



Renovating on a budget

Helpful hints for your next renovation

BY HOLLI APPELQUIST

Are you renovating and don't know where to start? Many people want to know how you complete a renovation - what comes first? Where do you start? What are the steps in a renovation and in what order are things accomplished? While each reno is different, there are some general rules of thumb that you can follow to schedule your renovation and keep it on track.

Step 1: Demolition of existing space you're renovating. This could mean taking up flooring, removing kitchen or bathroom cabinets and fixtures, scraping stipple off ceilings, etc. Many people complete this stage themselves to stretch the budget.

Step 2: Preparation work. This could involve installation of a new subfloor if you're installing different flooring, patching walls before painting, removing toilets prior to new floors installed in bathrooms, sanding woodwork prior to painting, etc. Depending on your project and skill level, you may be able to complete some of this stage yourself also.

Step 3: Electrical, Plumbing and Mechanical Changes. This could mean moving the location of a sink, installing new toilets or sinks in a bathroom, re-configuring lighting in the ceiling, moving air/heat vents to accommodate changes needed, etc. This stage normally requires qualified proper professionals to complete the tasks required to ensure the foundation of your project is completed well. One word of advice; resist the urge to schedule more than one tradesperson at your house at a time. They can end up tripping over each other while trying to complete tasks which takes more time and causes frustration.



Give each tradesperson involved their own timeframe to complete the work required and everyone will be happier and your bill will be smaller.

Step 4: Actual Work Completed. This is where you finally start to see the fruits of your labour. It may involve the installation of new kitchen cabinets or a new countertop, new flooring or wall colour, new light fixtures, etc. It's the exciting part!

Step 5: Clean Up and Attention to Detail. Once the majority of the work is done, it's important not to lose steam. Finish up those little details that you may have missed in step 4. With so much to do, often times we end up

Renovating poses many challenges. The more prepared you are the better you will manage throughout the process. *Here are some tips for stretching your renovation dollar:*

- Decide what your priority areas are and spend your money there. Most people can't afford to max out their renovation budget everywhere – identify your key area(s) and dedicate more money there to ensure you get the look you want. Cut back in other areas that are of less concern to you to save.
- Do what you can yourself. Have a “demolition party” and invite friends who are able to help with removal or prep work.
- Know your abilities ahead of time so you don't get in over your head. Phoning a contractor at the last minute to fix a problem you have caused will be more costly than planning for them to do it in the first place. If you're unsure how to tackle a specific project but would like to try, research how to complete the project first. If you're still unsure about your skill level, hire a professional so you get the quality of workmanship in the end.
- Do what you can afford well. Don't scrimp and cut every corner possible during your renovation. In the end, you won't be happy with the finished product. Most times, the difference between what you want and don't want is a very small percentage of your overall budget.
- Be prepared for your original budget to expand by 15-20% because of unexpected issues that arise structurally. If you're taking out a wall you never know what you'll find. Additional expenses related to surprises that occur along the way are inevitable. Expect the unexpected and you'll be a more relaxed renovator!
- Plan in advance and discuss details in the quotes you receive. Ensure you understand who is doing what by when to keep your project on time and budget.
- Use contractors you trust. My golden rule is if you can't give the person working for you a key to the house, don't hire them.
- Sell your renovation “discards”. One man's trash is another man's treasure so the saying goes. You can sell existing kitchen cabinets, furniture, appliances, interior doors, light fixtures, etc. through www.ebay.ca or a local website - www.usedregina.com to name just a few. It puts additional money in your pocket and is environmentally friendly!
- Set up a temporary kitchen if you're planning to renovate your kitchen. It will help to keep things organized and manageable during the process and cut down on your fast food bill.

putting off smaller tasks until later on. Sometimes those tasks never get done. Spend the time and energy to actually complete the job in its entirety. You'll be happy you did.

Step 6: Re-organize and Re-accessorize. This is the fun stage where you dress the room after completing your project. Placing accessories, arranging your furniture and re-installing window treatments are often part of this stage.

Step 7: Relax and Enjoy! The best part of a renovation is always the end result. Enjoy your new space and feel proud of your accomplishments!

Good luck with your next renovation. Proper planning and realistic expectations help to make your renovation go smoothly!

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