

Winter Wear Organization Ideas

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Hats and gloves and scarves – oh my! Keep the cool weather items organized and easy to grab with these easy tips.

Two matching gloves and a hat that fits. That doesn't seem like too much to ask for, does it? But, the reality is, as soon as the cold weather hits, and the kids are in and out and dumping and scattering their gear when they enter the house, that simple request often becomes a lofty goal for busy, and sometimes frazzled, parents of young children. To help keep our mudrooms, or the lack thereof, sorted and manageable, three area professional organizers who are also parents of young children have shared their best tips for busy families.

Meredith Gross-Holstein of Clothing Racks to Dresser Drawers, a self-described “Monica” from Friends, has made good organization a life-long habit.

“I practice what I preach because if I don't, I can't help anybody else,” she says.

To keep track of easily misplaced gloves and hats, she recommends each child have his own storage drawer or basket just inside the main entry door, whether in a mudroom or not, where, upon entering, he will place his items immediately, before doing anything else.

She says it takes some time for children to develop the habit, but it is worth the effort.

And to make sure items placed inside the drawers are the correct sizes. Ideally you have done this by now so by the time the weather changes, you're all set and have time to purchase larger sizes or replacements if necessary. If you haven't — you know what you're doing tonight!

Keeping these items sorted also makes donating or consigning the unneeded items that much easier, she says.

A second tip Holstein gives is to keep a basket by the entry door specifically for wet items. Soggy gloves, hats, and coats can go directly in the basket and be transported easily to the dryer and without creating a slippery trail to the laundry room.

Darla DeMorrow of HeartWork Organizing says it is most important to first have a plan for organizing your entry space. It's necessary to determine the space's purpose and stick to that rather than having the mudroom become a catch-all for random items, she says.

Also, create the necessary organization with cubbies or storage benches so that each member of the family can use it.

“You need to make sure you change the space as the family changes,” she says.

Even if your mudroom is less than three feet of space in your kitchen, like hers is, you can still have a row of hooks at a child-appropriate level, a couple baskets for gear, and a tray for boots, she says.

And as to gloves and hats, she recommends keeping only the one pair or item the child wears regularly within reach. She stashes extras elsewhere so they don't get misused.

"There's a definite balance between having enough and having too much out," she says.

DeMorrow describes herself as "that mom" who stands, arms crossed, at the entryway waiting for her kids to sort their items into their proper places before moving on to any other activity.

"Stuff builds up [by the door], but if you make the time and make it a habit and everyone pitches in, it can take only 5 minutes a day to stay organized," she says. "Since 2 years old, my kids have been able to get their coats and shoes in the correct general space."

Annie Kilbride of Life Simplified, loves to tackle the organizational challenge older homes without huge closets present.

"Use as much vertical space as possible," she says.

She looks for wall space behind doors for hooks, or even uses backs of doors to hang coats and backpacks. Also, using the area under furniture to store items in an appropriate box can help solve the problem of very little space. Storage ottomans can double for seating and winter gear collection.

Kilbride says to keep only the pairs of shoes you absolutely need by the door, providing more space for a hat and glove basket.

Photo courtesy HeartWork Organizing.