

8-POINT PLAN

How to convert your garage

If you're thinking about this type of project, consider these points before starting the work

Do you need planning permission?

Whether converting your garage to a kitchen or knocking through to create an open-plan space, speak to your local planning authority before you start. In some cases, a garage can be converted under permitted development – visit planningportal.gov.uk for further details. Typically, work will need to be inspected and certified to ensure full compliance with building regulations. Separate rules will apply if you live in a listed building or in a Conservation Area.

Do you have sufficient room for storage?

Converting your garage is a great opportunity to create more living space, but you will need to store bikes, DIY essentials and lawnmowers elsewhere. Is there room in your loft or shed, or do you need to consider investing in a larger garden building to keep everything in one place? Decide what to do with all your stuff before planning your conversion.

Consider door replacements

'You will need to think about how you want to fill the space left by the garage door,' explains Nigel Lewis, building engineer at Space & Style Home Design. 'You can either create a brick wall or introduce new windows to bring in more light.' Think about whether a single window will provide sufficient natural light, and be aware that the replacement will have to meet building regulations and be insulated in line with the rest of the house. If you are knocking through to create an open-plan living space, match any new windows or doors to the rest of the property. For a space that feels light and airy, plan in rooflights, sunpipes or an additional window at the rear or side.

Replace the roof

The garage roof will almost certainly need to be upgraded to ensure it is

watertight. Use tiles or materials to match the rest of the house for a cohesive look. A pitched roof will also make the conversion less obvious and allow space for more rooflights.

Alter floor levels

'Building regulations state that a garage used for its original purpose should have a step of 150mm up to the house,' explains Nigel. 'So when converting the space, the floor will need to be levelled with damp-proof membranes, insulation and screed to ensure it is the same as the house and can create a flow from one room to another.' Waste and water pipes can normally be hidden in the floor space during the floor-levelling process, but plan well in advance so pipes can be placed in the correct positions with sufficient outlets in the conversion. Another option is to lay underfloor heating, which must also be planned prior to work starting.

Create a liveable space

It is likely that you'll need to improve insulation to ensure the converted space is comfortable. The most common methods are cavity wall insulation or stud walls with insulation behind, which will mean losing some floor area. 'Ventilation is also key for damp-proofing the space,' says Gareth Short, installations business manager at Leekes. 'It will also get rid of moisture, and make the room feel warmer.'

Plan the layout

If using the new room as a kitchen, it's vital to plan the layout before conversion to dictate where the drainage points, gas and water mains and heating will be routed. 'Additional electrical points will be needed to allow flexible positioning of appliances, and to ensure light switches are in the most convenient location,' says Gareth. 'Also consider how you are going to extend the heating provision, whether it's through the original central system or by adding an alternative source.' 🏠

BEFORE



CONVERTED SPACE

Above and below A double garage has been transformed into a playroom by

Anglian Home Improvements, creating extra light and insulating the living space above



Work out costs

The conversion of a garage typically costs from £5,000 for a basic single space, up to £15,000 for a double, depending on the specification, finishes and where you live. If on a tight budget, it's possible to do the work yourself, subject to inspections from building control officers. If hiring a tradesperson, ensure you obtain three different quotes and check companies with the Federation of Master Builders.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Anglian Home Improvements 0800 500 600, anglianhome.co.uk
Federation of Master Builders fmb.org.uk
Leekes 0800 015 7749, leekes.co.uk
Planning Portal planningportal.gov.uk
Space & Style Home Design 02392 525100, spaceandstyle.co.uk