

Fit for a Family

BOLD COLORS, SMART STORAGE, AND PLENTY OF WINDOWS TURN A DULL VERMONT BASEMENT INTO A FAVORITE GATHERING PLACE.

The basement is often a neglected afterthought, a dumping ground for too-small clothing, holiday decorations, and discarded toys. Case in point: The lower level of Toni and Bob Monsey's house was devoid of sunlight, stacked tall with boxes, and in serious need of a makeover. "It was pretty blah—the view was of insulation," Toni says. "We had been using an upstairs guest room and study as a play room, but we wanted to carve out a spot for our kids to have fun in and run around in."

The Monseys settled on three rough goals for their L-shape basement space: a play spot, a sitting nook, and a workout area. Working with Peregrine Design/Build

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THIS PHOTO: A wood-burning stove creates cozy ambiance in Toni and Bob Monsey's new basement sitting room. Colorful storage cubbies add a cheerful touch. OPPOSITE: Part of the basement renovation included a revamp of the staircase, which is trimmed to match details in the rest of the house.



A wide-open floor plan gives the Monsey family plenty of room to hang out. Cubes of bookshelves mark the transition from play space to sitting nook.

BASEMENT FLOORING

Rick Vaillancourt of Peregrine Design/Build in South Burlington, Vermont, says there are a few ways to ensure your basement floor stays dry and warm in winter and cool in summer.

✦ **Resolve any moisture problems first.** Before you select flooring, "you have to make sure you have a dry basement," Vaillancourt says.

✦ **Isolate the slab.** A foam-rubber pad is typically used to separate carpet from a slab foundation, while an isolation membrane is better for hardwood. Or, you could use a subfloor panel system, which helps control moisture and heat.

✦ **Choose a durable flooring material.** For their basement, Toni and Bob Monsey chose a yellow birch engineered wood floor with layers of plywood topped by a veneer. It's designed to withstand the temperature extremes of the Northeastern climate. Additional products suitable for a basement include genuine linoleum, stained or tinted concrete, and tile with radiant heat.



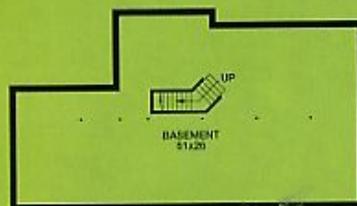
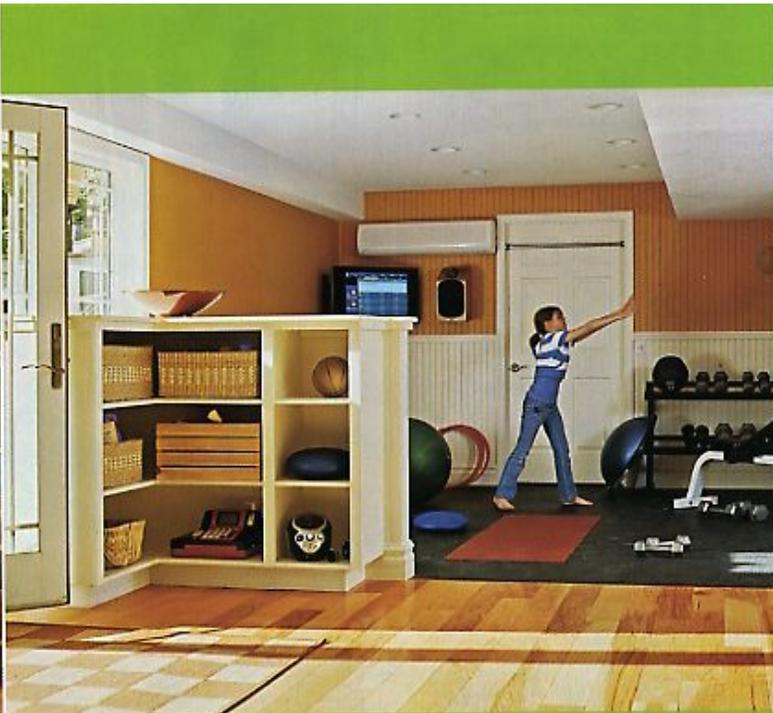
of South Burlington, Vermont, Toni and Bob developed a plan to open the basement to the outdoors by excavating 5 feet out of the downward-sloping backyard.

Light bounces around the new walkout space, complete with double doors, a row of windows, and colorful storage. Knee walls and various bright paint colors on mixed wall finishes—drywall and beaded board—roughly demarcate the three separate areas without closing them off from one another.

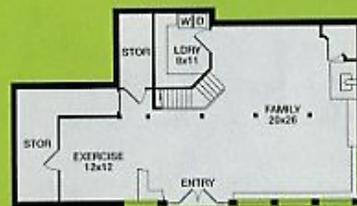
Toni and Bob requested lots of bookcases, some open and some closed, to give their 8-year-old son and 10-year-old daughter easy access to often-used toys while allowing rarely used items to be tucked away. Bright yellow, green, and red paints pop at the backs of the cubes, spicing up what could have been a swath of boring shelves, says Rick Vaillancourt, production manager for Peregrine Design/Build. Behind the stairs, a pantry area provides more closed storage.

The Monseys couldn't be happier with the results. "It's going to be a great space to grow with the kids," Toni says.

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BEFORE



AFTER

CHANGE

THE CHANGE

A dreary basement is transformed into a sun-filled recreation room with a renovation that adds storage and space for play and exercise.

WHAT IT TOOK

- ✦ Excavating 5 feet to create a walkout with new doors and windows.
- ✦ Revamping the staircase to the basement with details that tie in with the rest of the home.
- ✦ Retaining two structural supports but updating them with trim to match new bookcases.
- ✦ Upgrading and enhancing the flooring to maintain a comfortable, year-round space.
- ✦ Adding storage for toys, books, games, and other items.

ABOVE: After excavating 5 feet out of the backyard to create a walkout, Peregrine Design/Build installed a set of double doors and windows, with details that match the rest of the home.

ABOVE RIGHT: A rubber floor, similar to those found in gymsnasiums, protects the workout area. Beaded board covers the wall.

B For more information on basements, go to RemodelingCenter.com/Remodel