



Organize your priorities before starting a remodeling project

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Organize your thoughts and set priorities to select the right remodeling projects for your needs.
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A remodeling project is an exciting way to create a home that's perfect for you and your family, or to prepare your current home for sale. Taking on any remodeling project, however large or small, can quickly become a drain on your emotions and your wallet. Unless you have a plan. By making a few important decisions and doing some organizing in advance, you can save time and money while better assuring that the result of your work is exactly what you want.

Use these steps as a checklist to help you set priorities, get organized, and minimize stress as you complete your remodeling project.

1. **Ask why.** Ask yourself why you are considering remodeling: to update an aging property? to make improvements you've been waiting to add? to create more space? to prepare your home for sale? something else? The answer to this question will help you set priorities, establish a budget, and make decisions throughout your project.
2. **Make a wish list.** Write down all the changes you would like to make to your home. Taking a walk around the inside and outside while you create your list will help you visualize the changes you want in each space. There's no need to discuss pros and cons at this point; just record your ideas.
3. **Estimate time and money.** For each project on your list, do some basic research to find out how much time it will take and how much it will cost. If you will do any or all of the work yourself, include the cost of your time equal to what you would pay a professional the same amount of time. This basic research will inform your decision to undertake - or not - the projects on your list.
4. **Set priorities.** Now, review your list, labeling each item a "must have" or a "nice to have." The information you've collected about time and money should give you a more realistic view of what is possible within your desired timeframe and budget. When you've identified your "must haves," list them in order of priority. Now you should have a better idea of the work ahead.
5. **Organize your existing space.** Before you begin your remodeling project, take some time to unclutter and clean the space you have in mind for remodeling. You may surprise yourself and find that reorganizing your space is sufficient and that you can move on to other items on your list. This one step will help assure that you use your time and money for greatest impact.
6. **Start your project!**