



Thinking of Updating Your House?

I'm often asked by clients and friends to provide input as they start remodeling their house. It's not that they want my interior decorating ideas, it's that they are curious what buyers will want to see when they eventually sell their home. Below is the advice I share.

What to Keep in Mind When Remodeling

1. Enjoy the process of refreshing your home. It should be a fun project, and not anxiety inducing. Don't agonize over minute differences in door handle styles or drawer pulls. Life is too short for that. Pick what you like, and move on.
2. Choose materials, colors, and designs which your family will enjoy. Don't follow trends as those will make your house quickly feel outdated.
3. Concentrate on quality products and quality installation.
4. Don't pay attention to HGTV or other shows. That's television, and not real life.
5. You won't financially recoup your entire investment when you sell. The point is to update the house to keep it current, and by doing so, it will eventually sell faster. Most importantly, enjoy the updates and the investment while you live there. The right buyer will appreciate the work you've done, because it will save them time and money, and make your house move-in ready.
6. No matter the colors, flooring type, kitchen counter or cabinets (and drawer pulls) you choose, a buyer may want something different. Since you can't please everyone, please yourself. However, if you have eclectic taste, accept that making bold, out of the norm updates will cause some buyers not to make an offer.
7. Stay away from painting walls dark colors. A house should be a happy and comforting place to walk into, and deep blue, dark brown, dark gray or burgundy walls don't give a welcoming feel to any room. And please don't hang any wallpaper!
8. Keep a list of what you updated, when, and how much you spent. Do this especially for big ticket items. You'll be amazed how quickly it adds up, and you can use this list when you sell the home. For the mechanicals, write the installation date directly on the water heater, furnace, and water softener with a Sharpie. The buyer, realtor and inspector will be grateful to see the ages with a quick glance.
9. And finally, be careful who you hire. Ask friends and colleagues (or your Realtor), if they can recommend contractors and suppliers. Everyone has had work done in some fashion, and can share their success or disappointments with you.

It's your money, your taste, and your time. You're in charge. Make the updates that work for you, and enjoy your living space until you move. Updating your house is similar to buying art. They say you should buy art because you like looking at it, not because of the resale value. Keep this in mind when you remodel. And have fun with it!

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