



Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

## Ideas for Installing a Mudroom

A mudroom serves as a transitional space between the outdoors and your home's interior, helping to keep your living areas clean and organized. Here are some ideas to consider:



### 1 Benefits of a Mudroom

- **Organization:** Provides designated storage for shoes, coats and bags.
- **Cleanliness:** Helps contain dirt and moisture, protecting your floors.
- **Functionality:** Can include laundry facilities or pet washing stations.

### 2 Creative Ideas

- **Built-In Seating:** Add benches with storage underneath for convenience.
- **Hooks and Racks:** Install for hanging coats, hats and bags.
- **Message Boards:** Include chalkboards or corkboards for family notes and reminders.

### 3 Design Considerations

- **Location:** Commonly situated near entrances, such as the back door or garage.
- **Storage Solutions:** Incorporate lockers, cubbies or cabinets for efficient organization.
- **Durable Materials:** Use water-resistant flooring and easy-to-clean surfaces.

### 4 Tips for Success

- **Personalize:** Tailor the space to your family's needs and lifestyle.
- **Maximize Space:** Utilize vertical storage to make the most of limited areas.
- **Lighting:** Ensure adequate lighting for functionality and ambiance.

Implementing a well-designed mudroom can enhance your home's organization and cleanliness, making daily routines more efficient.



## Everything You Didn't Know—But Should—About Permits

Building permits are more than bureaucratic paperwork—they ensure safety, legality and quality in construction projects. Here's what you need to know:



### Why Permits Matter

Permits are crucial for ensuring your project meets local building codes. They help guarantee safety compliance, which protects everyone in the home. They also offer legal protection, as unpermitted work can result in fines or complications when trying to sell your property. Additionally, insurance policies may not cover damage that stems from unpermitted work, which could lead to costly repairs down the road.

### When You Need a Permit

Permits are typically required for structural changes, such as removing or adding walls, expanding rooms or modifying load-bearing elements. You'll also need one for system modifications, including changes to electrical, plumbing or HVAC setups. Even seemingly simple projects like building a deck, installing a fence or taking on significant landscaping often require permits. Always check with your local building department before beginning any work.

### Common Misconceptions

- **"It's Just a Small Project":** Even minor renovations can require permits.

- **"Contractors Handle It":** Always verify that your contractor has obtained the necessary permits.
- **"No One Will Notice":** Unpermitted work can be discovered during inspections or appraisals.

### Tips for Navigating Permits

- **Consult Local Authorities:** Regulations vary; always check with your local building department.
- **Keep Records:** Maintain copies of all permits and approvals.
- **Plan Ahead:** Permit approval can take time; factor this into your project timeline.

Understanding and obtaining the proper permits is crucial for a successful and compliant construction project.



## Remodeling Homes for Those with Physical Disabilities

Adapting a home to accommodate physical disabilities enhances accessibility, safety and independence. Here's how to approach such a remodel:

### Importance of Accessibility

- **Safety:** Reduces the risk of accidents and injuries.
- **Independence:** Enables individuals to perform daily tasks without assistance.
- **Comfort:** Creates a more inclusive and livable environment.

### Key Modifications

- **Entrances:** Install ramps and widen doorways for wheelchair access.
- **Bathrooms:** Incorporate grab bars, roll-in showers and adjustable-height sinks.
- **Kitchens:** Lower countertops and ensure appliances are accessible.

### Financial Assistance

- **Grants and Loans:** Explore programs like the FHA's 203(k) Rehabilitation Mortgage for funding.
- **Nonprofits:** Organizations such as Rebuilding Together offer assistance for home modifications.

### Tips for Remodeling

- **Consult Professionals:** Work with contractors experienced in accessible design.
- **Plan for the Future:** Consider potential changes in mobility or health needs.

By thoughtfully remodeling a home, you can create a safe and accommodating space that supports the needs of those with physical disabilities.

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