

How to keep your kitchen reno headache-free

The thought of a kitchen renovation may cause your eye to twitch and your sweat to trickle. You've heard the horror stories — work costing more than expected, lasting too long, or not ending up the way you expected. While you can't predict everything, there are ways to keep the road to a shiny new kitchen relatively stress-free.

Robin Saxberg, principal designer at Hamilton, Ontario's DESZA Design, advises that leaving the project to a professional may save you headaches in the long-run. "Occasionally, the client will want to do the demolition themselves either for cost-savings or for fun, which it is. However, there may be a risk of accidentally damaging something important," she reveals. "Most demos require the rental or purchase of tools, safety equipment and waste bin rental which could eliminate much of the potential savings."

If you're thinking of taking on the demolition yourself in hopes of saving a few bucks, look at other options. Contact your local Habitat for Humanity ReStore to see if they are able to remove your old kitchen for you. Also keep in mind that the contractor you hire usually includes this in their quote.



If you feel like you're drowning in sawdust, Saxberg says to keep in mind that your kitchen won't always be gutted. "Though your renovation may seem overwhelming at times, it is temporary. Any stress and chaos will pass and when the dust settles, you'll have a beautiful, perfectly unique space that functions the way you need it to."

In the meantime, follow her five tips for a smooth and successful reno.

- 1. Get everything in writing:** Read and understand all contracts with designers, contractors and anyone you hire.
- 2. Keep an emergency fund:** Set aside around 10 per cent of your renovation budget as a contingency fund. If a pipe bursts or the electrical needs to

be rewired, you won't panic knowing you have enough to cover it.

- 3. Plan as much as possible:** Lay out your renovation roadmap before the project begins, and don't be afraid to ask your contractor or designer lots of questions. Placing orders before work starts will also cut down on wait time for deliveries.



4. Invest in key pieces: Putting money into a quality stone surface countertop and Canadian-made solid wood flooring will ensure your kitchen will stand the test of time.

5. Reduce, reuse, recycle: Do some good by donating your old kitchen items to a local charitable organization, like Habitat for Humanity ReStores. Many contractors also work with them. This will keep your old kitchen out of the landfill and help others in the process.

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