

i did it!

Behind the doors of a hall closet, a **mini mudroom** was waiting to emerge. All it took was a DIYer determined to get her family on an organizational track.



It took all of 30 days after moving into her suburban Dallas home and watching the daily stuff pile up for Jessica Nickerson to target a closet near her garage as the solution. After removing the doors, Jessica saw the potential of the 3-foot-deep space; it instantly seemed more like a room. "There's no rule that a closet has to stay a closet," she says. "Your home has to work for you."

The closet became a mudroom when she installed a bench and bookcases to resemble built-ins. Now Jessica and her husband can always find keys and loose change, and their two girls know where bike helmets and backpacks belong. "It's nice to have a space where there are clear-cut expectations about where things go. My life feels more managed now."



WHAT SHE DID

Easy access topped the must-have list for this mudroom, where cubbies provide open storage. But there's more to it than function. "The fact that it's also beautiful helps us take pride in it and want to put things away," Jessica says.



MEET JESSICA

This interior stylist showcases her projects on her blog, *House Homemade*.

WHY I DIY

"To get the look for less. My husband and I also love it when we have a project we can do together."

BEST DIY SKILL

"Courage."

REMEDY FOR A CREATIVE RUT

"I either browse Pinterest and forge on—I'm kind of impatient—or I take a step back and wait until the right idea comes along."

BEST WAY TO SPEND \$50

"On something that gives you 'heart eyes.' Any amount of money is poorly spent if it isn't a necessity or if you're not absolutely in love with it."

EAGER TO LEARN

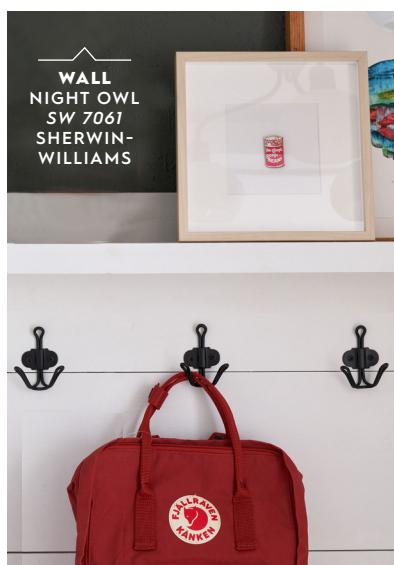
"Tiling. I've done a backsplash with mosaic tiles but I've never done a floor or used a wet saw." ■

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» STRIPS OF FELT HOT-GLUED TO THE CRATE BOTTOMS HELP THEM SLIDE SMOOTHLY.



1 SHORTCUT A BUILT-IN

Jessica installed a 15½-inch-tall TV stand as a bench and two slim bookcases (all IKEA) for side cubbies. The bench is anchored to the wall and supported by hidden wood legs so appears to float. Jessica visually connected the three units with 9½-inch plywood planks that mimic shiplap.

2 STENCIL THE FLOOR

For a low-cost update, Jessica ripped up old carpet and stenciled the concrete floor. She used sample-size containers of paint in three shades of gray and a geometric stencil (Tumbling Blocks Stencil, \$55; royaldesignstudio.com). To seal the design, Jessica rolled on polyurethane.

3 RETROFIT BINS

Rather than filling the shelves with loose shoes, Jessica opted to hide them inside fabric cubes. The fronts had grommets in shiny metal that didn't fit her scheme, so she fashioned new handles: She cut a \$1 thrift store belt into strips and hot-glued them to the backs of the bins.

4 FINISH THE SCHEME

A picture ledge made from scrap plywood shows off decorative items. A 1×2 lip secures the artwork, including a left-behind magnet Jessica framed after finding it while demoing the closet. The dark gray upper wall sets off the white built-ins and balances the bins.