

Top five pitfalls of kitchen renovations

A gorgeous kitchen can definitely make your life better, but before you start your reno, find out more about five common pitfalls and how to avoid them.

1. Kitchens are expensive. It's easy to spend \$25,000 to \$50,000 on a mid-range kitchen makeover. Even budget remodels of a small kitchen can run up to \$15,000. Expert do-it-yourselfers can cut these costs in half, but most of us don't have the required skills and will likely need a professional contractor to deliver the best results. Given the cost and lifestyle impact a kitchen reno has, avoid dealing with contractors who promise a low price but want to be paid in cash with nothing written down.

2. Cabinet hardware varies a lot in quality. Before you sign any kitchen remodeling contract, make sure it specifies the type and brand of hinges, drawer slides, handles and accessories that'll be used.

3. Fancy countertops can be troublesome. High-end stone and solid surface countertops deliver powerful bragging rights, but they're not necessarily more durable than less expensive options like

laminated or solid maple. Some elaborate materials require regular sealing, while others can be damaged by a hot pot. Research your options before deciding.

4. Ask for great materials. Even expensive kitchen cabinets are often made of the cheapest material possible, melamine-coated particleboard. Think of sawdust bonded with glue and a factory coating on top. Truly high-end cabinets are made with veneered cabinet-grade plywoods and solid hardwoods. These are stronger, lighter in weight and more durable.

5. New kitchens don't always pay off at resale. According to an annual survey run by *Remodeling Magazine* since 2002, mid-range and high-end kitchen remodels deliver only 60 to 65 cents of increased resale value for every dollar spent. If you're planning to move in the near future, make sure the investment makes financial sense.

Find more information on the Canadian Home Builder's Association's website, www.getitinwriting.ca.

www.newscanada.com

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