

MY DRESSING UNIT

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Every girl should have a dressing area in her bedroom—an attractive, well-arranged unit—where she can make her pretty face prettier and have ample space for storage as well. You can have such a dressing unit if you want one. This booklet tells you how.

It is very important that each member of your family have space for his own belongings. You may find that a well planned dressing unit is the perfect solution to your need for a space that you can call your own.

A good dressing unit must measure up to certain basic requirements. Of course, you must have a dresser, a chest, a bench, or a stool depending on the type of dressing unit you use. Good light—both artificial and natural—is essential, as well as a mirror properly placed. You may want other accessories like a wastebasket, pictures, and a rug.

Placement is an important point to consider

when you plan your dressing unit. Think of groups of furniture in relation to other groups—the dresser or dressing table in relation to the clothes closet. This makes for convenience. Try to place the dressing unit where the light will fall on you when you stand before the mirror. You can get ideal light if you place your dresser between two windows.

Consider also how many persons will live in the room. If two girls are rooming together, you may need two mirrors, one over the dressing table and one over the chest of drawers. Remember ease of cleaning, too, in placing the unit.

Plan carefully and know just what you want before you actually start to work on your dressing unit. You'll find many different types of dressing units—types to suit a wide range of tastes—from very simple to all-out fluffy dressing tables. There's a corner in even the tiniest home to accommodate this most feminine of all pieces of furniture.

Built-Ins Can Be Successful

If you have not considered the built-in dresser or dressing table, you may be missing something really nice. There's a lot to be said for built-ins. They eliminate clutter by replacing free-standing furniture. They can be designed to fill exact needs for greater convenience. They simplify the cleaning problem, and, if well-built, they can be very handsome. Built-ins are a blessing for small homes and small budgets.

You can make a very attractive built-in dressing table by simply placing a triangular shaped piece of wood in a corner. Add a skirt, a pretty mirror and a coat of paint.

You can combine this dressing table with a closet and build it into a bedroom. This dressing table, combined with a closet which opens from the other side, is built-in. Drawers stick out beyond the frame to provide deeper table surface and more knee room.

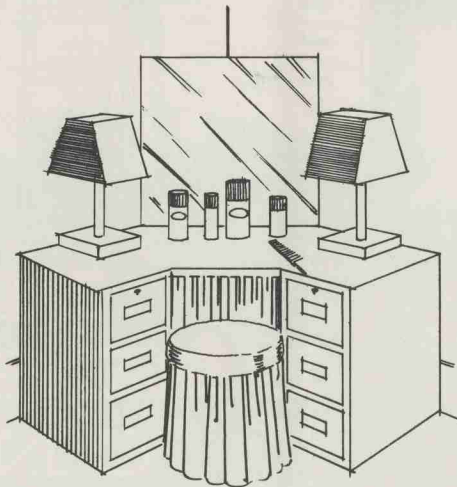
If you're extra crowded for space, attach a dressing table shelf and a mirror to the inside of a door. The shelf should have a raised edge so things can't slip off.

A dormer window makes a perfect spot for a built-in dressing table. Place a shelf with drawers between the two sides of the little niche. In this way you can take advantage of daylight.

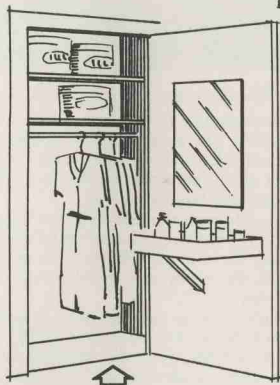
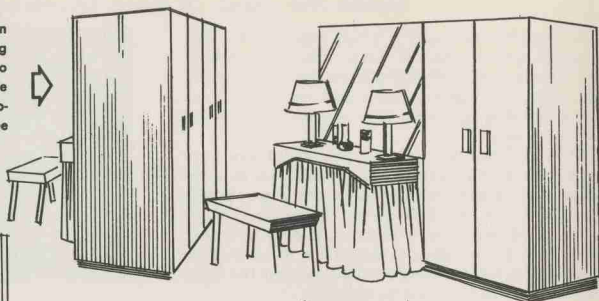
You'll find you can do much of the building yourself—and you'll have lots of fun doing it. However, it would be well to have dad's or older brother's help when it comes to some phases of

planning and actual building.

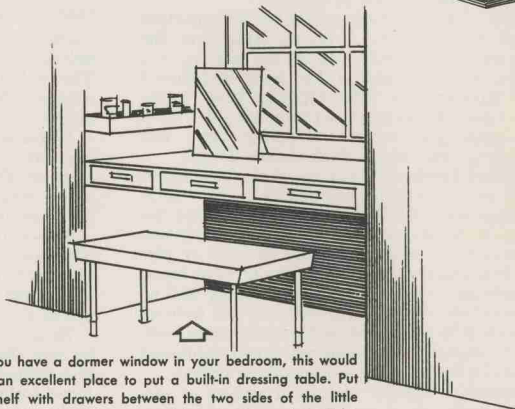
Make a built-in as simple or elaborate as your pocketbook and personal taste dictate, but do use imagination and original ideas in carrying it out. You have a wide variety of built-ins to choose from. Pick the one that seems just right for your bedroom and you.



An attractive addition to your bedroom can be made by adding a combination dressing table and closet. The closet is designed to open from in back of the table. The table drawers stick out beyond the frame to provide deeper table surface and more knee room.



To save space in a crowded bedroom, attach a dressing table shelf and mirror to the inside of a door. The shelf should have a raised edge so things cannot slip off.



If you have a dormer window in your bedroom, this would be an excellent place to put a built-in dressing table. Put a shelf with drawers between the two sides of the little niche. By doing this you can take advantage of daylight.

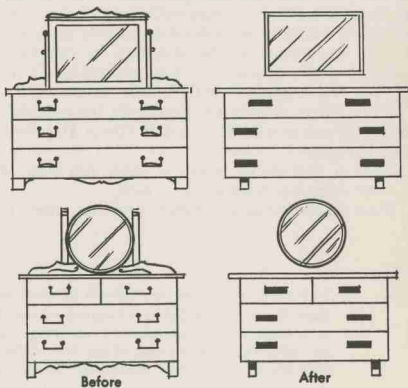
Dressers and Chests

Old dressers, chests, bureaus, tables, and even small desks can be converted into very good-looking dressing unit pieces if you put your imagination to work. In refinishing old pieces of furniture, you may find that they are made of very good wood.

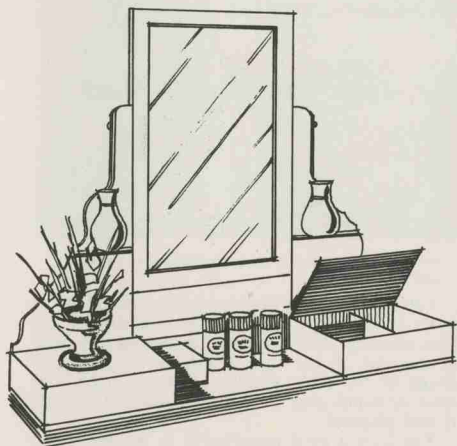
Simplicity is today's keynote in home furnishings. That is why many old pieces of furniture seem out of place in our homes. Their fancy carvings, elaborate brass trimmings, and cluttered lines are not in keeping with our newer furnishings.

If an old piece of furniture is well built and made of good wood, study it to find ways of changing it into an attractive piece for your dressing unit. You might saw off the legs, remove heavy brass pulls and carving, or take off the finish and restrain the wood if it is good. A coat of paint in a pleasing color may be just the finishing touch.

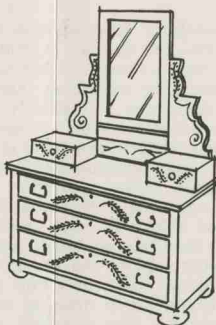
Here are two old dressers that are quite good looking after a few changes were made.



This dressing table began life as the old-fashioned bureau seen in the small sketch. It is attached to the wall. The drawer section could be refinished and used as a chest.



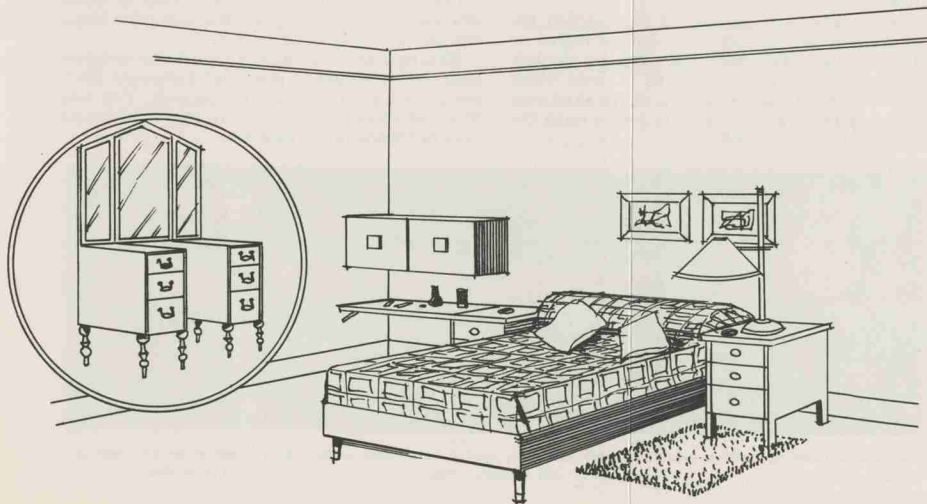
Old vanities can be modernized to give your room a new look. Here an extended top turns half of an old vanity into a modern dressing counter. The other half becomes a bedside table. A hanging cabinet gives extra space on the wall over the dressing shelf. Place a mirror on the inside of one of the cabinet doors.



Your dressing unit need not be fancy and frilly to be feminine. An old table may be completely simple and clean-lined, but ladylike. A pair of attractive, converted oil lamps provide good light.

A small desk can make an excellent piece for your dressing unit. Perhaps you have a discarded one in your house. You can brighten old pieces with the new adhesive-plastic film, which comes in colorful striped, marbelized, floral, or novelty patterns. You can also use the plastic film to lend touches of color and design to accessories in your dressing unit such as lampshades, wastebaskets, mirror, and picture frames.

You will have lots of fun exploring the possibilities of old pieces of furniture. Converting old furniture is one way you can have an attractive dressing unit with the least cost.



A Dressing Table With A Skirt

One way to acquire a dressing table is to go to the store, choose one and buy it. But there's another way. It requires less cash but just a bit more imagination. Take something that isn't a dressing table—something you already have in the house or buy unfinished—and convert it.

Although dressing tables with frilly skirts can be very pretty, be sure to think carefully before spending your time, money and effort to construct one. You may tire of it sooner than you think. The ruffled skirt will catch dust, and it will be difficult to keep crisp and fresh looking.

You are growing rapidly. As you grow your ideas and taste change. In a short time you may find yourself wishing for a dressing unit that seems more grown-up than a ruffled dressing table. So, before selecting a table with a fussy, fancy skirt, study carefully the possibilities of a built-in dressing unit or one made from a good piece of furniture.

Despite the drawbacks, attractive dressing tables can be made in various shapes and sizes. A good size is 40 to 42 inches long and 15 to 17 inches wide. The height should vary according to your own seating height. Some good shapes are halfround, kidney, rectangular, and the three-legged, corner ones.

The design of the dressing table skirt should be in keeping with other furnishings in your room. The material used should be washable as well as beautiful. You can make a ruffled skirt from organdy, eyelet, dotted swiss, or other thin materials. Heavier materials such as broadcloth, chintz, cotton prints, and others will give a more tailored appearance.

The material and method of construction determine whether the skirt will have a ruffled or tailored appearance. Will the skirt be pleated, gathered, draped in a feston, or in some other style? You might carry the style of the skirt over to the bedspread and curtains to give a room the desired "assembled" look.



Your dressing table skirt may be tailored or ruffled as you like.

You can build the dressing table stool or bench from an old piece of furniture or a sturdy box. The dressing table skirt will determine the type of covering on the stool. Consider the lines and shape of the table when selecting a stool. The stool or bench may be a good space for storage if well planned.

You have a good opportunity to use your own creative ability and initiative in making a dressing table. The finished product can be as ruffled or tailored as you want it to be. There is no end to the styles of dressing table skirts you can choose from.

Have you thought about the trim, tailored dressing table skirt? The box pleated style shown here is easy to make and is quite good looking.

Leg show—or not? A left-over scrap of fabric will work wonders for your dressing table bench and change its lines completely.

Making a dressing table is a good way to economize and make use of discarded furniture. However, don't go overboard on economy. You may find that spending a little more in the beginning pays dividends in the long run.



Dress up a round stool with a cushion and a ruffle.

Bench made of wooden boxes and covered with a pleated skirt.

Cut off the back of an old chair to make a dressing table stool.

Make the Most of Your Dressing Unit

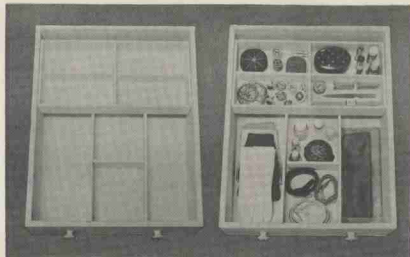
Accessories can add a great deal to the convenience and beauty of your dressing unit, if they are properly selected and placed. Here, again, you may use original ideas and save money at the same time by doing over pieces you already have on hand.

Mirror—The selection and placement are very important points. The mirror should be in good proportion to the dressing table and large enough for you to see yourself easily. Place the mirror so the light from the window falls on you rather than on it. Do not place it opposite a window. This would cause you to be silhouetted against the light and make it hard to see yourself.

Lamps—Good artificial light is just as important as good natural light. A pin-up lamp over the mirror or one on each side of the mirror, will give you very good lighting. Any lamp used should be the indirect type with diffusing bowl. Lamp shades should be cream or soft white inside. Twin table lamps give very satisfactory light, but small lamps with frilly, dark shades do not.

Sectioned Drawer—What about that top drawer? You may fit it with partitions or trays or both, depending upon the depth of the drawer and the articles to be stored. You can build partitions from any thin, strong material (scraps of plywood, if available). The trays, if you want them, are made in a width suitable for sliding into a thin board or strong cardboard for the bottom. The cleats to hold the sliding trays are made from $\frac{3}{4}$ inch quarter round molding. Small cardboard boxes make satisfactory sections for a drawer.

Pictures—A colorful picture or groups of pictures on each side of your mirror will add a nice



A sectioned drawer with a sliding tray makes storage much easier.

touch of color and design to your dressing unit. Select subjects that are suitable in a bedroom. The colors should blend well with your color scheme. The size of the pictures in relation to the mirror and dresser are important, too.

Wastebasket—Add a wastebasket to your dressing unit, both for convenience and an added touch of color. You may do over an old one with colors which blend with the room or you may buy one very inexpensively.

Rug—You don't need a rug in your dressing unit, but it's nice to have one, if possible. It brightens your room and helps give the dressing unit a complete look. Use one already on hand, or buy one of the inexpensive, washable cotton rugs.

No matter what type of dressing table you use, be sure that the top of it is safe against spillage and damage. You can paint the top with two or more coats of enamel, cover it with a glass cut to fit, or cover it with a colorful dresser scarf.

Suggested Activities

If you really need and want an attractive dressing unit, you will find that planning it and carrying the plans for it to completion can be a very rewarding experience. Activities in this unit will give you experience in the planning, construction, and in the development of color knowledge. Your need for self-expression will find an outlet here.

Listed below are the requirements for completing the dressing unit in the 4-H Home Improvement Project.

1. Take a picture or make a scale drawing of your dressing unit as it is now.
2. Plan improvements needed, and list them in

the order you plan to make them.

3. Select and complete three jobs listed:

a. Plan and make a dressing unit from:

- (1) An old piece of furniture.
- (2) Boxes (with skirt).
- (3) Built-ins.
- (4) Select, remodel, or refinish a chair or bench.

b. Buy or make lamps, wastebasket, pictures and other accessories.

c. Plan and make division in drawer space.

d. Plan and make storage needed for unit.