

Your Kitchen Remodel Checklist

Did you hear about the contractor who put up sheetrock before the wiring was in the wall? No? Well, neither have we. But a kitchen remodel is a complex process. Whether you use the one below or develop your own, a step-by-step checklist will help you stay on track and moving forward.

Phase 1: Assess Your Goals

Carefully analyze exactly what you hope to achieve with this remodel. Consider the following:

- Do you have enough floor space?
- Are there any traffic bottlenecks?
- Do you have any special storage needs?
- Is your cooking style occasional, casual or professional?
- Does anyone in the home have difficulty bending or reaching?
- Will average-height counters work for everyone in the family?
- What other activities besides cooking happen in your kitchen?
- What look do you hope to achieve?
- What features are you looking for in cabinets, flooring, sink, lighting, countertops and backsplash?
- Do you have some high-priority wants, such as a pro range or granite countertops?
- When do you want the project to be completed?

Phase 2: Assess Your Resources

- Take pictures – you, your designer and your contractor will refer to them during planning.
- Measure your space. Create a floor plan of your current space that includes windows, doors, electrical outlets and switches, vents, plumbing and any other significant features.
- Do you plan on doing any work yourself? Break the project down into tear-out, rough construction, installation of each product, and finish carpentry. Make a list of tools and project time for each part of the project. Now determine what you will do yourself and where it makes sense to hire a pro.
- Will you be using existing appliances or [refacing cabinets](#)?
- What is your budget? (This should be less than 20% of the value of your home and include a 20% buffer for unexpected expenses.)

Phase 3: Create a Design and Shop for Materials

- Select appliances and cabinets (your designer will need this information).
- Decide what type of material you want for flooring, countertops and backsplash, and what type of lighting you want.
- Work with a professional to develop a detailed layout with installation notes for your contractor. Use a [free kitchen design](#) service or allocate 4-15% of your budget for a local interior design studio.

Phase 4: Hire a Contractor

- Use personal recommendations and online directories like Angie's List to develop a list of contractors.
- Cross off any without license, bonding or insurance.

- Cross off any who are not free to complete the project on your schedule.
- Cross off any who have not recently completed similar projects.
- Assemble a packet with your detailed design and a list of materials. Provide exactly the same specs to each contractor.
- Interview contractors (see [Interviewing Contractors and Evaluating Bids](#))
- Call references.
- Sign a contract.

Phase 5: Construction

- Take progress photos.
- Set up housekeeping in your [temporary kitchen](#).
- Provide coffee, water and sodas for work crews.
- Be available to answer questions.
- Check off items in the contract as they are completed.
- Do not tie the contractor or workers up in long conversations.
- Collaborate with the contractor to work out unexpected issues.

Phase 7: Decorate and Enjoy

- When the construction debris is cleared away, display a few carefully chosen items in glass-door cabinets and open shelves, then, take pictures!