

DIY Home Projects: Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

February 5, 2021 | In Kitchen Renovation | By Mary

If you've ever done any DIY project then you know there's nothing like the feeling you get after completing a task that you worked hard to finish. And not only are DIY activities fun, but they also provide added benefits for your mind, body, and even your wallet. But, like many other things in life, DIY projects can go wrong as well. We've asked experts to share the most common DIY home project mistakes they've seen and what to do to avoid them.

Planning

We find the best way to avoid costly mistakes in DIY projects is to put the adequate amount of time into the most important step of the planning. 80% of your project happens in the planning phase. Identify and source your products before construction begins. This way you can get the products you want without facing changes due to lead times or supply chain disruptions. DIY and design are detail-oriented. Measure your space and remeasure and do it again. Accurate measurements save time and loads of money when you are ready to install!

→ *Kristen Elizabeth Design*

Not consulting with a professional before you begin

With over 16 years of experience in remodeling and new construction, I have seen a good number of DIY mistakes. I am often called in far too late to help remedy the problem. The most common mistake I have seen is not consulting with a professional before beginning work. Even though it may look easy enough, there are often small items that are overlooked. This can cause problems down the road. So, always consult with an expert before undertaking a DIY remodel. I also see people far too excited to begin their project without completely understanding the cost of all the materials. It is important to know all the materials that the project will require and have them on hand to avoid unnecessary delays. Lastly— and this is a big one— I never recommend that a DIY-er ever attempt plumbing or electrical work on their own. This is a safety hazard. There is a reason that professionals are licensed in these industries. It could be an issue when it comes to reselling and that's not a positive for return on investment.

Doing it just because it's trendy

The most common mistake I see homeowners make when remodeling their home is getting in their head too much, thinking "Is this trendy?" or "Will this be appealing when we sell the home down the road"? I find that these thoughts can give people tunnel vision or make for uninspiring spaces. My advice is to think about what the home needs architecturally: What your lifestyle needs in terms of functionality and how you can really reflect "you" into the home aesthetically? That's the recipe for success.

→ *ICONIC Design + Build*

Overlooking potential changes to functionality

We find that homeowners who want to refresh the look of their home commonly overlook potential changes to the functionality of their home. In our design firm, we help clients utilize their spaces in new ways, while also updating style and feel. This can include enlarging their kitchen into a rarely-used formal dining space. And even turning a formal living room into part pocket office, part walk-in pantry. By using 3-D modeling software, we give the client new eyes, to see how reallocating space can breathe new life into their home and how they live in it.

→ *Everything Home Designs*

Underestimating the value of good hardware

Never underestimate the value of good hardware inside and out. I have seen the missed opportunity to upgrade hinges and drawer rails more than once. That's like taking a tin and dipping it into gold. It all looks gorgeous from the outside, but that luxurious feel is gone the second you open a cabinet. Don't do it! Hinges, pulls, toe kicks, and the details are what takes a kitchen from ok to over the top incredible!

Leaving the walk-in pantry door as a separate architectural feature

A common mistake we see often in DIY home remodels is pantry design in the kitchen. Most people leave the walk-in pantry door as a separate architectural feature in their kitchen design. This makes it stand out and not flow with the rest of the kitchen. Our advice is to build it in with your cabinets for a seamless, sleek, well-planned look. This gives your kitchen clean lines and an overall cohesive design.

→ *Interiors by Popov*



Not thinking about details

1) Tile Backsplash – A common misconception when a kitchen counter ends up against a wall, is that you need to continue running the backsplash tile around and wrap that 2' of wall space with tile. This is visually very heavy, and it leaves the unfinished edge of the tile exposed. All you need to do is leave the tile in the backsplash area and sheetrock and paint the wall coming down to meet the countertop on the adjacent wall.

2) Glass Cabinets – Homeowners get misty-eyed seeing all the pretty glass cabinets on Instagram. But remember, you have to fill all the space behind the glass with pretty things. Avoid common things like colorful plastic cups and boxes of macaroni and cheese. It's best to keep glass cabinets limited to one or two unless you already have a large collection of beautiful dishes.

3) Blocking for Grab Bars – Many people think that grab bars are only for hospitals and nursing homes. But we have a fast growing 50+ population and accidents do happen. Homeowners don't usually plan ahead during bathroom remodels. You should always ask your contractor to put the blocking in for potential grab bars that may be needed down the road. It's easier to do it now when the walls are already open, rather than tear it all down later.

→ *Terravista Interior Design Group*

Not mixing it up or end up overdesigning

Simple yet so important...Resisting the urge to over-design and match EVERYTHING. There is nothing more difficult than designing around a room where every print, finish, and texture is the same. Mix it up!

→ *AHG Interiors*

Not thinking about the end result

It's all about an atmosphere plan and how the house is going to feel when finished. A professional interior designer will have the sourcing and knowledge to do a really great job.

→ *The Design Firm*