

Organizing Button-Making Supplies

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There are lots of organizational nightmares in any well-stocked craft studio: not only maintaining machines and equipment so they're ready to go, but ensuring that small parts and supplies are readily to hand and easily retrieved when needed.

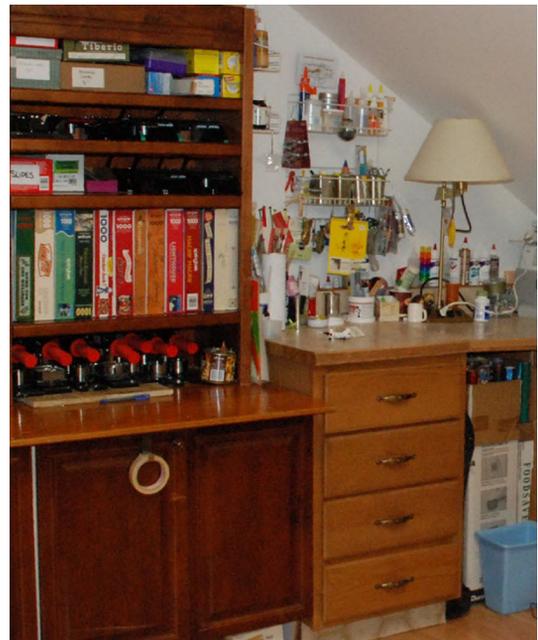
For me, one of the biggest organizational challenges is pin-back button-making, which involves not only machines but several different components in multiple sizes.



I keep my machines lined up on a shelf near to my work space for easy accessibility.



The work space itself is a base cabinet salvaged from a kitchen renovation, which lets me stand up while I work, giving me better leverage when operating the button machines.





The drawers in the cabinet provide a home for the small bins I use to organize the components, so everything is close to hand.

I have multiple sizes of button machines, so need a variety of button parts nearby as I work.



I don't keep all my button parts right here; bulk storage is in another part of the loft, and I replenish the parts in the drawers as needed. I'm only a hobbyist and not making buttons as a business, so I don't need to do this very often.

This arrangement works well for me; the machines and parts are out of the way until I want them, but still close enough to grab quickly if I need to make a button for one of my projects. The parts are sufficiently organized that I need only pull out the number of pieces I need for my current project, and once I'm done, I can easily return the machine to its shelf. This is important to me, because the button work surface itself is pretty small.



There is one other challenge in organizing the button parts: the pinbacks for the 1" and 7/8" buttons. Unlike on larger buttons, where the pinbacks are already attached to the button backs, these wire pinbacks are slipped into position once the button is assembled.



The problem is that they come from the supplier in a tangled heap, and as you can imagine, it's a bit of a pain to extricate a single pinback from this mess, especially if you're in a hurry.



My solution is to cut strips of scrap card-

board just the right width to provide a friction-fit for the pinbacks, then slide them onto the strips in lots of 50. I make buttons only as a hobbyist and not in any serious volume, so this method works for me. It's kind of labour-intensive to set up, but I honestly think it saves me time in the long run because I have to untangle the pinbacks only once, and not every time I need to grab one for a project, and they're easy to retrieve from the drawer.



Perhaps if I were making pins in a larger volume I might not do things this way . . . but then again, given how I like to organize, I just might.

