



NEAT FREAK NEWS: October 2006

I'm going to let you in on one of my organizational fantasies. I dream of having a mudroom in my home complete with built-in cubbies for each member of my family to hang coats, backpacks, purses, briefcases, hats, lunchboxes, and sports equipment. My fantasy also includes a spot for muddy shoes and wall mounted paper storage for each family member to deposit their notices and artwork from school, to-be-signed papers, the mail, and all other items deemed important enough to escape the recycling bin.

However, my reality is that I have a faux leather bin from Target for backpacks and purses, an oversized table that acts as catchall for paper, keys, phones, mail, library books, gum rappers, etc., and a line of dirty shoes sitting next to my front door. Even an organizer doesn't always have the perfect system!

If you're like me, your entryway may need a mini-maker. If you're living out my fantasy, then just keep that to yourself! Here are a few quick tips for taming the stuff that comes in with us from the outside world so your foyer can return to the inviting, clutter-free entryway it was always meant to be.

1. Introduce the members of your household to your coat closet, and encourage them to use it. Even young children can hang their coats on hooks at eye level, or you can purchase a closet rod extender so they can independently put away their things.
2. Use a cloth or plastic shoe bag and attach it to the inside of your coat closet door to store hats, gloves, mittens and chapstick in winter, or sunscreen, goggles, sunhats and sunglasses in the summer.
3. Have an "Inbox" for each member of your family. Routinely (as in everyday) empty backpacks, purses and briefcases, ditch what you don't need, copy dates into your calendar and phone numbers into your phone list, and sort paper into each person's inbox for matters that need to be taken care of later.
4. Keep stuff off the floor. Install attractive, sturdy hooks for hanging backpacks and purses. Use baskets or a shoe rack to store shoes and encourage everyone to remove their shoes upon entering your home (your carpet will thank you!).
5. Create an "out" bin or bag that you can grab and take with you to the car containing items such as library books and videos to return, dry cleaning to be dropped off, or purchases or borrowed items to return.

Unless we win the lottery, I'll be living without my mudroom for a long time. But a few quick, inexpensive organizational items and a little "maintenance" effort (aka nagging!) can go a long way!

Need help organizing your own entryway or any other chaos-filled space in your home or office? Contact me at perri@neat-freak.com!