

Treat yourself to a new kitchen

A kitchen renovation can make an exciting transformation to your home. A well designed kitchen will give you enjoyment and functionality for many years. Also, if you are looking for a good return on your investment, kitchens and bathrooms continue to top the list of home improvements that can potentially increase the value of your home by at least the amount you invest or more.

Where to begin?

Start out by visiting building suppliers, retail outlets and kitchen showrooms to find out what's available and get an idea of prices. Depending on how extensive your renovation plans, it's also wise to talk with a professional renovation contractor to get a clear idea of the work involved. When it comes to any home improvement project, especially a kitchen project, planning is key.

What are your objectives?

Ask yourself some simple questions like: What am I hoping to accomplish? Do I need more space for storage or work space? Do I just want to brighten things up or update the look of my kitchen? Do I want better traffic flow? A nice breakfast area? What don't I like about my existing kitchen? Answering these questions will help you and your contractor determine your needs and wants.

Bigger is not necessarily better

Do you really need a larger work area or could your existing space be used more efficiently? Often older kitchens are poorly laid out with lots of wasted space. Today's kitchens are designed to make the most effective use of cupboards, counters and shelving. If you do need a larger room, is it possible to relocate a small bathroom or closet to another area of your home? Or would bigger windows help open up the kitchen?

Do you need a designer?

Sometimes it is difficult for a homeowner to see beyond what you have. You may not be able to visualize the possibilities. A kitchen designer may be able to provide you with ideas and suggest things you may never have thought of.

How long will it take?

A typical kitchen renovation involves three stages: preparing the room, installing cabinets and counter tops, and completing the job including tiles, floor cover, trim, lighting etc. Whether you are doing the work yourself or having a renovator take care of it for you, it's a good idea to create a work schedule and plan to be without your kitchen for a few weeks or longer depending on the extent of your project. Most homeowners will set up a temporary kitchen in another area of the home during renovations.

Plan for success

Any home renovation project will be somewhat disruptive, but careful planning before you begin will keep the chaos to a minimum. Experienced renovators suggest you don't make a single purchase until you have decided on everything from the style and colour

scheme to the size and scope of your project. Get samples from suppliers and review everything together to make sure it matches and coordinates for the look you want to achieve.

Finally, when you embark on your new kitchen project, take your time. You will be using your kitchen every day for years and years. Do your homework, consult with professionals and get it right!