



What is self storage?

Self storage is a relatively new way of storing your belongings, providing a fast and convenient way for either domestic/household or business. In very simple terms you turn up to the storage unit, fill your unit as and when you please, lock it up and that is it. This makes it an ideal and affordable option when moving house, de-cluttering, decorating, having work carried out on your house or just own weird and wonderful things you need to keep somewhere.

Generally units range from a locker size to something the size of a school gym hall. With so many different size units or rooms available you only pay for the space that you need, choosing at the outset the size of unit or room.

How does it work?

Once you have a self storage unit, you will have unlimited access to it and pay either a daily or weekly rate, for as short or long as you require. Usually you will be the only person to have access to the keys for your room/unit as you normally supply your own padlock. Your items in store can be accessed without prior arrangement and without an additional charge. Some companies even offer 24 hour access seven days a week via electronic keypads.

The old method of storing required a removal company to pick up your items and store them in wooden containers in their warehouse / depositary. These were stacked on-top of each other to make the best use of space, so when you needed something out of store, the container holding your belongings had to be located and brought to the front of the warehouse. Because of this a fee was usually charged. But things have moved on considerable, making storage must more flexible.

What types are available?

Self storage units vary in all shapes and forms, from converted mills to purpose built buildings, outside lock up garage type units to the ex shipping containers. These vary in sizes and in the purpose build building can vary from a size of a locker to a football pitch. Some also are temperature controlled climates with are perfect for antiques, electronics etc that are sensitive to temperature changes. Container/box (sometimes called pod) storage is where you rent a unit/container but this is delivered directly to your house. The idea is you then load the container with your belongings and when ready this is collected for you and transported to a storage facility. Check however what type of security the company offers i.e. video surveillance, alarms, guards on duty, nightly inspections etc.

So what can you store?

Well anything as long as it is not illegal, flammable, perishable or alive. This will include fuels, paints, solvents or acids. However some companies will not allow high valuable goods like jewellery or gold so always doubt check with each branches policies and restrictions

How does this all work?

Get quotes from at least three self storage companies, prices can vary from area to areas so do get quotes. We offer a free quote request to save you time and offer special offers and discounts i.e. student storage, long term storage rates even free van hire so ask the local branch. Once you have

chosen your company it is best to visit your storage facility before hand to get a feel for the place. You can also ask about security and check the opening hours, so you have an idea of the times that you are able to gain access. Remember that it could take up to 3 hours to unload your belongings into your room/unit so don't arrive at the store 5 mins before they close.

Not all the rooms will be on the ground floor. Most Self Storage companies have large lifts, but also be prepared to have to carry items upstairs. They will loan you the use of barrows and sack carts.

What is the minimum amount of time I can hire?

Again this depends on the self storage companies as each will have their own policies but some will be 7 days and some monthly. But the longer you store the cheaper the facilities will become.

How much does it cost?

Unfortunately rates vary considerable so there are no set rates. The biggest factor is size and how much you require. Units are normally rented in 25sq ft, 50sq ft, 150sq ft or 200sq ft, but the bigger the size the cheaper it will be i.e. a 25sq feet unit may cost £12.00 per week whilst 50sq would be £18.00. Another factor is location; prices will vary again considerable just on this alone. Even national companies have different branch prices as each will run their own special offers etc. Have a look at our top tips for better deals and saving money.

What about Insurance?

It is always good to have the appropriate cover for your belongings. Firstly check to see if you are covered under your household insurance at the appropriate level and if not self storage companies will offer this service for a fee to you. Ideally create a full inventory of your goods not only to locate goods easily but also in case you need it for insurance purposes.

How to store items:

- Bikes, Metal Equipment and Tools can be prevented from rusting if they are to be in storage for a long time by wiping with an oily rag before storing. Your garden equipment could be cleaned before you store it to prevent corrosion. Make sure that all appliances are clean and dry and empty, wedge the doors open to let the air circulate. Make sure that freezers/fridges are completely defrosted.
- Lay down plastic sheeting on the floor of your unit. If you have a large room/unit leave a walkway either down the side or the middle so you can gain access to items if you need to.
- Place any valuables towards the rear of the room/unit and try to pack it to the ceiling by placing heavier items like drawers and wardrobes on the floor and lighter/fragile items on top. Fill all the spaces/gaps that appear with small items or soft items like bedding. When stacking boxes up high always place heavy boxes at the bottom and lighter/fragile ones on top.
- Choose your boxes wisely, always buy quality to prevent boxes from collapsing when stacked on top of each other. Modular boxes that stack together will reduce the amount of storage space as less empty space is wasted.
- Label your boxes carefully. Remember to write on the side of the boxes with contents not just the top as you do not want to unstack the boxes just to know what it in each box. Ideally place a sheet on paper on the side of the box rather than the top so when stacked you can view easily. If you want to be even more organized create box contents lists on your computer with a reference box number, this way you will be able to find items quickly by cross referencing.
- When packing it is especially important to pack your boxes correctly. Put heavy items in the bottom and add lighter items in the top. Remember to fill the box completely to avoid any of them collapsing when stacked on top of each other.

Top Tips to save money

- Shop around, first choose the depot nearest your new property but if you can travel and don't need regular access then get quotes further a field as prices do vary.
- Choose upper levels as these are often cheaper than ground level.
- Buy good quality double walled boxes that are modular in size so that you can stack higher in the unit. Where possible reduce your floor space but stacking boxes safely and filling any possible wasted space inside furniture like sideboards, drawers etc.
- If you plan to put items in for a long period see if the branch offers a discount for paying in advance. Some companies offer a 10%-8% discount if you pre-paid for a year and 5% for six months.
- Ask about discounts, individual branches have their own offers i.e. free first month, student or armed forces discounts with a valid ID or NUS card.

How much space will I need?

This is a very common question but the reality is that every body has differing amounts of belongs to store, even if they are both in the same size properties.

A Self Storage unit size is measured in square feet (a room 6 feet by 6 feet is 36 sq ft). On average the height of these rooms/units are up to 8ft tall therefore a box measuring 1ft x 1ft x 1ft would fit into the 36 sq ft room 288 times stacked 8 high.

If you need to access your items whilst in store, you will have to pack them loosely in the storage unit, leaving space to move items about or even a walk way so allow for a bigger self storage room/unit. If not you can fill all of the available space in the self storage room.