Instead, it may be worth donating the majority of your seasonal decorations when you are finished with them and buying them back, or buying new decorations when the time comes around. If you'd like to keep your decorations throughout the year, a great option would be to consider [external storage](#) in a temperature-controlled, secure, storage locker.

## Wooden Furniture

Much like old documents and photographs, temperature is also a problem when it comes to wooden furniture. Wood expands and contracts with temperature. The fluctuating temperatures, and therefore consistent expanding and contracting, you get in an attic can cause the wooden furniture to warp, losing its shape and stability and making it unusable as furniture.

Temperature isn't the only factor that causes wooden furniture to warp, during the winter and spring, attics will experience a lot of condensation due to the warm air rising from beneath meeting with the cold air surrounding the house. The moisture generated from this can seep into the wooden furniture and cause warping and cracking. Wooden furniture, if unused, should be stored in a cool, dry environment, and checked regularly for warping and cracking.

## Clothing

Clothing attracts a new problem to attic storage. Although clothing will be affected by dampness if left in moist conditions for too long, and many fabrics can be ruined quite quickly by this if the region you are in has a temperature fluctuation, the main factor that affects clothing in an attic is pests. Moths are the biggest pest problem when it comes to clothing, but rats and other bugs can also enjoy eating the fibres in your clothing. Natural fibres such as linen, wool and silk are more susceptible to pest damage than other materials and can be totally destroyed by moths in a few months if left unattended.

If you are storing clothing in an attic or a place where it will likely be unattended it should be stored in boxes or clothing bags. If the item you are storing is expensive or sentimental, a wedding dress etc. you should invest in a plastic clothes bag, this can then protect against both pests and moisture. The best place to store clothing is somewhere that is accessed regularly in a living area, such as a cupboard in the bedroom, therefore temperature won't be a problem and pest damage can be noticed as soon as possible.

## Paints

Temperature can ruin paint and can be very dangerous if it reaches extreme levels. When the air is warm, during the summer months in an attic, the paint thins and can dry very quickly - making it unusable after a short period of time. If the paint is oil-based, however, it can become very dangerous at high temperatures as oil-based paint is flammable, it is crucial that you store oil-based paint in a cool and dry environment.

If you have open paint cans that you need to store somewhere, the best thing you can do is transfer the paint to a sealed container and place it in a cupboard or a closet with no direct sunlight. Make sure to label the paint colour and the room it was used for when storing paint, as it could come in handy when you need to use the paint next.

## **Storage Alternatives**

There are alternatives to storing items in the attic, even when you have no room, and there are even ways to store items in the attic in efficient ways to prevent any damage or any loss of insulation. Here are a few:

### **Protective Support**

Items can be stored in the attic, and it can be quite useful to store some items in the attic, however in order to avoid any damage to the items or lapse in insulation you should be implementing protective support both to the items and your attic. When placing your items in the attic, never put them directly onto the insulation, as it can compact the fibres and ruin the insulation, instead, have even slats of wood above the insulation and place any items on there. Plastic wrapping your items is also an important step to protection from moisture changes and pests, it's also a great way to stop dust buildup and keep your items clean when unused.

### **External storage**

If you have any of the items listed above, then it might be useful to look into [external storage](#). Not only does external storage make sure your items are being stored away from your home and stop them from taking up valuable space, but it will also help with the problems faced when storing items in an attic. Storage containers will give you secure access to your belongings 24/7 and, unlike an attic, there won't be any massive fluctuations in temperature and moisture which could potentially harm any items you store there.

### **Donation**

If you feel you aren't going to be using items for a long period of time, or may not be used ever, then paying for external storage, or taking up storage in your attic, it could be useful to donate your items to a local charity shop and buying them back or

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buying new if you come to use the items again. Of course, this is subject to the item, you cannot donate important documents but it could be a perfect way to save storage space on seasonal decorations.