

## Remodeling Checklist



If you are starting a remodeling project, here is a checklist of things you can do to avoid the pitfalls of home improvement makeovers gone awry.

- Set a realistic budget. It is okay to start with a general number to fit your pocketbook. Be sure to compute every cost factor, including materials, labor, permits and special order items in as much detail as possible. Plotting out your costs on computer spreadsheets will give you a big picture overview for how much you are spending and will be helpful in your planning. A firm budget also sets parameters and helps contractors know what you have to spend.
- Know your limitations. Hire a professional. Too often, shoddy work by homeowners is penalized by finicky buyers when the time comes to sell the home.
- Hire an experienced contractor. Ask potential contractors the tough questions: How much experience do you have on this type of project? Do you have proof of insurance? Do you show up on time? How do you handle payments and project expenses? Then do your homework and call the Better Business Bureau where you live to find out if any complaints have been lodged against the contractor. Finally, make sure to ask a prospective contractor to provide you with references, then call them to check out the quality, reputation and workmanship of previous jobs.
- Do not buy on cost alone. A lower cost contractor who does not show up on time, or who changes quotes for labor and materials midproject, is not a good value and may end up costing you more than you have budgeted. So do not quickly rule out contractors who may want to charge you more for better service and a promise to finish on time and within budget. In the

long run, you might actually save money - and avoid financial woes later.

- Get it in writing. No deal with a contractor is ever done on a handshake.
- Use the correct materials. Here is a good rule of thumb: If a project budget is tight, spend the most money on the objects (fixtures, knobs, door hardware) that are touched frequently or are visually prominent, and less on other items typically out of view. If you can do without costly wood, use weather resistant composites or plastics for crown moldings, decking and flooring. You will save on maintenance headaches too.
- Plan for energy efficiency. Your fuel bills should be reason enough to think about conserving energy. So before plowing ahead with a room addition or makeover, find out if there is anything you can do to make the space more comfortable or energy efficient. For instance, if the drywall is down, consider adding more insulation to protect against the weather and reduce household noise.
- Make your home eco-friendly. Plan material usage carefully to reduce waste that ends up in landfills. For instance, consider using composite deck planks instead of treated lumber; be strategic and plant trees and hedges as natural shade against direct sunlight.
- Home sweet home improvement. Sure, the increased resale value of your latest home-improvement project is something to relish. However remember to appreciate your home's enhanced livability and the joy it will bring to you and your family.

Advice is free at **Construction By Design, Ltd.** If you have questions call, (617) 427-5352 or (401) 475-5215.

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## A Small Price for Peace of Mind

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Window locks (latches to keep a window in place) are small and can give you additional security.

There are many good reasons to install window locks. If you have small children, window locks can prevent children from opening the windows and falling out. The lock also prevents the lazy thief from opening the window.

If a burglar really wants in, the person will find a way through a window. However, a window lock can help deter a burglar or at least make a window more difficult to open.

And on nice warm nights, window locks also allow you to open the window enough to let in a breeze and not a stranger.

Window locks generally are placed on the track of a windowsill and installed with thumb screws. There also are some that have flip latches that lock them into place.

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## Attic Rehab Not for the Faint of Heart

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No matter how great your finished attic room is, renovating an attic is a complicated job. In the toughest cases, a pull down staircase is the only way up. The eaves in many attics slope down to the floor, with full headroom a mere path down the center. The floors may not be designed to support living space, and they may require reinforcement. There is typically little light or ventilation.

All these are costly structural and design issues. If you decide to expand headroom by building up and out, you must consider roofing issues.

Attics that already have a built-in staircase, a usable floor and a bit of headroom are well ahead of the game. In such cases, changes as minimal as drywall, new paint, better lights and carpet can create the additional living room.

Recycled rubber flooring is an option. Prices are similar to prices for hardwood, however the cheerful flooring colors available offer more cushioning and sound absorption. Another option is portable heating and cooling units that cost less than paying for duct and electrical work to extend current systems.

From attic rehabs to whole house rehabs the pros at **Construction By Design, Ltd.** do it all!. Call **Construction By Design, Ltd.** at **(617) 427-5352** or **(401) 475-5215**.

