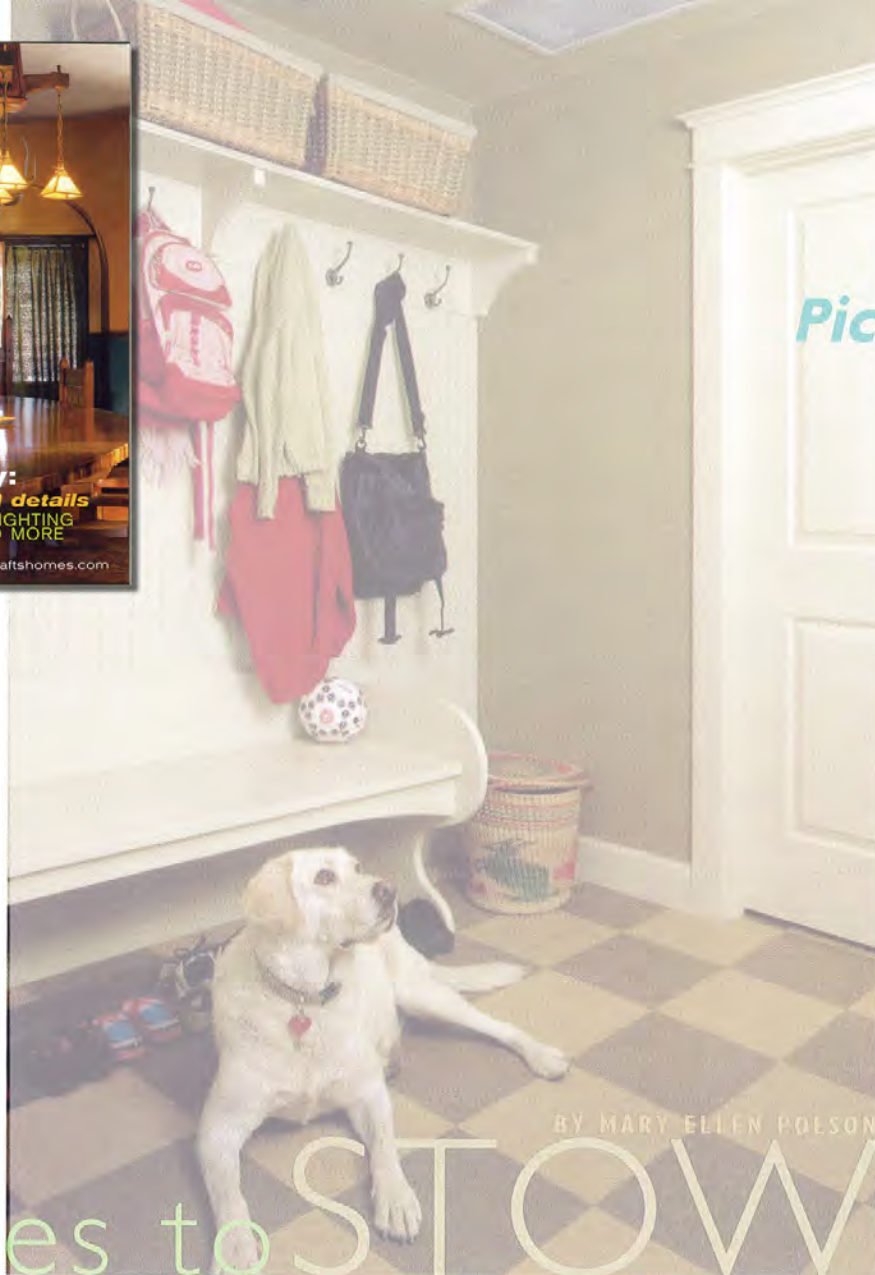




Got kids or dogs? Opt for easy-care flooring like tile or linoleum, preferably with radiant heat underneath. This mudroom makes the most of a small area with vertical storage, freeing up space to unload groceries on the bench, or dry off a wet dog on the floor.



places to STOW

How many items do you juggle when you walk in the door?

eVEN southern Californians need what New Englanders call a mudroom: a place to catch the clutter of daily life. Granted, hats and coats can go quickly into the coat closet, but what about the car keys, your cell phone, your laptop, and that bag of groceries? Not to mention hockey sticks and muddy bike shoes, the dog leash, and those catalogs that slip through your fingers as you juggle everything else.

Clearly, you need a space to stow. Mudrooms (also called drop zones or transition rooms) are the rage right now, but setting up or even

building one that will suit your family can pose a stylistic challenge in a house with period style, especially a bungalow-sized home that's already tight on space.

Not to worry. Depending on the amount of clutter you and yours generate, a successful mudroom can be as straightforward as a row of hooks mounted on a 3'-wide stretch of wall near the door (preferably over a bench or shallow table). Or it can be as elaborate as a dedicated room lined with flat-panel oak cabinets and benches, complete with an accessory

Pick Up and go

What creates clutter in the main entry to your home? Plan a niche, cubby, or hook to keep things in check.

- ▶ **Keys** A row of hooks, prominently displayed, for each family member—including the dog's leash
- ▶ **Cell phones and tech toys** Recharging station with multiple plugs; e.g., a power strip tucked into a cubby
- ▶ **Mail and catalogs** Slots for bills and letters, niches for catalogs and magazines, recycling bin for junk mail
- ▶ **Handbags, briefcases, day packs** Cubby for each family member, close to keys and rechargeable items
- ▶ **Groceries and packages** A bench or bin that doubles as storage
- ▶ **Shoes and boots** Mix of cubbies sized for footwear from ballet slippers to fireman's boots
- ▶ **Jackets, coats, and sweaters** Conventional hangers still work well for these; consider options like double rows for shorter items
- ▶ **Hats and scarves** Hang them on hooks or a rack on the back of a door; stow fragile or small items in drawers or cubbies
- ▶ **Gloves and scarves** A shallow drawer or two will keep them from getting lost in the shuffle

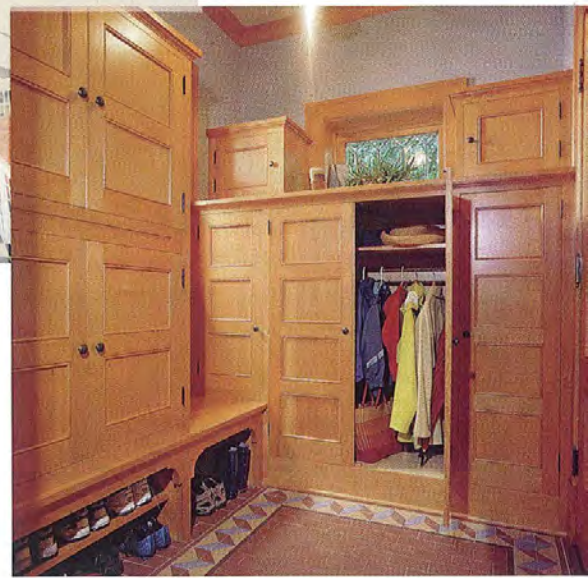
Sports gear

- ▶ **Balls (soccer, basketball, football)** Bins, benches, drawers, or a netted space in a larger cubby
- ▶ **Bats, hockey sticks, tennis rackets, etc.** Narrow vertical or horizontal bins
- ▶ **Uniforms, protective gear** Dedicated sports closet with versatile bins and niches

A GOOD
MUDROOM
SHOULD BE JUST
THE RIGHT SIZE:
NOT TOO BIG
AND NOT
TOO SMALL.



LEFT: A single wall can accommodate a double row of hooks, with room for shoes and boots underneath. **ABOVE:** Mud and laundry rooms work well in passageways, especially near garages and kitchens. **RIGHT:** A mudroom designed by architect David Heide for a 1904 Minneapolis Foursquare features paneled millwork in period-specific vertical grain Douglas fir and an encaustic tile floor.



bathroom to shower off the dog.

Ideally, a good mudroom should be just the right size: not too big and not too small. You need enough room to move around as you bundle up or bundle down, with room for children and pets to do the same, if you have them. You also want the drop zone to encourage you to put things away. Equip the space with easy-to-reach storage bins, cubbies, hooks, and hangers that will realistically accommodate your needs (see “Pick Up and Go,” p. 30).

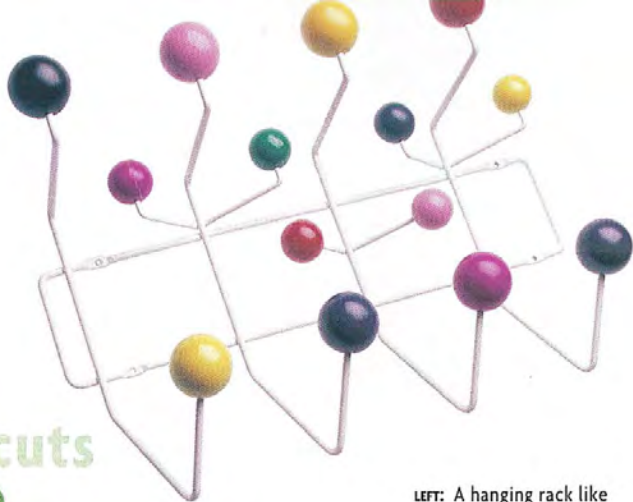
There should also be a place

to sit (to change from sport to street shoes, or dress a child). A bench is also the perfect place to drop packages and groceries while you stow coats or other items. Some family members (kids and dogs, especially) may take the term mudroom literally, so floors and surfaces should be easy to clean. Finish the floor with period-friendly tile or linoleum. A newly installed floor also offers an opportunity to add radiant heat under the floor, which will help keep moisture out of the house. Keep the mudroom at a slightly lower temperature than

indoors (55 degrees, for instance), and you will also have an energy-conserving buffer against the cold.

If a radiant floor isn't in the cards, consider installing a towel or bench radiator. The towel version is an ideal drying rack for damp coats, scarves and gloves, while the bench warms both you and your damp shoes as you strip off outer gear.

Think seasonally. One of our editors confessed that each of her sons has at least three different helmets: a couple for warm weather sports like lacrosse and bicycling,



shortcuts to web

Flooring

- **AMERICAN RESTORATION TILE** restorationtile.com *hex and pattern tile*
- **ARMSTRONG** armstrong.com *linoleum and lookalikes*
- **DOWN TO EARTH BY MEREDITH** downtoearthtile.com *unglazed ceramic floor tiles*
- **FORBO FLOORING** themarmoleumstore.com *linoleum and cork*
- **GREEN MOUNTAIN SOAPSTONE** greenmountainsoapstone.com *soapstone tile*
- **SHELDON SLATE** sheldonslate.com *slate tile*
- **TILE SOURCE** tile-source.com *encaustic floor tiles*

Built-ins and benches

- **CROWN POINT CABINETRY** crown-point.com
- **KENNEBEC COMPANY** kennebeccompany.com
- **NR HILLER DESIGNS** nrhillerdesign.com
- **MISSION WOODWORKING** missionwoodworking.com
- **RUSSELL & MACKENNA** russellmackenna.com
- **STICKLEY, L. & J.G.** stickley.com

Radiant heat

- **RADIANT FLOOR CO.** radiantcompany.com
- **RUNTAL NORTH AMERICA** runtalnorthamerica.com
- **MYSON** mysoninc.com

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LEFT: A hanging rack like the Eames Hang-It-All covers a lot of bases. RIGHT: Open cubbies and closets make it easy to stow sports gear and boots.



ABOVE: A bench radiator from Myson does double duty under a coat rack. LEFT: A kneewall bookcase offers both a visual break for the entry and a place to drop mail. RIGHT: The mudroom built-ins here are a natural extension of the kitchen cabinets. (Image courtesy The Taunton Press, *The New Bungalow Kitchen*, 2007.)





LEFT: (top) A built-in bench and hammered copper umbrella rack blend right into the woodwork in a board-and-batten-paneled foyer. (bottom) Clever and inexpensive, a chalkboard peg rack has room for notes for every day of the week. (Image courtesy The Taunton Press, *The New Bungalow Kitchen*, 2007.)



A BENCH IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO DROP PACKAGES AND GROCERIES WHILE YOU STOW COATS OR OTHER ITEMS.

and others for winter skiing. She rotates items by season, storing winter things in the attic once warm weather comes, when the hooks in her mudroom hold beach towels and wet bathing suits instead of soccer gear.

To be functional, a good mudroom should be convenient to the most frequently used entrance, whether it's the front door, a side entrance, or through the laundry room. If you don't want to see evidence of your drop zone when you walk in the door, you'll need to come up with a clever plan to conceal it.

That's exactly what Jackie Dinan and Raymond Horton did in their ca. 1902 Brooklyn townhouse, done in Moorish Revival style with Arts and Crafts touches. The couple have two school-age daughters, so a place to store books, coats, and sports

equipment was a necessity, as was a powder room on the entry level.

Working with a designer and architect, the couple had already concocted a plan for an elaborate archway to unify the two large front and back parlors. The new archway walls are at least 2 feet thick, leaving enough space for recessed shelves and drawers on one side of the opening, and—with the aid of a curved bump-out behind the wall—a concealed powder room and coat room on the other.

The compact anteroom serves as a discreet vestibule for the tiny half bath. Its curving wall holds a row of pegs at just the right height for hanging coats and backpacks, with room for shoes on the floor underneath. Although it's in the middle of the house, Jackie says, "you would never know there was a mudroom there." ■