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Mudroom Mania

Some storage spaces are so gorgeous the word “mud” seems unfair. Our interior design expert offers tips for building a beautiful version of your own.

By Stephanie Horton

“I love the combination of the grey-green paint and the natural wood bench,” says Horton, who gives her take on local mudrooms. “It looks very British and all-weather, especially with the yellow rain gear. I like the use of beadboard paneling in the cubbies and the dark bronze hooks and drawer pulls. It’s a good blend of closed and open storage.”

Once drab and utilitarian, mudrooms today can be practical and pretty. How you design them is limited only by your imagination. Before you get started on yours, keep these suggestions in mind:

1. Use Durable Materials

Stone floors prevent scratching from sports equipment, and hold up no matter what shoes track in. They also make for easy cleaning in foul weather. The more kids you have, the stronger materials you should use. For the floor, I like tumbled travertine in a random rectangle pattern. Travertine is a form of limestone that isn’t slippery, so it’s safe in a wet mudroom.

2. Invest in Millwork

Custom cabinetry offers the most personalized storage for your needs, and makes use of every inch you have. A combination of long, vertical cubbies with hooks plus cabinets with doors, built-in drawers and open compartments for baskets works best. It provides the most organizational options, and ups the chance you’ll have the right space for sports gear and musical instruments.

MUDROOM BY MICHELLE HOLLAND INTERIORS, SHELburne, VT

Photographs by JANE BEILES

Home & Garden

3. Use Dark Paint

Wood-paneled walls with dark semigloss paint is very forgiving, hiding scratches and giving the mudroom a less cluttered look, since the gear recedes from view.

4. Don't Forget Electrical

Include some built-in lighting for illuminating cubbies, especially the back and bottom regions where things get lost. Also, outlets for charging devices are a huge plus.

5. Go for the Extras

Adding a blackboard or bulletin board for posting family schedules is one more way to keep your mudroom functioning as a command center. One of my clients (a sports-oriented family with four boys) even added a water fountain to hers!



"This mudroom looks super functional and tough," says Horton. "Not only does it have stone flooring, but also tiled walls for maximum durability and easy cleaning. I like the combination of covered storage (cabinets with doors) on the sides and the open bottom row for easy access. The neutral color scheme's natural materials and the dash of blue in the overhead bins is a great contrast."

"This is a happy mudroom! I like that the design is integrated into the rest of the home's décor. The pink and orange brightens up what could have been a drab space. The hot pink drawers really pop, and I love the built-in full-size mirror — it makes the corridor look wider, and provides more light. It's also convenient for a last-minute outfit check!"

TOP MUDROOM BY NEW ENGLAND COASTAL REMODELING, LLC.; TRUMBULL, CT; BOTTOM MUDROOM BY JULIE NIGHTINGALE, NIGHTINGALE DESIGN, ROWAYTON, CT; JULIENIGHTINGALEDESIGN.COM

"This mudroom is sophisticated and durable. Painting the custom millwork glossy black not only looks chic, but it's also very forgiving," says Horton. "Scuffs don't show! The individual sections keep everyone responsible for their own belongings. The black and white chevron tile, plus the red ceiling and white antler chandelier, really ups the glamour quotient. This looks more like Parisian café than mudroom!"