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# Space Stations

This family didn't need a bigger kitchen, just a smarter one. A fresh take on assigning space made it happen.

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The only thing that remains from the former kitchen is one well-disguised column, which now anchors the half-wall separating the kitchen, *this photo*, from the mudroom, *below right*. Organizing the mudroom required only two shelves, a few bins, and an assortment of hooks. Daughters Natalie and Frannie each have a bin where they toss their shoes when they get home.



Like a time capsule from the early 1980s, Doug and Tessa Fleming's Seattle kitchen featured once-popular, now outdated elements, including an arched window, decorative columns, and a rounded island. After living with the space for more than 10 years, Doug and Tessa were ready to remake it to meet the needs of their family. "We wanted the kitchen to feel more like a room—a place you could really live in, a room for more than cooking," Tessa says.

The Flemings worked with a design team to carve the room into five distinct stations—a mudroom, office, sitting area, pantry, and kitchen—that are open yet delineated. They raised the ceiling in the kitchen and added clerestory windows for extra light and airiness. The reworked floor plan uses cabinetry as a half-wall to separate the kitchen from the mudroom and entrance. A separate pantry tucked into its own little room adds hardworking storage solutions.







The sitting area, left, provides a comfy spot near the kitchen—that's not underfoot. The fireplace is finished with matte soapstone.

When the design team first visited the Flemings' kitchen, they noticed piles of papers taking up valuable counter space. The solution: a dedicated place for bill-paying, homework, and projects in a corner, below. Each family member has a basket to keep the desk tidy.

To get the kitchen she wanted, Tessa knew she had to let go of rarely used things—including her wedding crystal. The payoff for eliminating upper cabinets: more windows.

A few special features bring together the entire space. Marble counters add warmth and a sense of old-house history. Enamel barn lights and oil-rubbed bronze hardware provide contrast and character. Upholstered chairs give the family a place to plop down in what's become a mini living room.

"At one time, I thought our whole house needed to be remodeled," Tessa says. "But what I realized is the kitchen is the epicenter of our home, and when that's tricked out, the whole house functions better." ■

