

WHERE DO I START?

A kitchen renovation can seem like an overwhelming project to undertake, but with proper preparation, lots of patience and helpful guidance and assistance from professionals, the makeover of this important room can go smoothly. Here are some things to keep in mind as you begin to journey down the exciting road toward your dream kitchen.

1. Why does your present kitchen need to change?

There are really five basic reasons why homeowners choose to renovate their kitchen. All have varying degrees of work involved, and require very different budgets. How extensive are your needs?

- **Cosmetic** – Change a dated kitchen design to a more modern kitchen, or visa-versa. The most frequent type of kitchen design makeover is to update or alter the appearance of the kitchen for a fresh, new look. A cosmetic kitchen remodelling project does **not** change the layout of the kitchen. It involves renewing the walls, kitchen cabinetry, counters, floor, or changing the overall design (from a contemporary kitchen design to a French country kitchen design, for instance).
- **To improve kitchen design layout** - Changing kitchen design layout might include repositioning appliances, fixtures, and eating areas for better organization and workflow (for example to improve the work triangle – sink, to stove, to refrigerator, to sink – for smoother, more efficient meal preparation, or to create a second food prep area or eating bar).
- **To redirect kitchen traffic** – This might involve adding a new doorway, moving an existing one, or taking down part of a wall to open up the kitchen, to make it feel more open and less isolated. The basic kitchen design layout and footprint (*traffic area*) often requires redesign. But the result of redirecting traffic often makes the kitchen look and feel larger, and will make it safer and more efficient.
- **To increase kitchen space from existing interior space** – This renovation increases kitchen space by expanding the kitchen into adjacent rooms. This may mean incorporating a little-used dining room to create a larger kitchen with more counter and storage space, adding a breakfast counter for quick snacks and/or work island, etc. This type of project often involves moving or removing interior walls, and rearranging appliances and fixtures. The result? Significantly more space, increased storage, and open access to the adjoining room(s).
- **Expand kitchen space through an outside wall** – Expanding outward by building an addition on to the house is the most extensive and most expensive type of kitchen renovation. Making both interior and exterior changes to your home often requires the expertise and skills of several professionals – including a general contractor. This project can completely change the function, flow, and design of your kitchen, as well as the exterior appearance of your home. It provides more options to design your own kitchen, and will provide extra kitchen floor space, and perhaps a walk-in pantry, eating nook, office/desk space, etc.

It may be helpful to talk to a kitchen designer before you commit to an overall expansion of your space. He or she has the expertise to look at all your layout options, and may be able to incorporate your needs in a more efficient manner in a design that meets your needs, in a style of your choice, which will complement the rest of your home's interior design and overall theme.

2. What inspires you?

- One of the first steps is to start collecting pictures and notes of things you love. Jot down ideas when you see something unique that attracts your attention. Look through magazines and kitchen websites, and tear out or print out images you really like. Think about what attracts you to the image – is it color? Style? A particular look? Make notes on the pictures to remind you of what stood out for you.
- Make note of what you DON'T like as well. It will be much easier to quickly eliminate options you're not interested in.
- Do you like the look of country? Contemporary? Traditional? A mix of several styles? A mix of wood tones?

3. What do you do in your kitchen?

- How do you use this space? What activities will take place there?
- Do you like to entertain in your kitchen? Does an open plan appeal to you, or do you want the evidence of your cooking to be hidden away from guests?
- Do you prepare a home-cooked meal from scratch every day, or do you frequently eat out and use the kitchen more for on-the-go or prepared meals and quick snacks?
- How many people use the kitchen at one time? Is there more than one cook to accommodate?

- Do you have small children? Are you an empty nester? Stage of life – and the accompanying safety, accessibility and mobility issues – should be considered in your plans.
- Copperstone Kitchens has an activities check list that your designer will review with you to help you think about the many considerations to keep in mind.

4. What are your long term plans for this house?

- Maybe your kitchen drives you crazy, but you're only planning to stay in your home for few more years. Alternatively, perhaps this home is where you plan to stay well past retirement. Consider whether you should be investing in a minor facelift or a major re-construction that will meet your needs for years to come.
- What image do you want to present? Do you have a home office with clients who see this space? Is this design just for you and your family, or are you mainly concerned about re-sale?

5. Start Your Plan

- Consider the current layout – is it working? Does it need to change or can you keep the same cabinet footprint?
- What is your time frame? Do you want your new kitchen ready to use in 3-6 months? In 6-12 months? You should begin seriously planning for your new kitchen at least three months before the starting date of the renovations. It may take several weeks to finalize the design and layout of the space, manufacturers require from 3 to 6 weeks to manufacture your new cabinets, and you'll likely need to shop for items like appliances, floor coverings, lights, etc. Remember too that good installers are busy installers, and they need to be booked well in advance.
- What priorities are really important to you? For a gourmet cook, perhaps you dream of a state-of-the-art commercial gas range. For a home with children, perhaps meal preparation is a family activity requiring adequate space and accessibility for young hands to fully participate. Do you want your guests to have space to visit in the kitchen while you're preparing?
- Think about what you may want to add to your kitchen in years to come. For example, if you're considering installing a television next year, have the cable wiring roughed in while your walls and ceilings are opened up during your reno so that it's ready when you are.

6. Plan Your Budget

- One of your first big challenges will be to put a budget together to make sure you get the kitchen you really want. Your professional kitchen designer can help you with this process. A kitchen design can be done in all price ranges. Some changes may be required, but the basic design can usually be achieved.
- You should also do your own research. Price appliances and flooring, ask friends who have remodelled about the costs and read shelter magazines to help you mentally prepare a budget that is realistic.
- See [Budgeting for Your New Kitchen](#) to begin this process and arrive at a budget amount that is realistic and will work for your family and your needs.
- While it's great to keep a positive attitude and think that everything will go as planned, life usually doesn't work out that way! When coming up with your kitchen renovation budget, plan for challenges by adding on 10-15% for contingencies.
- You may be able to save money by doing some of the work yourself, but only take on tasks that you are absolutely certain you can successfully accomplish on your own. Otherwise, you may waste time and cash having to redo mistakes.

6. Finalize your Plan

- If you are starting from scratch, you probably need the help of a professional to lay out your options properly. There is order required for kitchen planning -- it needs proper function, layout, electrical, plumbing etc. For example, if it's a blank canvas space, you need to know the dimensions of the appliances to properly build the cabinets around them.
- You can choose where to spend. If you've spent the time planning (on your own or with your kitchen designer), and have done your homework, you know where you can afford to go over budget and where you can save money. Remember, you certainly don't have to sacrifice style to save money!
- **Go for Quality.** In most cases, buying the most inexpensive and lower quality hardware, fixtures and appliances will cost you more in the long run. Take time to research products, whether working with a designer or not.
- Ensure you're dealing with professionals, and that the people you select for the job are reputable and insured. They'll be in and out of your home over the next few months, so be certain you are comfortable around them and that you understand their work styles before you proceed.
- After you've made all of your choices and have the installation specifications for the products and materials you will use, our Project Coordinator will discuss the schedule with you, based on the lead times and specifications on various materials.

- The busiest time for renovations is from May through December. If you plan your renovations for the winter or early spring, you'll avoid scheduling problems, as contractors and kitchen designers are not as busy, and planning deadlines will be shorter.
- A typical schedule would start with a complete tear-out, any structural modifications, installation of windows and doors, plumbing modifications, electrical modifications, drywall, tape and texture, painting, floor and underlayment (particle board), cabinet installation, countertops, plumbing and electrical top-out, floor covering installation and appliance installation, followed by a grand dinner party!