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## A tidy foyer makes a good first impression

BY MATTHEW CHIMENTO • COURIER-POST STAFF • AUGUST 22, 2009

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The opening area of any home -- where everyone throws their keys, kicks off a pair of sneakers and air dries a soaked umbrella -- is often an afterthought.



Any home's entryway can be brought to order with the Windham Storage bench or Ten Degree Coat Tree from Crate & Barrel. Target's Hall Tree and Storage Bench can also keep things in their place.

It hardly even has a proper name: Is it a foyer? A mudroom?

Target modeled an entire line of products for the "entryway," and when is Target ever wrong?

Name games aside, the entrance to a house is the area where guests make their initial judgments, where the outside world collides with private life in the form of winter jackets left around long after the last snowfall, or muddy prints tracked in on work boots.

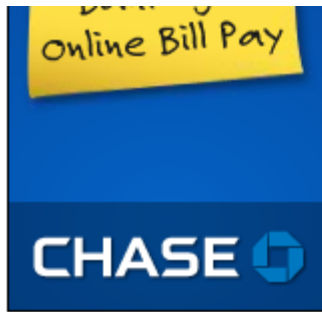
"It's the easy dumping zone and being organized is something that can get really difficult," says Ellen Faye, an expert in clutter control. Faye is an organizer and organizing coach who has many

different clients in the South Jersey area, all with different needs - some people run businesses out of their homes and need to reinforce a professional atmosphere, while others are just looking to keep things tidy.

"You want to have things in order so that coming into your house and dropping your keys can be on auto pilot," Faye explains.

"The day-to-day stuff that you're using all the time, you're going to naturally put down when you walk into the house. To try and stop that just wouldn't be productive."

Faye concedes fighting the incoming wave of backpacks, sandals and coats is a losing battle, but she draws a line in the sand when it comes to excess.



"It's the things that you hardly ever use that sort of hang out in that zone and become problematic," she advises. "You use 80 percent of your things 20 percent of the time and 20 percent of your things 80 percent of the time. The 20 percent of things that you're using regularly should stay in that foyer area."

Faye believes in bending but not breaking rules, acknowledging there often isn't a more logical place to store a winter coat, so it ends up glued to a coat rack. With this in mind, a little bit of maintenance can go a long way.

"When it's too full that you can't find the things that you're using all the time, take 10 minutes to go hang up all the extra coats," she says.

"Say to yourself, 'I only need one umbrella here; I'll go put the other one in a closet.'"

Ingrid Trotman, of Step Above Organizing Services, a company based out of Hamilton Township, identifies the general lack of space in a foyer as a chief concern for anyone attempting to tidy up.

"Most foyers are not very big," she says. "When people come in the home, they want to drop everything right away. Unless you have an area big enough to accommodate all the stuff you're bringing into the house, it's going to get messy."

Trotman works in many homes overwhelmed by what she considers the biggest clutter offenders: pocketbooks, coats, shoes, keys, pieces of mail. So she tries to cut corners wherever she can.

"In the entryway I also say less is more," she adds. "A hutch is definitely good as long as it doesn't have too many drawers, otherwise people will be encouraged to bring in even more stuff. When you have too many baskets and buckets, it invites the person to keep filling them."

"I recommend a mini table with one or two drawers underneath," she adds. "If you don't have room for a coat rack you can install hooks."

The Container Store, Wal-Mart, Target, and Pier 1 Imports are all places to find function and aesthetic in a bench, cabinet or shoe caddy. Crate & Barrel, with a location at the Cherry Hill Mall, provides many options, including an entrance cabinet ideal for sustaining order.

"The most important thing is that everyone has a place to put their mittens, gloves, hats," says Bette Kahn, a Crate & Barrel rep. "You want to find a place to put things so that they're out of sight."

"Get a system in place that works for you," advises Trotman. "If you have structure it will stay tidy. (Making a home messy) is a habit that needs to be changed and it starts with having an organized entryway."

"Establish that system and then work it every day."



Ellen Faye, CPO® is founder and Principal of Ellen Faye Organization™ (formerly Straighten-UP!), a Professional Organizing, Coaching, and Consulting firm located in Southern New Jersey since 2001. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and has trained under Denslow Brown in the highly acclaimed Certified Coach Organizer Program. Her passion is helping clients identify their goals and find the balance and skills to reach them through organization.

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