

Snow, Rain & Mud - Oh My!

Mudrooms for Minnesota

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY KELLI WEGSCHEID

Unlike other parts of the country, here in Minnesota we actually have mud. And rain. And snow. Oh, and don't forget wind! For our climate mudrooms are not so much a luxury but a necessary part of our homes. If you have the opportunity to build new or add an addition on to your home, you may look at all the new trends in spaces that are becoming more developed with today's home design. Even if you have an existing home with limited space, you may be able to incorporate some "mudroom" types of ideas into your current space with a minimal amount of effort.

New home designs now recognize how much "stuff" accumulates when we enter our homes and attempts to find a place for it all. The key ingredient to reducing clutter in our entryways, or anywhere, is to have a designated place for it all. Mudrooms now have become quite sophisticated with cabinetry and organization. We can start to look at wall space as real estate, and then develop a plan to utilize it all.

First, address everyday needs and keep those items easy and handy. Find a spot for a bench so people can sit down, which may have shoes cleverly hidden below. Some benches have lids that lift up for glove and hat storage below. Adding a coat hook area directly above the bench keeps all of our everyday needs handy and ready to go. You may find an individual bench and coat hook pieces, or an all-in-one type of furniture piece. If you have a large family, you may consider built-in cubbies for each person that would allow hanging coats, shoes, and miscellaneous storage for each person to be kept separately to avoid confusion. Everyday use is different than seasonal or occasional use, so by keeping it open, easy, and handy we prevent coats and other items from making their way into other areas of the house. This may even be the garage/house wall where you add a rug, hooks & a bench to the garage space to keep really messy items out of the house all together.

Second, find a spot for occasional or seasonal type of clothing. These are items that may be dress coats or winter gear that you may only need on the weekends. These items do not need to be constantly underfoot taking up valuable space. Do you have an actual closet for these items to remain in year round? Is that closet too small? Homes with limited storage may result in "flipping" or changing out your seasonal needs with storage areas in other unused closets or the basement storage. Even if you have a designated entry closet, it may be an unrealistic expectation for people to hang up their everyday items every single day - hence the separate everyday space. On the same note, we don't need to look at all of our coats and shoes every time we enter the house, so having separate closed storage and open storage areas works well.

Lastly, find some "dumping" or unloading location for phones, purses, keys or gadgetry that otherwise would end up on your kitchen table. This can be a small desk space, a hall table top, or a simple cabinetry top that provides a specific location for the random items to sit. If you have room, a small office center can provide mail slots in the upper cabinetry for bills, mail or important documents



Keeping children's items at their height allows them to be self-sufficient.



Built-in features help reduce clutter while providing additional storage.

before they get lost in the shuffle. Also, having a trash can nearby for junk mail allows getting rid of unnecessary clutter before it can accumulate. If you have small children, they may appreciate a specific spot for school papers, library books or other items that are important for them to keep track of. If you have room to add only one piece of cabinetry into your current set-up, this may be it. A stock base cabinetry piece from your local retailer, with a stock countertop and a stock upper cabinet may be a great step to de-clutter your mudroom. Drawers can hold items that can be changed for the seasons - in summer the "handy" drawer could hold sunglasses, hats, and sunblock. In winter the "handy" drawer could hold mittens, winter hats or a flashlight. If you have any wall space left, this could be an area for a bulletin board, a marker board for notes, or the family calendar. Don't forget the needs of the rest of the family - can the pets have space here as well? Under countertops are a great location for food dishes and kennels.

Incorporating the laundry room, pantry and powder room off of the mudroom are ideal in today's new home designs. But, adding furniture or cabinetry storage pieces to your current space may also be an option. "Weather" new construction or creating a mudroom area in your current space, finding a spot for it all is key!



Kelli Wegscheid, Architect/Owner of Harmonious Architecture. When we moved into our home, we added simple items to our current mudroom space to accommodate children, pets, and a busy family! Although it doesn't always stay clean, it's a start!