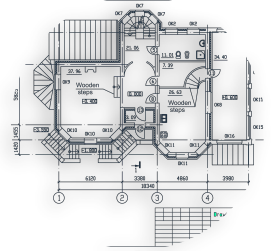


BEFORE YOU RENOVATE

1 PREPARATION IS EVERYTHING

Before your project starts, your vision should be as complete as possible, and as many decisions as you can should be made. If you begin a project and part of the scope is unclear—say, how the fireplace will be modified to blend with the rest of the living room renovation—that uncertainty can lead to delays and frustration later on.

Have your tile selections picked and ordered. And if you want to see the tile in the room before grouting, at least have a few grout choices in mind. The same goes for paint: maybe you want to wait until cabinets are installed before making a final selection, but narrowing your options in advance will make that decision easier. (And while we're on paint—think about sheen, trim color, and the ceiling too!)



2 CROSSING THE FINISH LINE



One of the biggest pain points for clients is a project falling behind schedule. So here are a few thoughts on that, especially when vetting contractors before signing a contract. When a contractor says your bathroom renovation will take eight weeks, ask: Does that schedule include lag days? Is there a buffer for inevitable delays? What are the best-case and worst-case scenarios?

Permits and inspections can cause delays. If your project involves structural changes and demolition reveals unforeseen conditions, that can cause delays too. Your preparation will help keep the project on schedule, but an organized project manager and a realistic timeline are also key to finishing on time.

3 BALANCING THE BUDGET

In addition to staying on schedule, budget is another top concern. Most contracts and contractors include a contingency. Whether or not it's formally stated in your contract, there will always be extras, additions, or surprise costs that arise during a project. If your contract includes a 20% contingency, consider earmarking or expecting an additional 10–20% for overruns or add-ons. If it's not needed—great! But it's better to be prepared than to be caught off guard mid-project. And if that extra contingency puts the project out of reach, it may be worth revisiting the scope or holding off for a better time.



4 KEEP CALM & RENOVATE ON



No matter how prepared, on schedule, and on budget you are, renovation projects always come with challenges. Be prepared for some turbulence. If you're living in the house during a kitchen renovation, if you have a pet that's sensitive to noise or strangers—or both—or if you have a high-stress job and limited time to field calls and make decisions, you'll likely feel the added strain.

There will be inconvenience. There will be stress. But trust me—it will all be worth it when your ideas become reality in your new home.