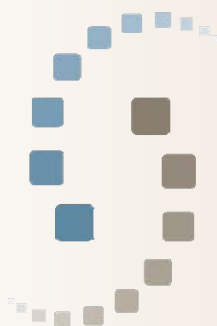


KITCHEN



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Budget Friendly Remodeling Tips

The National Association of the Remodeling Industry has put the following list of ideas together to help the budget conscious home owner find inexpensive ways to update their home.

Build your New Cabinets Around Existing Appliances and Major Fixtures

If at all possible, reuse your existing appliances and build your new cabinets around them. This could save you anywhere from \$1,500 to \$5,000 easily. However, be aware that appliances, like anything electrical, are sensitive to change and may develop problems if they are moved. Should you decide to avoid potential appliance "burn-out" and purchase new appliances, choose energy conscious models for a reduction in your utility bills.

Maintain the present location of major fixtures, appliances and utilities relative to the plumbing, gas and electrical outlets. This could even apply to the location of the telephone. Moving plumbing, wiring and jacks can be extremely expensive.

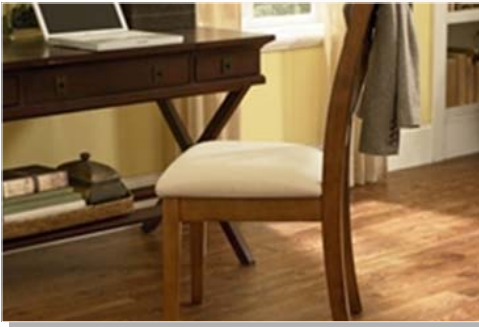
Use Caution When Selecting Faucets



The faucet can be a costly item. The least expensive selection is chrome. Even a high-end chrome faucet is considerably less than a mid-range brass or porcelain version. A standard two-handle faucet generally costs less than single handle. Faucets and handles are sold separately, so you may want to choose a chrome faucet with brass or porcelain handles for a different look. Faucet caution: The price variances in faucets reflect the various internal and external features. Always choose a faucet with replaceable internal parts. You won't want to have to replace the entire faucet if it breaks – it's simply not cost-effective.

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Flooring Options to Consider



Good floor covering is important. It ties one room to another and provides visual consistency. Familiarize yourself with the prices of the various flooring materials to make the best decision for your home. To get you started, vinyl or laminate flooring is less expensive than wood, tile or slate.

Use the existing floor covering if it is still in good condition. If the kitchen has old vinyl flooring, there may be a hardwood floor underneath that could be sanded and refinished, avoiding the need for a new floor entirely.

If you currently have a vinyl floor covering and wish to update with a newer version, you can install synthetic floor leveler material over the existing vinyl floor and lay the new vinyl flooring on top, rather than tearing the old flooring off to install the new.

Give Careful Consideration When Selecting Cabinets

Consider your cabinet options carefully. Those choices will drive the overall price. You can add some options at a later date to defray some of the initial cost. Some that are easy to add include spice racks, roll-out trays and trash pullouts. However, if you decide to wait, make certain that the option you want will be available and can be added after installation. Note of caution: Waiting will cost you more in the long run. Adding new cabinets often requires installing a new floor. Refacing your existing cabinets is a major savings in any kitchen remodel.

Go with a simple design in the kitchen employing single height wall cabinets, blind corner cabinets rather than those with Lazy Susans, and other standard options. Watch your upgrades.

Use standard cabinetry instead of custom cabinets, or use a combination of the two if they are compatible.

Choose cabinets that can be operated without the addition of hardware (those that are finger-pulled).

Install cabinets without soffits to decrease the labor cost. Also consider cabinets without trim moldings or with simple trim.

If you are going to put in new wood trim (in your crown molding, trims, and door casings) to match the new cabinets, order pre-finished trim instead of having the painting or staining done on-site. This will decrease labor cost.



Choose Neutral Colors

Choose neutral colors in fixtures, appliances and laminates. They are less expensive initially and won't look dated when the color trends change. White and almond sinks are much less expensive than color varieties. And neutral laminate colors for countertops are less than custom colors or textures.



Dress up Laminates Countertops

Laminate countertops are the least expensive choice among solid surfacing, quartz and granite. You can dress it up with wood or tile trim for a more innovative look.

Fluorescent Lighting

Connect fluorescent light fixtures to the existing ceiling fixture box instead of installing new recessed lighting, which may require a new ceiling because of the recessed features.

