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## How to make your renovation a successful, positive experience.

(MC) Often the investment a homeowner makes is substantial, both financially and emotionally. The stakes are high. That is why it is imperative that the job is done well from start to finish. There are a number of steps a homeowner can take to ensure a positive experience and a successful outcome, including:

1. Know your goal. Ask the question, What is this renovation designed to accomplish? More functionality? Storage? Living space? If a homeowner does not know where they are going with the renovation, chances are they will never get there.
2. Do your research. In most things, knowledge is power, and knowing what to expect, in advance, can keep expectations in check. Investigate options, budgets and timelines, and arrange financing in advance.
3. Hire professionals. Be sure that they are happy to work with you to meet your budget and achieve your vision. Communicate clearly and often to ensure understanding on both sides.



4. Opt for a general contractor and trades that are experienced, licensed and insured. Do not hesitate to check credentials and references. Get recommendations from family, friends and colleagues who have had work done and were satisfied with the results.
5. Start with quality building materials. When it comes to home renovation and construction, the adage, it is what is on the inside that counts, seems apt. While homeowners tend to get caught up in the aesthetics of a project, such as finishing and paint colors, the key to a successful

renovation often lies in what you won't see. Investing in quality behind your walls will ensure durability, comfort and safety for years to come.

6. Focus on the basics. This includes quality electrical, plumbing, HVAC, framing and drywall. Do not underestimate the importance of insulation, especially in a basement renovation. Not all insulation is created equal. Opt for insulation that is fire-resistant, sound absorbent and resistant to mold, mildew, bacterial growth, and rot.

7. Develop a good plan. This includes preparing for the unexpected. Setting aside a 20 percent contingency fund will help bring you to the finish line when unanticipated issues creep up.

Lastly, the key to a successful renovation includes patience. Living in a construction zone, or alternately moving out while the work is done can be stressful and trying. Keep your eyes on the prize. There is nothing more rewarding than the end result.

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