

ULTIMATE HOME REMODELING CHECKLIST:

So you're ready to turn your home remodeling ideas into reality. Whether you just bought a place that needs a lot of love or you're finally able to do that makeover you've been dreaming about, this is a very big deal.

Considering the cost to remodel a house, pre-planning is essential. With all the details to keep straight and conversations to remember, a house makeover can quickly go off the rails.

Don't let that happen to you. Keep your home renovation ideas on a budget and on the right track by using our handy-dandy home remodeling checklist, developed with input from a pro.

STEP 1: CAPTURE YOUR HOME REMODELING IDEAS ON PAPER

CREATE A PLAN

Every grand adventure begins with motivation and a map. Once you've considered why you want to embark on your remodeling adventure — it's a necessary repair, to update a room, to improve accessibility, or just for fun — it's time to plan how you're going to get there.

LIST YOUR PRIORITIES

With your why nailed down, ask what your priorities are. If grandma's coming to live with you, a zero-entry shower could be a non-negotiable. If you're a private chef, that walk-in cooler is essential. Once you know

what you can't live without, you'll have a better idea of where the wiggle room is in the budget.

SET A BUDGET

Imagine having your roof ready for shingles and running out of money. Not a good place to be when a storm brews on the horizon.

"When I ask a prospective client their budget, about 90 percent have no idea," says Jay Gauldin, president, TBS Construction in the greater Roanoke Valley of Virginia. If you're unable or unwilling to finance this project, know your limit and keep a tight grip on the purse strings. Also, Gauldin recommends padding your budget with 10-25 percent to cover unexpected surprises. He says to pad for the unforeseen, like water damage found under tile, and for changes in plans, like you want a larger window than you first thought.

When preparing your home for sale, you definitely want to get back what you've invested. Use sites like HomeAdvisor to research an average cost when planning a remodeling project. Then check the Remodeling Impact Report published by the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). Not only does it show the percentage of value normally recovered from a project, it includes a Joy Score — a number from 1 to 10 which rates how much enjoyment homeowners receive from a particular project. If you're not planning to sell your home, the Joy Score

