

# What Renovations will Increase the Value and Saleability of my Home?

*Portfolio context: I researched and wrote this 900-word article for a realtor's blog.*

To increase the saleability of your home (in other words, how quickly it is sold and for what price), you may consider investing money, energy, and time into renovations. Some major and minor renovations are wise investments, while others are difficult to recover in the purchase price. Carefully consider the costs and benefits of any renovations before you begin.

Updates to walls, flooring, kitchen, bathroom, as well as improving your home's curb appeal, offer the best return on your investment. With all the materials you purchase, keep it simple and stick with light, contemporary, neutral colors. Now is not the time to get creative or extravagant.

## Walls and Flooring

Freshly painted walls will make your home look clean and cared for. Even though you won't be around to enjoy your new paint, pay attention to details. Prepare by cleaning the walls, filling holes, and priming. Use a drop cloth to prevent splatters. Remember to paint doors, baseboards, and trims around doors and windows. If you have challenging features, such as high ceilings or hard-to-reach areas, or you're not sure you can do a good job, consider hiring a professional painter.

Most homes can benefit from flooring improvements. Carpet that is less than 10 years old may simply need a good cleaning. Hardwood may just need some sanding and staining. If not, and you need to replace your flooring, look for a product that offers good quality for a lower price. Hardwood is timeless but expensive. New carpet may be a poor choice, because it doesn't present as well to buyers as hardwood, laminate, tile, or vinyl. Vinyl offers the best quality for cost and ease.

## Kitchen and Bathrooms

Kitchen and bathrooms are subject to much wear and tear over time, and therefore usually require minor, perhaps major, improvements. Any materials purchased and work done in these two rooms can be expensive. Although they will help you sell your home, you likely won't recover your costs completely, so choose your products wisely.

In the kitchen, your lowest cost options are to update cabinet hardware, lighting, faucets, and sinks. A new backsplash can update the space, and potential buyers will be impressed with a device-charging outlet. If you're replacing your countertops, laminate is the most budget friendly material, but solid products such as granite, wood, concrete, or glass will be more appealing to buyers. Cabinets can be painted, refaced, or replaced, depending on their condition. If you decide to invest in new appliances, be sure to balance cost with quality and aesthetics.

In the bathroom, also look first to update cabinet hardware, lighting, and fixtures (faucets and showerheads). Replace a smaller mirror with a larger one. For more extensive remodels, update the vanity and replace an outdated Jacuzzi tub with a freestanding soaker tub or walk-in shower. Note, if you only have one bathroom in your home, adding a second is a major renovation that is worth considering.

### **Curb Appeal**

Front exterior and landscaping creates an important first impression for potential buyers about the overall quality and condition of your home. In fact, this is the first image they will see online before even booking a viewing appointment. While this is not the time to overhaul your home's facade and front yard, some time, effort, and money is probably well spent boosting its curb appeal.

You want to give the impression of beauty, organization, yet easy maintenance. Attend to any necessary repairs. Consider painting the front door (or it may need to be replaced), garage doors, window trim, and siding. Keep your grass well trimmed, watered, edged, and free of weeds. Update your lighting fixtures, mailbox, and house numbers. Powerwash your driveway, sidewalk, and front steps. Tidy your flower beds with mulch and clean up any dead foliage. Add color with some annual plants in an outdoor container or other decorative touches, depending on the season. Any new landscaping, such as a shrub or water feature, should be budget friendly and simple.

### **Renovations to Avoid**

For the purposes of selling your home quickly at a good price, some renovations are not worthwhile. The cost to you is far more than the increase in your asking price, not to mention your time and energy dedicated to such projects. In such cases, you are better to adjust your price, clean and stage your home well, and let the new homeowners renovate to suit themselves.

Adding square footage through room add-ons, basement finishes, or income suites may be appealing to some buyers, but repellant to others. Tearing down walls is rarely a good idea, except maybe between kitchen and dining areas to improve the spaciousness of this high traffic area. Swimming pools, decks, extensive backyard landscaping, new windows, solar panels, and “invisibles” (such as a new water heater or furnace) are impractical as you get ready to sell your home.

Once you decide on your renovation efforts before putting your home on the market, think small. Don't over-improve and go beyond the market value of your neighborhood. Also, do-it-yourself is okay if you have the time and expertise, but many renos are best handed over to a contractor. This way, they'll be completed in a timely, professional manner, and meet building codes. On the topic of codes... remember your permits. Check with your municipality to see what projects do or do not need a permit.

[Realtor to add call-to-action here.]