

kitchen chronicles

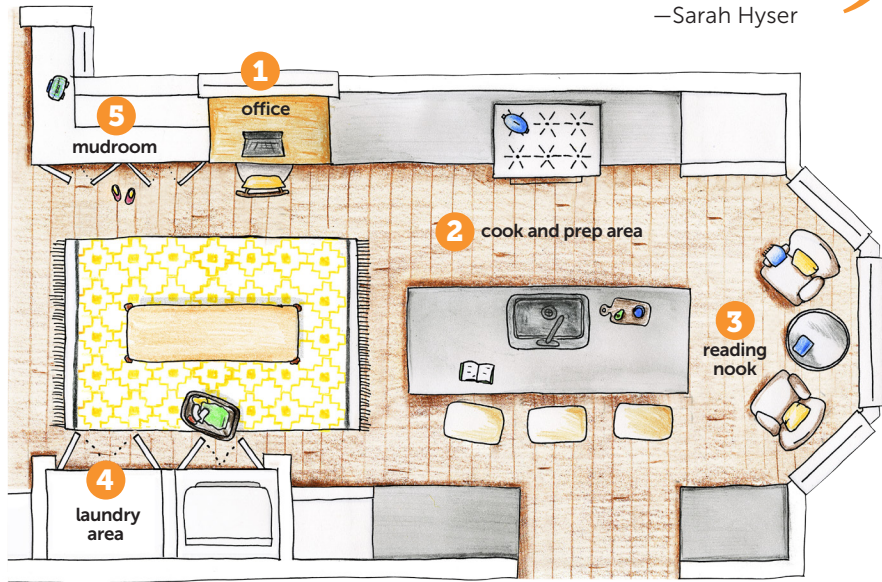


this kitchen does **more than cook**

It organizes, helps with the laundry, and has office space, too.
And it did wonders to restore this Georgia family's sanity.

“The kitchen was designed with real life in mind.”

—Sarah Hyser



Like plenty of families with full throttle lives, Sarah and Steve Hyser needed the kitchen in their 1980 Federal-style home in Atlanta to handle more than just meals—a lot more. With two busy daughters—Molly, 12, and Meg, 8, who are constantly racing off to gymnastics, soccer, or ukulele lessons—and Sarah’s position as PTA president, the room needed to be a multitasking dynamo. A to-the-studs gut renovation in 2012 overseen by local design firm TerraCotta Properties delivered exactly that, transforming the once cramped area into a hardworking combination of cook space, mudroom, laundry center, reading nook, dining spot, and office. Now twice its former size (knocking down the wall to the adjoining dining room enlarged it to 260 square feet), the space is clean-lined and storage-smart—and sees action nearly round the clock. “If we’re at home and not sleeping, we’re in the kitchen,” says Sarah. “It’s been a total life changer. I still walk in every day and love it.”

1 office

The built-in three-drawer desk is topped with an IKEA butcher block—it was treated with tung oil to bring out the grain and make the wood water-repellent—and is Sarah’s go-to spot for doing paperwork. With no curtains or blinds on the windows, “there’s great natural light,” she says. The linen-covered corkboard keeps VIP papers front and center.



These globe pendants were just \$118 each at Lowe’s.

Open shelves store everyday dishware.

2 cook and prep area

Everything from after-school snacks to feed-a-crowd buffets is dished up at the 7-foot-by-3½-foot island, which houses a sink, a dishwasher, and trash and recycling bins. The dark gray paint color on the island’s base (Deep River by Benjamin Moore) echoes the darker speckles in the 1½-inch-thick granite countertop. Sarah found the linen-covered backless barstools with nailhead trim at Pottery Barn.

3 reading nook

Two compact wingback chairs, lucky antiques shop finds, are the perfect size for the bay window’s nook. Sarah had the pair reupholstered in a graphic dotted fabric (Strands by Waverly), teamed them with a Ballard Designs table, and created her favorite spot in the house. “This is my happy place,” she says. “I have coffee and use my iPad here.”



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4 laundry area

In the old kitchen, a side-by-side washer and dryer were shoehorned into an afterthought of a closet. With the new, more accessible layout, a stacked unit is incorporated into an entire wall of cabinets and concealed behind perforated metal doors. Laundry sorting happens on the long, low bench. "I just line up the clothes on it," Sarah says. An adjacent cabinet, with adjustable shelves for cleaning supplies, has a rod for hanging clothes and an outlet for plugging in an iron.



All the walls and cabinets are painted the same color (Gray Owl by Benjamin Moore).



5 mudroom

Even on super-rushed mornings, the family's routine is less stressful thanks to efficient storage by the back door. Inside the locker-inspired cabinets, which are fronted with air-circulating metal mesh to thwart odors, are hooks for the girls' coats and backpacks, and catchall bins for sports equipment. Shoes can be grabbed fast from the deep drawers, which also stow toys and leashes for Australian shepherd Huck, who has his own customized drawer with drop-in kibble and water bowls. The wool rug is from IKEA.

FOR SHOPPING SOURCES, SEE PAGE 174.