

CREATING A FUNCTIONAL MUDROOM

WHY DEVOTING SPACE FOR A MUDROOM MAKES SENSE

In every busy household there is a spot, that easy convenient spot, where everyone in the family dumps what they're carrying or wearing when they come in the door.

In most homes it's in the kitchen. Maybe it's at the end of the dinette table or the corner of the counter. Perhaps it's in the back hall next to the door to the garage. Backpacks, shoes, coats and shopping bags are shrugged off and dropped. Their owners forget their good intentions to pick them up later, instead coming back in haste when it's time to leave. They search the pile frantically for their stuff, and then they are out the door again.

Good design accommodates human nature instead of fighting it. This is why we need a mudroom—to provide an organized and contained space right inside the main family entrance for outerwear, backpacks, briefcases, cell phones, sporting equipment and other everyday clutter.

When designing a functional mudroom, always take into account the needs of the household. How many are in the family, including pets? Where is the primary entrance and exit? Will this room serve other purposes such as a laundry area, pantry or a family workstation area?

Consider what types of organizing systems would work best. For instance, most parents tell us their children

function better in open areas. And children are more likely to hang their coat on a hook than they are to open a closet door and pull down a hanger. Always include a shallow bench area, which is helpful for pulling off boots. Separating the space into individual cubbies means each family member gets his or her own dedicated space. Drawers or cabinet storage could be handy for storing hats, scarves and gloves.

Other features to consider are key hooks, charging stations with extra outlets for cell phones and tablets, a broom closet for cleaning supplies, built-in trash can, a utility sink, family calendar and chalkboard for notes and racks for sporting equipment.

Once the space has been laid out, consider the types of materials you want to incorporate for surfaces. Porcelain tile in a medium to dark color is a favorite of mine for the floor. It is durable, easy to clean, and if you select your pattern carefully, it's very good at camouflaging a little dirt here and there.

Also try to make sure any cabinetry is of a nice hardwood species with a durable finish. Thermofoil can also be a good choice for the budget minded. Many heavy-duty mudrooms have a tile or beadboard wainscot since these materials are a little tougher than drywall and can take more abuse.



PHOTOS COURTESY J.S. BROWN

Finally don't forget the four-footed family members. We design many of our mudrooms with pets in mind. Imagine having a space for wiping off a wet dog, housing food and water dishes, storage for pet food, maybe space for a dog crate, or a cat box. It's becoming more common to have a built-in dog shower. If that's not for you, a utility sink is helpful for cleaning muddy paws.

By NARI member Monica Miller
CKD, CBD, CR
J.S. Brown & Co.
jsbrowncompany.com

