

## **YES YOU CAN: Increase Your Home's Value**

Does your house need some work? Certain renovations can pay back handsomely if you sell, while others add little to a home's value. Before hiring a contractor or doing the job yourself, find out which projects are sound investments.

### **Renovation hits**

Some renovations that provide the biggest bang for the buck aren't obvious. For instance, nearly 97% of the costs of installing a steel entry door are recouped on average at resale, according to a recent *Remodeling Magazine* study. Fancy new garage doors also did well, adding about 83% of their cost to the home's value.

Another surprising winner turns out to be adding a bedroom in an attic space, providing a value boost equal to 84% of the cost. Remodeling or finishing a basement comes close, with a return of almost 78%.

DIY Network found that repainting can also be a value booster, but with a bit of a caveat. New wall or siding coatings could backfire and actually cut your home's appeal if you use unpopular colors. Play it safe with soft, neutral shades and avoid anything too harsh or intense.

### **Best kitchen projects**

Almost all homebuyers love a modern, updated kitchen. When it comes to what you'll recoup from renovating your kitchen, however, less is often more. Replacing cabinet faces, the stove, countertops and the floor covering should return about 83% of the cost. That percentage drops to 74% if you add an island, fancier cabinets and lighting. Going whole-hog with things such as stone counters, built-in appliances and a cork floor provides the lowest value, only adding about 64% of the cost.

### **Worthy bathroom projects**

Nice new bathrooms also impress house hunters, so improvements can be wise investments. As with kitchens, though, less often yields more. If you replace the fixtures and add a tile floor, you'll recoup about 73% of the cost if you sell the house. A much more extensive overhaul and expansion, including separate shower and tub, and an enclosed toilet, may cost three times as much and return just 64% of your investment. Adding a bathroom doesn't pay back quite as well, at around 60%.

### **Outdoor payback**

Improvements to your home's exterior can also pack a good punch. New siding can return about 78% with standard vinyl, or 87% if you use a fiber-cement type. Replacing windows is also an excellent choice, boosting the house's value by as much as 79%.

Adding a stylish new deck can do more than make the outdoors more comfortable. A wood deck returns an average 87% in added value, while a longer-lasting material such as composite boards costs more but adds less, about 65% of its cost.

### **Renovation flops**

Some projects might seem like good ideas at first but don't add much value. Converting a bedroom into an office doesn't do much to wow homebuyers, nor does converting a garage into a bedroom. Most house hunters prefer having a garage. Other projects that don't have much payback include wallpapering, screening in a porch and adding luxury kitchen features (except in a high-end home).

### **Smart financing**

If you don't have ready cash to pay for a project, [Minnesota Valley Federal Credit Union](#) can provide [home equity financing](#) or a [personal loan](#) so you can start planning. Before you know it, you can be on your way to making improvements in your living space and boosting its value as well.

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