



# TOP 10 Renovation Don'ts:

**HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU'RE HELPING OR HURTING YOUR PROJECT, HERE ARE MY SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR NEXT RENOVATION:**

**DON'T: Delay decisions.** If you want your remodel to go well, the best thing to do is make every single decision before the work starts.

A designer should talk you through the list of situations that might come up. Reality is, there will always be on-site issues, why add to that stress by having to wait for a faucet, or you can't tile the shower enclosure because the floor tiles are back ordered (again!).

Most decisions are new materials, like paint, trim, tile etc. These may seem like small decisions, but when your faucet is two weeks late, plumbers have to be rescheduled and the medicine cabinet door hits the faucet when it's installed. You'll quickly appreciate the advice to have everything on-site before you start.

**DON'T: Change your mind.** It's inevitable, you'll change your mind about something on your project. Know this, every time you change your mind, it results in a change order and delays. The change may seem minor, but there are always added costs — even if it's only the time spent discussing the change.

Scheduling can be affected too.

Everyone working on the job needs to be informed of the change so no one's working on the old plan. Everyone makes changes, and that's OK — just be aware of the potential to disrupt and delay the job which can also add costs.

**DON'T: Buy your own materials.** It seems like an obvious way to save money — a builder/contractor is going to mark up the cost of materials and pass that added cost on to you. That's true, but the contractor/builder/designer normally gets a better price. Bottom line, it means that after markup, you'll pay the same price, and maybe even less. Your professional should know what products to stay away from (eg: inferior craftsmanship, long ordering times, etc.). Remember, big box clearance items are on sale for a reason — you get what you pay for! You may save on the materials, but the cost on labour to install inferior products, and additional costs to buy more because tiles keep cracking always ends up costing you more.

**DON'T: Put lipstick on a pig.** There — I said it. We rarely come right out and say that to you, but some houses should be knocked down rather than

being renovated. Unfortunately, it is common for people to put money into fancy cabinets for a house with a sagging foundation, or purchase a high-efficiency furnace in a house with no insulation. Listen to the professionals who come to look at your home, be open to their suggestions, and put your money where it counts. For large renovations, I often segment the project into phases — it is just smart advice to take care of structural, functional issues first — then add the pretty after — if your facing a large project, you won't regret this advice.

**DON'T: work without a contingency fund.** It's almost unheard of that a person sets a realistic budget for a project. Make it a rule of thumb — add in the 10% towards the unforeseen. If, you've planned responsibly, and — the contingency thankfully wasn't needed — my clients have purchased that "wish list" item they always wanted as a special treat. But I can guarantee you, when walls are ripped open and you see faulty plumbing or wiring — you planned responsibly and already have that covered. Add in the contingency, it's peace of mind for you.

General rule of thumb for contingency amount is for a home that is 0 to 20 years old, start with a 5%, then add 5% for each additional decade. (Eg: 20+ year old home = 10%, 30+ year old home = 15% etc.)

**Don't: let kids and pets get in the way.** Though the people working in your home will often try to accommodate your pets and kids, they shouldn't have to — it's just not safe

to have children or animals around construction.

**Don't: live in the home/store furniture on-site.** Most people ignore this rule, and for good reason. Remodeling is expensive, and moving out just adds to the cost. If you can't move out for the whole job, try to schedule some time away and set up a clean, comfortable place to retreat to when you can't handle coming home to a messy and stressful construction site. I've had lots of my clients rent an RV, and they park in the driveway/backyard for the duration. Plan to move all furniture out of the areas that are being worked on. You don't want to be paying plumbers/electricians costly rates to be moving your furniture — do you? Not to mention your property can get damaged and will get filthy.

**Don't: be a distraction.** It may sound harsh, but every minute someone working on your house spends talking to you, they are not working on your house. Is the conversation important and one that will have an impact on the job? That's one thing, but the electrician on the job isn't getting paid any more to spend 30 minutes talking about your vacation plans. Schedule regular meetings to review all with your general contractor at a time when workers are normally off-site, they will convey instructions to the sub-trades to carry out your wishes.

**Don't: ignore what the house wants.** Though some people can pull off wearing a pair of high-top sneakers with a tuxedo, it can also go horribly wrong. Houses are the same way. Can an ultramodern kitchen in a Victorian brownstone work? Absolutely. There are no hard and fast rules — just get to know your house, live in it and do your research before you pull out the sledgehammer. It's always a good idea to hire an interior designer to ensure that if you are wanting to mix the personality of your home on the outside, to what is getting renovated on the inside, they are the professionals — let them guide you to an amazing end result.

**Don't: work without a contract, floor plan or design.** Always get a contract from your professional. Without one you are opening yourself to errors in communication and expectations.

Always work with a detailed floor plan, if your home is fairly new you should already have one. If not, it is well worth the cost to have one done up. It helps suppliers/sub-trades estimate labour/materials more accurately, and, more importantly it helps you envision the details, and plan for solutions.

Most projects require design, it isn't as expensive as you would think. How much is it worth to you to renovate right the first time? Find the perfect

designer/ architect for your next project. Consult with them before you start your renovation plans. The consultation fee is a wise investment to get a professional opinion before you make costly mistakes.

For example, my discovery consultation takes 3 hours and is packed full of information. We discuss creative solutions, wants, wishes, needs, budget, timelines. The fee is minimal considering the value to you in setting you on the right path to success.

***Plan for your renovations success and it will reward you for many years to come. Remember good design is not a luxury, it's a smart investment!***

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As an interior design professional, I follow fashion, the economy, local and international events to bring you my professional opinion of what is current and innovative in the world of interior design. Join me each month where I hope to inspire you in making your home the very best it can be.

MARIE HEBSON'S **interiorsBYDESIGNinc.** is a full service design studio based out of Edmonton, Alberta. No stranger to design, Marie has a degree in both graphic and interiors.

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