

IN THIS NEWS LETTER, WE WILL DISCUSS...

- How to Keep the Mud Outside (or under control) When You Don't Have a Mud Room
- Media Center Makeover
- Transferring a wet bar to an Office

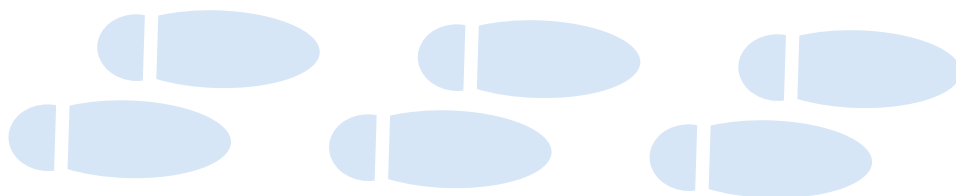
How to Keep the Mud Outside (or under control) When You Don't Have a Mud Room

A recent client of mine lives in a home built in the 1890's. It was remodeled to reflect a more modern style, meaning a more open floor plan. But , no hall closet. When you walk in the front door you are immediately in their living room, a popular home layout. With the rain in Seattle, this set up can lead to a common problem that a lot of us experience: tracking in mud, leaves and other outdoor debris. Together, we came up with a few solutions to help remedy the situation.

A Mat for all Seasons: First of all, we purchased a mat on which to wipe one's feet on when walking into the house. We chose a generic looking one, versus a Persian or Oriental rug style because the mud has a tendency to grind into the carpet. This is the mat we chose: <http://tinyurl.com/yaf2fuo>

The Shoe Zoo: Next we chose a shoe organizer to corral the masses of shoes gathering at the door. We made a "shoe spot" for each member of the family by purchasing a cabinet with larger sized baskets perfect for containing shoe clutter: <http://tinyurl.com/28rsaa> (We turned it on its side so that it was horizontal, not vertical). And these are the baskets we used: <http://tinyurl.com/yzxf17>

Getting Hooked: Finally, we put a system of attractive "flip" hooks on the wall to hold each the family member's coats: <http://tinyurl.com/yc7xbfj>. It is also handy for guests, as prior to this, coats ended up piled on the floor.



The second project we tackled was to add a makeshift "mud room." This house has an entrance leading to the basement, which is rarely used, but has a cement floor – perfect for snowy days or extra muddy ones. This was a great space for installing organizers for extra bulky coats, winter boots, and ski supplies. This is what was purchased to create a truly effective and efficient space:

- Another mat for the entry to the door.
- A shoe rack from IKEA: <http://tinyurl.com/yjh73km>
- A very simple wire rack and bar system to hang the bulky winter coats and a shelf to place the ski supplies, such as masks, gloves, etc. To create this system, you will need the following:
 - Two of these: <http://tinyurl.com/yb437x7>
 - One of these: <http://tinyurl.com/yc37llw>
 - And one of these: <http://tinyurl.com/y9upmvb>

Then you will have yourself a simple open closet system for your "mud room".



Media Center Makeover

Remotes – Use a universal remote control, such as this one, to avoid gadget clutter: This one is great <http://tinyurl.com/yfc9qzqg> because it has the following features:

- One remote to control all of your digital media
- Infrared wireless freedom up to 10 meters
- Friendly Media Center Menu (The Microsoft Media Centre Edition on- screen menus are specially for Remote Control interaction)
- Play Music Right from your remote control (Control your DVD/VCD/MP3/Audio media functions directly and easily from your remote control)
- Mouse Function: Control your cursor without a mouse

Cassette Tapes, Vinyl records, Discs -

<http://www.reclaimmedia.com/> This is a great company to use for transferring all of your tapes, records and older discs to DVDS. Just think you could listen to your favorite old children's music you haven't heard in years, or that tape you made with your sister when you were 8!

DVDs – Instead of keeping your DVDs in their cases, put them into binders like these to maximize space: <http://tinyurl.com/yg3ucel>.



VHS tapes – Transfer outdated VHS tapes to DVDs and take the VHS tapes to Half Price Books. To transfer VHS to DVD you will have to take them to a place to do so. Sometimes you can even mail them in. Here is one place that transfers them in Seattle: <http://www.seattlevideotransfer.com/> I am of course only referring to family videos, not professional videos, such as movies/films! You cannot copy those because of copyright laws. Your best bet is to sell these, or donate them at your local donation station.

Video games, consoles, & controllers – This is a great, and impressive, organizer for those of you with a media room: <http://tinyurl.com/ylr4pud>. It not only holds your video games, but consoles, such as an Xbox or your Wii, as well as controllers. If you don't have a ton of video games and controllers then this is a smart alternative: <http://tinyurl.com/y87mgml>

Transferring a wet bar to an Office

A while back I worked with a client who liked to use her kitchen countertops as her "filing system." In reality, it was a Piling System! She needed a place to put all of her paperwork, someplace highly accessible, where she could spread out all of her work.

For many reasons the kitchen wasn't an ideal place for this activity. So I suggested a creative solution - why not take out the wet bar and replace it with an organized office space? She was wary, but liked the idea of having her very own office space, away from the kids and her husband. Did I mention the wet bar had closet doors? (Perfect for putting projects Out of Sight and Out of Mind.) First we removed the cabinets, and sink. We were in luck with these tasks because she had a family member who was familiar with home improvement (he took out the sink and managed the accompanying plumbing issues.) My client took it upon herself to paint her newly claimed space. When the space was complete with freshly painted walls, my expertise came into play. I came up with a new layout for her new office space.

To keep it as cost effective as possible, I decided to go with The Container Store closet solutions. I used the Elfa wall hanging solution and built-in desk top (eliminating the need for a freestanding desk): <http://tinyurl.com/yjm6ly7>. Although the look of the supporting bars may not seem ideal for some, the

coordinating containers (below) hid them almost completely, and as an extra bonus they kept her office supplies tidy. I had her purchase open containers (without lids) for her office supplies: <http://tinyurl.com/ylyf2nwf>. These open containers were essential for her because for most people lids add an extra step to staying organized. The open container model meant she was more likely to put stuff back where it belonged. The handles on these bins were necessary for housing them on higher shelves, making pulling them down as needed much, much easier. It's often helpful to use a tag to identify what's inside each bin. Martha Stewart has many creative ways to make an attractive tag. These tag ideas are great for labeling cute bins that have no label holder: <http://tinyurl.com/yajzqlq>

Without a doubt, the most important component of a new office space is the file cabinet. This one goes well with the Elfa closet system: <http://tinyurl.com/yee5veu>. Not only does it look smart, it also keeps your papers and projects in order.

Changing her space from a wet bar to a personal home office (even though it was tiny) was an ideal solution to her paper clutter problem. It was also a nice place for her to get away. The final space was tidy and fresh, making my client's personal organizing projects a breeze.

