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What to Keep in Mind When Remodeling by Kirsten Sharpe

I'm often asked by clients and friends to weigh in when they're planning a home remodel—not for my interior design skills, but because they want to know what updates will appeal to future buyers. If you're in that boat too, here's the advice I always share.

1. Enjoy the Process: Updating your home should be exciting, not stressful. Don't agonize over every little detail—whether it's door handles or drawer pulls. Pick something you like and move forward. Life's too short to sweat the small stuff.

2. Choose What Works for You: Trends come and go quickly. Instead of chasing the latest style, pick materials, colors, and designs that you and your family will enjoy while you live in the home.

3. Focus on Quality: Invest in quality products and quality installation. A well-done remodel stands the test of time and leaves a better impression on potential buyers down the road.

4. Don't Rely on HGTV: Those shows are entertaining, but they're not real life. Their timelines, budgets, and expectations aren't realistic for the average homeowner. Stay grounded in what works for your home, your budget, and your lifestyle.

5. You Won't Recoup Every Dollar: Most remodeling projects don't offer a 100% return on investment—but that's not the point. Keeping your home updated will help it sell faster when the time comes. And more importantly, you get to enjoy the improvements while you live there.

6. You Can't Please Everyone: No matter what updates you make, a buyer might want something different. So make choices that please you. If your style is bold or eclectic, just be aware that it may not appeal to everyone—which might affect the pool of potential buyers.

8. Keep Track of Your Updates: Create a list of what you've updated, when you did it, and how much you spent—especially for big-ticket items. You'll be surprised how it adds up. For mechanical systems like the furnace or water heater, write the installation date directly on the unit with a Sharpie. It's a small thing that buyers, inspectors, and realtors really appreciate.

9. Choose Contractors Carefully: Ask around—your friends, colleagues, or even your Realtor may have great recommendations (or helpful warnings!). A good contractor can make or break your project, so do your homework before signing any contracts.

Remodel for the Right Reasons. It's your house, your money, and your taste. Make updates that bring you joy and comfort now—not just for future resale value. Updating your home is a bit like buying art: buy what you love, not what you think will appreciate in value. So go ahead—refresh your space, enjoy the process, and have fun with it!

