

Prepping your house

What is best - repair or renovation?



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Air Force Retiree still Serving my Community

PREPPING YOUR HOUSE



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Sweat prep can bring more equity

Psychology - a Major Consideration for Sellers

- Consider your house from the psychologically, emotionally, and physically viewpoints of a potential buyer. Whatever you do, consider it from the perspective of a potential buyer, who is seeing it for the first time. You want prospective buyers to become emotionally connect with the house: envision living there their family, envision how their possessions will fit, how they will feel living there, and not feel as if they are interlopers in the house. If the house is not offered in this manner, most will move on.
- Look at your house with a fresh eye. Walk up to the front and enter each room with the mindset you have never seen it before. Each door you go through, stop and look from there and determine how the initial view of a room makes you feel emotionally and psychologically. Does it feel inviting, spacious, confined, relaxed, dark, bright, outdated, wow, or conflicted, etc.
- Focus on turning your home into a “model home.” Most buyers want to purchase a home which is move-in ready. If a house doesn’t appear in top shape, buyers will make a low-ball offer on the premise it will need work to bring it up to their basic standards.
- The family needs to let go of this house emotionally, and for some this can be a tough process. Once the decision to move is made, the family needs to commit to selling by removing their identity from the house. Call the house being sold as “This Old House” and stress the future house as “Our Dream Home”.



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The Seller's Action List

The rooms which actually sell the house	
Kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you first walk into each room - how does it make you feel emotionally and psychologically? • Does it feel inviting, spacious, confined, relaxed, dark, bright, outdated, wow, or conflicted? • Do items needing repair or updating quickly jump out at you?
Master Bedroom	
Master Bathroom	
Main Floor Family Room	
Living Room	
Front Entrance	

Clean Everything

- Cleanliness signals a buyer the home has been well cared for and is most likely in good repair. A messy or dirty home will cause prospective buyers to notice every flaw. Clean every corner high and low.
- Buyers want to envision themselves living in the house, and if the home is not offered in a manner which will allow them to do this easily, most will move on.
- The house needs to be neat, clean, and orderly.
- Consider hiring a professional cleaner.



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Required Seller Actions

- CO2 alarms need to be **installed prior to listing the property**. They need to be mounted within 15 ft of each bedroom and from each combustion sources (furnace, fire place, gas hot water heater).
- Smoke detectors - Ensure operational detectors are in each room.



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- If there is a well, it must be tested as part of a sale and this is paid for by the buyer. The seller must allow access for testing. Individuals involved in the deal are not allowed to pull the water to be tested.



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- If you have a septic system:
 - Make sure area near septic tank is odor-free.
 - Depending on the county where the property is located, and each county has different rules, you will probably have to get an inspection for a Septic Use Permit prior to the sale of the property. Due to recent State code changes expect the septic system to fail. Septic Use Permits for transfer are typically valid for 6 months or until the time of title transfer. The Inspector must be certified by a nationally recognized inspector training program (e.g., National Association of Wastewater Technicians, or the National Sanitation Foundation).
 - Typical costs: The County Septic *Use Permit* application is ~\$100. Pumping is approximately \$200-400. The inspection is \$150-\$350 and can be included with the pumping. The cost to replace a septic tank is generally ~\$4,900-\$6,500, but could go to \$11,000 depending on the size of the tank, and any other materials needing replacement. Replacing the septic is not cheap, but some septic companies are willing to wait till closing for payment.
- Fill out the Seller Property Disclosure Form - Seller should be very comprehensive to eliminate future potential legal issues. If the buyer comes back in the future with a suit claiming the seller knew about something (asbestos), and it's not on the form, the seller could be held responsible. This form is for identifying defects known by the seller, and for items which can be discovered by reasonable inspection.
- Fill out a county TD-1000 which will identify all specific appliances or items (e.g., curtains, blinds, chandelier, hanging swing, tractor, or grill) which will be sold or included with the house. Come up with an approximate value. You will be required to fill out a TD-1000 at closing (and again after closing).
- Locate all items required for listing the house and for items needed to be given to the buyer.
 - Owner's manuals and warranty information to give the buyer for appliances being left in the house.
 - Dates for the last roof replacement and all the major appliances staying with the house.
 - Energy efficient (green) documents and certificates (solar, radiant heating, or triple pane windows).
 - Well and well adjudication information.
 - Survey documents.
 - HOA documents.
 - All extra house-related keys and remotes.
- While walking around the house, consider what special or unique aspects of your house you think would be worthwhile to include in advertising.

- Reminder – you will be having strangers touring your home during the selling phase. They will be opening cabinets and closets. Now is a good time to pay attention to securing your valuables, weapons, extra house keys, remotes, small easily pilferable items, and items of a personal nature you would not want seen by others (photographs, lingerie or sexual-related items). Your agent will be accompanying them, but it's hard to watch people if the couple splits up after being told they need to stay together. The agent makes a quick decision of which to follow.



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Air Quality/Odors

- Let fresh air in.



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- Odors can determine whether or not a buyer will even look at the place, let alone make an offer. Take care of any specific rooms or basements which have odors which may be unfamiliar or unpleasant. People are most often offended by odors from tobacco, pets, cooking, or sour/musty laundry.
- Take out trash/litter box day every morning prior to leaving the house for work, or a showing.



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Avoid cooking with strong seasonings (i.e., curry, garlic) and foods which have a lingering smell (i.e., fish) while trying to sell your house. Try to limit any frying while you are actively selling your house.



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- Avoid smoking in the house. If the house has been occupied by a smoker, it might be helpful if the walls, ceiling, and furniture are professionally cleaned. Most non-smokers can smell a smoker in the house, and many will not make an offer because of the smell.



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- Use smells which can be used to your advantage and attract positive attention such as fresh flowers, fruity potpourri, fresh baked bread, cinnamon and other similar smells. Avoid artificial flower smells and sprays.



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De-clutter and Pre-pack

- Once the decision to move is made, the family needs to commit by remove their identity from the house. The family needs to let go emotionally, and this can be a tough process. De-cluttering is a major item. The goal is not to make the house a home for you, but to give the impression of lots of space for buyers who can envision it as a home for them.
- Focus on turning your home into a “model home.” You want prospective buyers to emotionally connect with the house, and envision themselves living there – and not feel as if they are interlopers in the house.
- Now is a time to get rid of unwanted items. The less “stuff” in a home, the roomier it will seem.
 - Have a garage sale. Empty the closets and storage rooms.
 - Donate what you can't sell (remember to document for itemized tax write-off).
 - If using professional movers, remember they charge by weight.
 - It may be cheaper to get rid of heavy cheap items now (particle board furniture, metal lawn furniture, and can goods) and buy new ones later, than it will be to pay movers to haul them.
 - When we were considering moving across country, we found out our particle board cabinets we used in our basement storage room cost more to move, then it would be to buy new ones, and they would have most probably been broken by the movers anyway.



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- Consider using a storage locker.
 - If you have lots of furniture and stuff, making the house feel roomier can help it sell quicker.
 - Sanitizing your home is an important step. De-personalize by removing personal effects and family photos. Remove religious, political, pet, any items which could be potentially offensive or disagreeable and even professional sports team memorabilia. You are decorating for someone to make a connection to the house for their effects, not your memorabilia.
 - Pre-pack items which will not be needed while selling the house (children's toys, games, books, off-season clothing, gear, music, and collections. Pre-packing will make it easier when it's time to move.
 - Leave most paintings and art in place as long as it's not excessive amounts, very expensive (theft targetable), inappropriate for all ages, potentially offensive, or culturally disagreeable.



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Lighting

- Let the light in. Bright, open rooms feel larger and more inviting. Dark rooms feel small and gloomy. Raise the shades. Open the blinds. Pull back the curtains.
- How many light fixtures are in each room? If it feels dark, can you install more? Do the installed light fixtures need updating?
- Since LED lights are brighter without the additional heat. Install brighter bulbs in all the lamps (but not bright enough to cause a glare). Put at least 100 watt lights in the garage, basement stairs/storage rooms, and porch lights.
- When the furniture and lighting are properly placed, they will show off the prime features and allow buyers to see the specific function of each room.
- Turn on all lights for pictures and showings.



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Paint

- Buyers want to purchase a move-in ready home, and this includes the paint color. If the house is painted in very bright, unusual colors, potential buyers may be turned off or feel they can negotiate on the asking price. When was the last time the house was painted?
- There is nothing which improves the value of a home for a lower cost than a fresh coat of paint. It's often easier to paint a room than it is to scrub it. Repair any holes or cracks in the walls and ceilings. Put a fresh coat of paint on the ceiling to give the entire room a clean look.
- Repaint if needed, but stick with neutral colors.
 - Best tested colors for resale are: Off-white, white, light grey, soft yellow, blue-grey, and neutrals like taupe. Neutral colors are restful to the eye. If you have a Broncos theme shrine room, consider repainting it in a neutral color. Most buyers want to live in the home awhile before deciding if they want to change the paint color. Be sure to avoid black, violet and pink.
- Front of the house a bit bland - Consider painting the front door a contrasting bold color for impact.

Fix anything broken

- This includes plumbing, electrical systems/switches, windows, screens, doors and fences. If it can't be fixed, replace it or get rid of it. (No window screens are better than ones which are broken.)



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- **The main thing to take care of in this market is health and safety issues.** Suggest fixing any/all electrical or plumbing issues. When the buyer's inspector finds any issues, the buyer will counter with a requirement for a license professional to make the repairs. It will be cheaper to take care of items now, especially if the seller has the wherewithal to make these repairs themselves (or knowledgeable family/friends). You're better off if you leave buyers no reason to offer less than you're asking. Repair doors, windows, screens, plumbing, electrical systems/switches, and fences.
- A buyer will make a much lower offer if the house appears in disrepair. After their inspection, they will probably try to insist everything be fixed before sealing the deal, or they are considering it a fixer-upper and will make an corresponding offer.
- Fix/lubricate squeaky floorboards, hinges, window slides, and anything else which makes unwanted noise around the house.
- Buyers want to fulfill a wish list, not a to-do list. When they see a property with a bunch of fix-up projects, they'll turn away faster than you can imagine. Often it's not one big repair item, but a lot of little things which cause buyers to turn away. If there are problems and a significant to-do list, your house will drop to the bottom of their list, or attract an offer much less than the asking price. Our goal is to present buyers with a complete move-in ready, which is a home they can be comfortable and happy in.
- Check coveted items (wood floors, granite countertops) for cleanliness and no scuffs or damage.

Staging

- The staging priority is typically: Living room, kitchen, dining, family, baths, and the master bedroom.
- The best furniture to stage a home is your own.
 - This typically consists of reducing the amount of furniture you already have in place.
 - When staged properly, buyers will feel happy. Buyers reportedly spend 3-17% more for staged houses.
 - To stage an empty house will require a seller investment of \$250-\$500.
 - Simplify the space. Make a bedroom a bedroom. Not a combination office bedroom.
 - What size is the furniture? If oversize, it could make the room feel small.
 - What condition is your furniture in? Consider slipcovers and pillows.
 - Set a nice table in the dining room with table cloth, napkins, plates, glasses and silverware.
 - Ensure artwork is family friendly.

Pet Issues

- Be aware many people are especially sensitive to the smell of pets. Many people are allergic (especially cats) and this could cause an offer not to be made (or to even see the inside).



- Remove your pets and any signs of them while selling the house (e.g. food/water bowls, toys, litter box).
- If your pets must stay in the house, hide any sign of your pet during showings.
- Keep the litter box out of sight, and cleaned daily (especially right before a showing).
- Don't forget outside pet toys, droppings, and dog digging issues.

Holidays

- Are there going to be any holidays during the sale period?
- Do decorate for the holidays, but decorate using simple and nondenominational items. Any holiday decorations should be removed immediately after the celebrations.



Interior Focus

Front Entrance

- Judge your first impression waking through the front door. Does it feel inviting?

Kitchen



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- How does the kitchen look and feel when you first walk into it?
- Check granite countertops for cleanliness and no scuffs/damage.
- Keep dishes and food out of sight.
- Does the kitchen require some updating? If so, determine what needs to be done.
- How do the cupboards look? Organize them.
- Clean: trashcan, appliances (and behind), range hood, light fixtures (including light bulbs), cabinet under sink, and floors.
- Make sure all electrical outlets work.
- Deodorize disposal, dishwasher, fridge, trash can, and drain.
- Repair faucets.
- Remove all magnets and items off the fridge.
- Put fresh shelf paper in cabinets (especially under sink).

Floors

- Replace worn/broken flooring. Use area rugs where needed.
- Wall-to-wall carpets are typically a turn-off for buyers, so consider replacing these with hardwood floors will make the space more attractive overall. Do the math and see if it will pay to consider upgrading.
- If you have hardwood floors, take a good look and see if they are scratched, peeling, or look generally damaged, then sanding and refinishing them makes a huge difference in bringing the entire home up-to-date.



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Bedrooms

- Do you feel calm walking into this room? How is the furniture positioned? Are there any updates or repairs needed?
- Make beds each day, complete with bed covers.
- Hide dirty laundry and any very personal items such as photos, lingerie, or sexual-related items.



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Living Room, Dining Room, and Family Room



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- Check wood floors for cleanliness and no scuffs/damage.
- How does the view look from the entry? Does it feel inviting?
- How is the furniture positioned?
- Are there any repairs or upgrades needed in these rooms?
- What is the focal point in each room?
- Does it feel spacious or cramped?
- What can you do to improve this?
- Clean around doors, windows (inside and out), light switches, baseboards ceiling light fixtures, and cobwebs in all corners.
- Wash curtains and draperies if necessary.
- Remove or pull back dark curtains.
- Fluff the pillows.
- Remove all festive lights and decorations.
- Lubricate window and doors latches/hinges.
- Empty wastebaskets.
- Pets - Remove toys, beds, food and water bowls.

Bathrooms

- Do you feel relaxed when you walk into this room? Do the colors make you feel relaxed?
- Keep the bathroom spotlessly clean. Keep fresh, clean towels on towel racks. Remove stains, lime, mildew, mold, soap scum, Shine mirrors.
- Keep wastebasket empty and clean.
- Clean out cabinets and remove excess. Remember visitors will be looking in there.
- Are there any updates or repairs needed?
- Clean/lubricated shower door and bathroom door.
- Replace torn/moldy shower curtain.
- Make sure toilet flushes properly, and replace the toilet seat if necessary.
- Clean exhaust fan/heater.
- Hide hygiene products and all medications.
- Clean out under sink and install new shelf paper.



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All Closets & Laundry Room

- Keep closets clean, well organized, and free of clutter. People will be looking in the cabinets and closets.
- Throw out or pack away non-essentials.
- Adjust/repair/lubricate any sliding door hardware.
- Paint if needed.
- Clean out area behind washer and dryer, including the vent and hose.
- Eliminate any mildew odors.
- Remember buyers will be looking in cabinets, and closets. Give the impression of lots of storage space.
- Hide dirty laundry.



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Garage

- Keep garage clean and uncluttered.
- Hang up, organize, and put away tools.
- Clear away any cobwebs, and dead flies.
- Power wash the floor to remove oil/stains.
- Adjust tension rod to eliminate sag from overhead garage door.
- Lubricate/adjust/repair garage door opener.
- Paint if needed.
- Eliminate any signs of dampness or mold.
- Check for and eliminate cracks.

House Components

- Area where the vacuum system, furnace, water heater, water filter system, and water pressure tank are kept.
 - Vacuum/dust
 - Replace/clean all filters
 - Clean intake vent
 - Remove any stored items
- Air Conditioner compressor (outside).
 - Inspect/clean/repair
- Chimney, fire place, or wood burning stove
 - Inspect/clean/repair



Exterior Focus

Curb appeal

- The exterior says a lot about how the home is maintained both inside and out. It creates a lasting impression when buyers drive by or view photos online, so give them the appearance the property is well cared for. When buyers see an attractive exterior, they will be excited to view the interior as well. You are fighting dozens of other homes to be noticed. Look at curb appeal with critical eye.



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- Entry way welcome.
 - Front of the house looking bland? Place flowers, winter arrangements, or plants on each side of the front porch, front door and/or in front of the garage to frame the door to welcome and add color.
 - Paint the front door a contrasting bold color for impact.
 - Inspect the door area. Make sure doorbell/knocker works, polish/repair/replace hardware.
 - Street numbers (house and curb): inspect/repair/replace.

House Exterior

- Walls, siding, trim repair/replace/remove.
- Window, shutters, frames, screens, and hardware inspect/wash/repair/replace/remove.
- BBQ area – inspect/wash/repair/replace/remove.
- Decks - inspect/wash and re-stain/paint if needed.
- Roof - Free inspection available.
- Rain gutters, inspect/clean/repair/replace.
- Spigots inspect/repair/replace.
- Driveway: Power wash/patch/reseal if necessary.
- Service areas/trash cans: clean and organize, and haul away excess rubbish.
- Power wash siding, sidewalks, driveways.



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Landscaping

- Lawn:
 - Mow, edge, water, feed, reseed, rake, and aerate lawn regularly.
 - Remove lawn decorations, hoses, and all extraneous items.
 - Make sure lawn sprinklers are not programmed to come on during showing times.
 - Sprinkler system; adjust, repair as needed, water regularly, and turned off during showings.
 - Remove pet toys and clean up droppings.
- Shrubs, bushes, and trees.
 - Remove/replace dead items.
 - Prune overgrown/diseased/damaged shrubs.
 - Prune/remove shrubs/trees blocking windows.
 - Stake up any sagging trees/shrubs.
- Flowers.
 - Plant seasonal flower beds, mulch and keep weed-free.
 - Fill in empty window boxes and pots.
- Landscaping decoration, artwork, and fixtures.
 - Gazebos repair/replace/remove.
 - Fences and gates repairs/replace/remove.
 - Pool/spa inspect/wash/repair/replace/remove.
 - Lighting - inspect/clean/repair/replace.
 - Fountains repair/replace/remove.
 - Trellises repair/replace/remove.
 - Planters repair/replace/remove.
 - Step stones, walk ways - Replace broken.

Rural Specific Topics

- Septic tank: Locate and get the inspection as soon as possible. Ensure area around is odor-free.
- Woodpile: Straighten.
- Well: located for inspection.
- Look at your house curb appeal from a longer distance.
 - Drive in and see what items you would consider as detrimental. Look at things with a fresh eye.
 - Consider mowing along the both sides of the road for a distance in each direction.
 - Consider picking up trash along both sides of the road for a distance in each direction.



RENOVATION OR REPAIR?

Renovation

Should you renovate the house for selling?

- This all comes down to the math. If you are not going to get 100% of the renovation back, you should not consider doing this. There are repairs which may be required in order to sell the house, but if you are not going to be living there, cosmetic repairs should be based on cold logical analysis and not emotional feelings.

Remodeling Estimates for Additions or Upgrades

There are two pamphlets which are excellent if you are considering remodeling or updating your house. Both are these are available for download. The company Pillar-to-Post Home Inspectors produced an excellent pamphlet title *“Residential Construction and Remodeling Estimates Cost Guide”* which shows the approximate costs to upgrade or replace items within a house. I believe this is an excellent pamphlet and have enclosed the company link to ensure you get their most current pamphlet. The National Association of REALTORS® also produced an informative pamphlet *“2022 Remodeling Impact Report”*. Click each square below to download or go to the website:



¹ <https://cdn1.pillartopost.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/27192838/528791-Generic-Pillar-To-Post-Cost-Guide-HiRez.pdf>



<https://cdn.nar.realtor/sites/default/files/documents/2022-remodeling-impact-report-04-19-2022.pdf>

Upgrades which increase/decrease the value of a house			
Upgrades	Job Cost	Resale Value	Recouped %
Basement Finishing			109
Basement Remodel	\$61,303	\$43,095	70.3
Bathroom Remodel	\$50,007	\$29,162	58.3
Bathroom, ¾, Addition			115
Bathroom, full, Addition			123
Bedroom Addition			104
Bedroom Attic Addition	\$47,919	\$34,916	72.9
Ceilings Raised to 9'			106
Central Air			112
Deck Addition (composite)	\$15,084	\$10,184	67.5
Deck Addition (composite) High-end	\$34,403	\$20,532	59.7
Deck Addition (wood)	\$9,327	\$7,213	77.3
Entry Door Replacement (steel)	\$1,137	\$974	85.6
Entry Grand Entrance (fiberglass)	\$7,088	\$4,528	63.9
Fireplace			112
Garage Addition			113
Garage Door Replacement	\$2,720	\$2,046	75.2
Garage Door Replacement (mid price)	\$1,496	\$1,132	75.7
Kitchen Remodel High-end	\$107,406	\$64,113	59.7
Kitchen Remodel Major	\$53,931	\$37,139	68.9
Kitchen Remodel Minor	\$18,527	\$13,977	75.4
Laundry Addition			102
Mother-in-law suite			95
Office, Professional			95
Pool, Above ground			100
Roofing Replacement	\$33,880	\$19,194	56.7
Siding Replacement (fiber-cement)	\$13,083	\$10,379	79.3
Siding Replacement (foam-backed vinyl)	\$13,818	\$9,926	71.8
Siding Replacement (vinyl)	\$11,192	\$8,154	72.9
Window Replacement (vinyl)	\$9,770	\$6,961	71.2
Window Replacement (vinyl) High-end	\$13,055	\$9,295	71.2
Window Replacement (wood)	\$10,708	\$7,852	73.3
Window Replacement (wood) High-end	\$16,361	\$11,194	68.4
The recoups larger than 100% (identified in Green) generally pay for themselves when the house is sold. (Nationwide statistics and it assumes all other characteristics, i.e. square footage, remain the same)			
Source: NAR study and Pillar-to-post chart			

Fixing a Property Up Too Nicely

- A common mistake is fixing up a property too much. If you're fixing up a luxury house to flip, then you need to go all out. Working/middle class rentals don't need this level. They need to be nice and functional, but not spectacular. High-end materials won't add much rental or resale value to a middle range property. Things like these are not worth the costs unless you will be living there:
 - High-end stainless steel appliances.
 - Custom cabinets.
 - Granite slab counter tops.
 - Bay windows.
 - Elaborate crown molding.
 - Expensive chandeliers.
- It's important not to use crummy materials. Builder's grade carpet will rarely last, and good luck getting any mark off walls if you use flat paint. Cheap materials will quickly break, need replaced, and are not worth the cost. Aim for the "Goldilocks zone" – Not too cheap, not too expensive, but just right.

Easy Updates That Will Give Your Home the Best Resale Value

Article By [Mackenzie Dunn](#)/ 1 Oct 2018

- When the word renovation is used, many think gutted kitchens, brand new bathrooms, and months of labor and demolition. Sometimes it's the smaller home improvements that garner the biggest rewards when it comes to return-on-investment and resale value.
- When contemplating smaller renovations, you want them to feel right and aesthetic, so there's a balance. Don't go overboard with renovations, instead focus on creating updates that you can also live with. You should definitely consider resale when you're renovating, but it doesn't have to be your primary point.
- If you're moving sooner rather than later, your renovation should be targeted in the areas that will create the biggest difference to buyers with minimal cost to you. Focus your time and money on remodeling the most visible parts of your home as these tend to have the best value. Buyers don't typically get to spend much time in a home before they decide to buy it, so first impressions are incredibly important.
- To get the most bang for your buck:
 - Focus on what you and buyers can see.
 - If you need to prioritize, start with the most outdated/worn items.
 - For the best return-on-investment, don't choose the most upscale options. Mix low- and mid-range materials and finishes to create a look that will be pleasing to most buyers.
- **A fresh coat of paint**
 - Many homeowners can easily repaint themselves, but experts say that sometimes, it's worth calling in the pros. Sellers often resist spending a little money when they are selling but it can save you a lot of money when the offers come in.
 - For a smaller room, opt for light/airy colors that make the space look brighter and visually defined. Consider white or if you want some color, go for muted neutral colors. You can always call in the pros to paint everything traditional white, as it makes everything feel new light, bright and clean.
- **Updating kitchens**
 - If the kitchen can be easily updated - go for it. A budget-friendly update that will go over well with buyers is simple like updating the cabinet fronts or the back splash. Depending on the price range, you may be better off swapping out appliances for new ones and allowing the new owners to decide on their own cabinetry. If it's a total gut, leave it as is and price accordingly.
 - Focusing your energy on the kitchen might be your best bet when it comes to resale. This area is often the most visible upon entering the space, so focus your attention here. Simply sanding and repainting the existing surface is the most budget-friendly option (\$500-\$1,000). You can choose to replace the doors and hardware, but it will cost significantly more. Either way, if the kitchen feels dark and dated, it's best to brighten it up to better appeal to buyers.
 - Even adding or replacing a backsplash can make a huge visual impact, and doesn't need to be too involved. Simple white subway tile may be a tired trend, but it's also a classic.
- **New hardware and light fixtures**
 - A fresh update doesn't mean you need to go high-end. Hardware, fixtures and accents that are not dated can definitely add more value and interest to your home. Replacing or updating hardware won't cost you more than a few hundred bucks, just be mindful about where these updates are needed most.
 - Experts advise to stay away from anything too wild or trendy. There are options that offer a stylish and easy pick-me-up to your existing space with clean lines and muted colors. Even changing out doorknobs can make your home feel more modern.

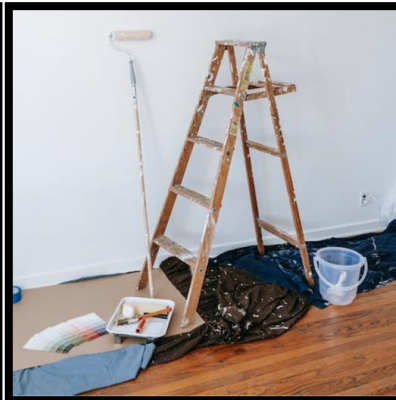
Easy Updates That Will Give Your Home the Best Resale Value (Con't)

- **Updating baths**
 - This is the most important space to focus on for resale. It's important to make it look clean and functional. Smaller updates that are both easy and affordable will make it look clean and presentable. Bathroom updates can really make the home's value increase.
 - Swapping out the medicine cabinet-mirror for an updated model, like these sleek oval-shaped ones that can create the illusion of a bigger space. Paint the walls cool, calming shades for a spa-like feel. Updating the tile, vanity, and re-glazing the tub may also be good ways to freshen up the space, without getting too involved or moving any of the existing plumbing.
- **Refinished floors**
 - Take a good look at existing wood floors; if they scratched, peeling, or look generally damaged, then sanding and refinishing them makes a huge difference in bringing the entire home up-to-date.
 - Wall-to-wall carpets are typically a turn-off for buyers, so replacing these with hardwood will make the space more attractive overall.
 - These might seem like hefty tasks, but you may not have to completely replace your floors outright, if you plan strategically, it can save you time and money, and ultimately pay off in the long run.
- **"Flex" space**
 - While it's often impossible to add actual square footage, it's often helpful to create the illusion of it. This can be done by putting up pressurized walls to carve out an office nook, or by adding sliding doors across a large living room to create a den-like area. While this type of renovation won't change the legal designation of the number of bedrooms in your unit, it helps buyers envision more uses for the space, and can be more useful for your own living situation. Typically, a pressurized wall will run you anywhere from \$1,000 to \$2,000, while a sliding door can run you up to \$5,000.
 - Buyers do not want to do a full-out renovation, but are shopping for a new home which is in a move-in condition, with many upgrades, including fresh kitchens, bathrooms, and floors. If you can make small improvements along the way, it will help your resale later and probably with a profit.

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Value-Added Upgrades

- Not all upgrades will increase or decrease the price of a house. Some items are not important here in Colorado. Such as an above ground swimming pool will probably not be recovered 100%, a basement in an area with a high water table, or central A/C up in the mountains of Colorado.
- Some renovations are almost always a bad idea such as In-law suites, professional offices, or converting a garage into a bedroom. The problem with this is you lose a garage in order to just get another bedroom. While adding a bedroom to go from one bedroom to two or from two to three (usually the smallest a family would consider) may be worth it. But in general, adding bedrooms beyond three isn't worth the cost. If you have a big, multi-story house with no downstairs bathroom, adding a half bathroom would be worth considering.



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Positive Impacts to the Bottom Line

- When selling, you should only make updates which will directly benefit your wallet at closing, or will help sell your house very quickly. Ask yourself - "Would I live here?"
- Some repairs are cheaper to make now. In a seller market, the inspections tend to be for safety and health.
- Asbestos example.
 - A client's house was built in 1973, has popcorn ceilings, and the owner knows the popcorn tested positive for asbestos.
 - Besides being legally required to put it in the seller disclosure, it's cheaper to pay for mitigation now than later. Professional services such as asbestos mitigation do not go down as the years pass. It may cost \$2,000 now for the actual mitigation. If left till after inspection, the buyer will use this to negotiate a lower price. They will get a few estimations, and not use the cheapest estimate in their negotiation price. They also may include an inconvenience fee and the cost could be \$4,000.
 - Failure by the seller to put the asbestos in the disclosure leaves them open to litigation because the seller knew about the issue and didn't disclose it.
 - Once the asbestos is mitigated, there is no requirement to put this in the seller's disclosure.

Fixing a Property Up Too Nicely

- A common mistake is fixing up a property too much. If you're fixing up a luxury house to flip, then you need to go all out. Working/middle class rentals don't need this level. They need to be nice and functional, but not spectacular. High-end materials won't add much rental or resale value to a middle range property. Things like these are not worth the costs unless you will be living there:
 - High-end stainless steel appliances.
 - Custom cabinets.
 - Granite slab counter tops.
 - Bay windows.
 - Elaborate crown molding.
 - Expensive chandeliers.
- It's important not to use crummy materials. Builder's grade carpet will rarely last, and good luck getting any mark off walls if you use flat paint. Cheap materials will quickly break, need replaced, and are not worth the cost. Aim for the "Goldilocks zone" – Not too cheap, not too expensive, but just right.

Awkward Additions or Upgrades

- For the most part, it's probably best to avoid adding additions to a house in general.
- Other upgrades may appear on the surface to be worthwhile, but really aren't. Bedrooms which are only accessible only through another bedroom don't count (legally or otherwise) as a bedroom. A bedroom should be at least 100 sf, must have an appropriate sized outside egress, and a closet.
- If the laundry is located within a dank dingy basement, it's probably worth trying to bring the laundry upstairs. If it has a dry, finished basement, it's probably OK to keep it in the basement. If you are considering a garage-to-living area conversion, you should think about whether the house would still have any storage. If the house has no basement or shed, converting the garage pretty much eliminates whatever storage the house once had. People have a lot of stuff and need somewhere to put it.
- Skylights look nice, but they are notorious for leaking, so only consider this for a luxury property.

Bottom line

- Logical analysis of what you are willing to invest should be your bottom line. Let buyers spend the sweat and money to develop their dream home. Your dream home may not be their dream home.

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