

Frequently Asked Questions About Remodeling

Why remodel?

Remodeling your home can modernize the style, make it more comfortable, improve energy-efficiency and home functionality, increase the value of your home, and help with upkeep and maintenance. Remodeling is a sure investment in your home to ensure longevity, usefulness, and home value.

When is it time to remodel?

Perhaps it was that moment when you realized that avocado green and harvest gold are no longer the "in" colors for today's trendy kitchens. Or maybe you had an epiphany one day as you stood in line to use your own bathroom. Whatever the impetus, the thought has crossed your mind: Maybe it's time to remodel . . .

If you decide to follow through on that thought, you'll join millions of others who decide to remodel their homes each year. The reasons for remodeling are as varied as the projects we undertake. Some of these include:

- Adding more space.
 - Upgrading cabinets, counters, appliances, and fixtures.
 - Creating a floor plan that's customized for your lifestyle.
 - Improving energy efficiency with new windows, doors, insulation, and climate control systems.
 - Increasing the resale value of your home.

What are some remodeling ideas?

Before you head too far down the remodeling path, it's a good idea to think through your wants and needs:

- Decide what changes you want to make.
 - Ask yourself and other family members what you like and dislike about the house, then create a prioritized list.
 - Look at magazines and collect pictures of what you like.
 - Think about traffic patterns, furniture placement, colors, lighting, and how you want to use the remodeled space now and in the future.

How do I plan a remodel?

The first step is to develop an idea of what you want to do. Write a prioritized list of your needs and wants. Look at magazines and Web sites and collect pictures of what you like. The more clearly you can envision the project and describe it on paper, the better prepared you'll be in making your decision.

Think about traffic patterns, furniture size and placement, colors, lighting and how you expect to use the remodeled space. If your decision to remodel involves creating better access for someone with limited mobility, you may want to consider contacting a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist.

Figure out how much money you have to spend on the remodeling job, furnishings, landscaping or any other cost you might incur.

If you've decided you want to hire a remodeler, learn how to choose a professional (see www.rem council.com), avoid contractor fraud, and make your dream home reality.

How do I pay for a remodel?

One of the most important considerations for your home improvement project is financing. After all, the project will go nowhere if you can't pay for it.

Fortunately, there are several options that can provide the dollars you need. Four of the most common are a home improvement loan, a home equity line of credit, a home equity loan (second mortgage), and a cash-out refinancing of your current mortgage. However, the simplest method of financing is cash.

How do I find a professional remodeler?

When you hire a remodeler, you are buying a service rather than a product. The quality of service the remodeler provides will determine the quality of the finished product and your satisfaction with the result. To ensure your satisfaction, make sure you hire a qualified, professional remodeler.

Look at the How to Hire a Professional Remodeler resource page for tips, questions to ask potential remodelers, and qualities to look for in a remodeler. Visit the Consumer section of www.remouncil.com to see a list of local, professional remodelers in the Columbia area.

What should I expect during the remodel?

While remodeling can be an exciting process, it can also present unexpected challenges. Many problems can be avoided by planning ahead.