

In This Issue: Top 10 Code Violations

TAUNTON'S

Fine Homebuilding

Home-Storage Ideas • Skid-Steer Loaders • Timber-Frame Hybrids



Vinyl Siding the Right Way



September 2002 No. 149

U. S. \$7.99/Canada \$8.99

Home Storage

Smart designs clear the clutter from entryways, stairs, kitchens and bedrooms

BY JOANNE KELLAR BOUKNIGHT

Nothing separates a great home from a good one like plentiful, thoughtfully designed storage. Good storage not only holds our worldly goods, it also lets us live more organized lives. Just consider how much better it would be to take the time spent looking for misplaced stuff and to spend it on family.

There's certainly no single way to achieve storage Zen, but some basic guidelines can help to clear the path to good storage. The first step is always to get rid of everything you don't really need or love. This step makes room to design storage specifically for those objects you can't live without, and then some.

Ideally, storage-space design takes into account the habits of the people whose lives it will organize because what's right for one family won't necessarily be right for another. For builders and remodelers, this means talking to homeowners about their habits and priorities. For your own house, the first trick to efficient storage is to look at how you store things and list what works, what doesn't and why. Can you find your keys every morning? Can you find once-a-year decorations quickly when the time comes? Are you tripping over boots and briefcases near the front door?

A mudroom with an adjacent laundry and an extra bathroom may be the perfect antidote to a family's entryway chaos, and a walk-in closet or dressing room makes better use of space than a huge bedroom filled with furniture. And even a small pantry can allow a kitchen to function more efficiently without clutter.

Before settling on how to store your possessions, consider how often you'll use them. Daily use calls for different strategies than annual use. Car keys, newspapers, backpacks and bath towels should be within arm's reach but shouldn't clutter countertops. Seasonal clothing or holiday ornaments are dormant for months at a time; so although they should be accessible, they needn't be at hand.

Storage can be improved by the smallest of changes or by the biggest of commitments, from the addition of a few shelves to the addition of an entire mudroom, depending on the time, money, space and thought budgeted for the project. An existing home can become more efficient simply with the addition of a few hooks and pegs. Cabinets and closets can be reconfigured, and shelves can be added to unused wall space. Square footage may not be available for additional storage, but you're bound to find space somewhere that can be better designed. Even small changes can make a big difference. □

Joanne Kellar Bouknight is an author and an architect in Cos Cob, Connecticut.





Top-hinged picture frames preserve children's artwork.

Cubbies provide quick access to some items while drawers hide clutter.

Counter is a landing zone for incoming groceries and outgoing parcels.

Coming or going?
This back hall has a handy space to drop off or pick up anything. Drawers, cabinets, cubbies and a wide window shelf offer plenty of storage. Even the kids' artwork is preserved. Photo by Randy O'Rourke.

Bedrooms

Like the kitchen pantry that is required to contain ten brands each of cereal, cookies and soup, today's closet has to accommodate a colossal variety of clothing.

The heart of storage in bedrooms is the closet, be it the standard 2-ft. deep wall closet or a room-size walk-in. In either event, closet space goes a lot further if properly outfitted with shelving, hooks, rods and cubbies designed to fit the clothes that they store. (See "Outfitting a Clothes Closet," *FHB* #124, pp. 106-113.)

Drawer storage is best for small items such as lingerie, underwear, socks, swimsuits and exercise clothes. Sweaters and knit shirts can go in drawers, but they are easier to see and access on shelves. It's better to space shelves closely for folded items than to build a leaning tower of sweaters. Count and measure everything you'll be keeping and build in extra space for adding clothes.

Most clothes are best stored hanging, so the more poles the better: both single poles for coats and dresses, and double poles for shorter items. Short spans for each type of clothing work better than mixing everything on one long pole. Robes, towels, work shirts, belts and scarves work well on pegs.



Niche serves as couch or bed.

Drawers and cabinets provide lots of storage.

Store a whole bedroom in the family room. This built-in niche serves as a guest bed, kid couch and stage for kids' sleepovers. The surrounding cabinetry has plenty of storage space for games, toys and extra linens. Photo by Randy O'Rourke.