

## **Remodeling Your Home: How Much Is Too Much?**

The classic way for homeowners to increase the value of their house is by remodeling existing rooms or adding on to its current plan.

Some choose to build recreation rooms and studies while others add new appliances, fixtures and cabinets to enliven rooms and make their home more attractive to future buyers.

But, when should you decide to stop sinking money into a home and buy a bigger place? And how much rehab is too much when it comes time to recovering remodeling costs through a home sale

For instance, if you've just spent \$1,000 remodeling your living room and didn't expand your small bathroom, the chances of increasing the number of interested buyers are slim.

With these concerns in mind, I can offer a few tips for those struggling to add value to their home.

First, always protect the character of your home. Nothing sticks out more than a new addition that is in a completely different architectural style. Be consistent. Recognize your home's character and stay within its framework.

The most financially rewarding areas to remodel are usually the kitchen and bath. Newly re-done cooking spaces and cabinets can attract more buyers and may command a slightly higher price for the home than a comparable one on the market. Simple repairs that are made to last will bring you the biggest returns upon sale.

Enlarged bathrooms are the most popular attraction for new home buyers, according to the National Kitchen and Bath Association. Today, the most popular additions for younger buyers are sunken whirlpool baths and showers. But be sure to install modest, solid amenities. It's easy to quickly over-spend on bathroom fixtures.

Buyers are, by convention, more interested in above-ground living space – not basements, yards and walkways. Swimming pools can be a poor investment if installed for the sole purpose of increasing a home's value; it's rare that a pool's cost will be recovered in a home sale. It can also be a negative feature for potential buyers with very young children.

Replacing worn carpeting, tiles and wood floors can give your home an immediate advantage over similar properties in the area. Updating paint colors in all areas of your home can also prove beneficial.

However, it's recommended that you use neutral colors, such as gray, beige and off-white when adding new floor and wall coverings. Fewer buyers will then turn away because of differing tastes.

Stay simple with your remodeling and look at your home as though you were the buyer. Chances are that if you find the upstairs bedroom could be brightened by a larger window, potential buyers will probably feel the same.

Don't go overboard. Concentrate on improving two or three deficiencies in your home. More than likely, the time and money you spend adding quality to your home will be rewarded with greater profit at selling time.

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