

Building a garage will undoubtedly increase your property value, as well as add convenience. Depending on the room available and the layout of your home, there are certain design decisions that can ensure you build the ideal addition.

Also, the construction of your garage comes with a host of considerations to wade through. From building permits to finish options, there are things you need to handle before the contractor starts.

A DIY garage project is possible, depending on the design and size of the building. Investigate the various kit options on the market that you can build yourself over a concrete pad.

### ***Design Tips***

Strike a balance with the size. You don't want an oversized garage and an undersized yard, but try not to skimp on floor space either.

At the very minimum, a single car garage should be 11 1/2 feet wide and 20 feet deep (floor measurements or from the inside wall to inside wall). For a single car plus storage or workspace, think about a 1 1/2 car garage plan - add 50 percent of the length or width, whichever works on your property.

Consider the cost savings and simplicity of a carport. If space and budget won't permit a fully enclosed garage, this option can

deliver good protection for your vehicles and plenty of storage options.

Will your garage be attached to your home or detached? There is some cost savings in attaching, although the roof and other elements of your home may need extensive work for this option to work. Think about how much space you have and what you'll be using the garage for.

The height of your garage is another design decision. Adding extra room can be a cinch with a higher garage leaving plenty of room for overhead storage and even a loft or mezzanine.

### ***Construction Considerations***

The first consideration in any home addition project is the building permit. Visit your local building department to find out exactly what you are allowed to do on your property. There may be regulations about the location, size and design of the garage. Once you have a clear idea of what you can build, final decisions are easier.

A garage needs a concrete foundation poured, which will generally require excavation and back-fill. Be sure to hire a reputable contractor for this job. Since this stage will likely damage some of your existing landscaping, include the costs for replacement or repair of that lawn and garden in your budget.

You'll need to bring power into the garage and plumbing is a possibility. Take a look at the building code to find out any requirements you need to meet and take into account everything you will use the garage for. With a workshop or auto repair area there needs to be adequate lighting and outlets. A sink is a nice addition for washing up and some garages even include a toilet and shower.

Don't forget the proper ventilation and any insulation that the garage will require. Consult the building code to find out what elements are necessary, based on the size and location of the building.

The exterior finish of your garage is often decided by your budget. Brick walls are durable and attractive, but cost much more than vinyl siding. Wood batten board siding is a popular DIY option and can be stained or painted for protection and appearance.

Be sure to match the shingles or roofing material with your house and include soffit, fascia and eaves trough.

Building a garage is an ideal way to add storage and create a workspace. Think of all the DIY projects you can get done in your new garage and how much your cars will appreciate that level of protection and security. In terms of value and practicality, the cost of building a garage is well worth it.