



The result of a good remodel will be a kitchen that is lighter, brighter, more open, with warm textures and improved efficiency

**T**he kitchen is the home's hearth. For many homes it is the center of family activity. It is also the most often remodeled room in the American home. A well-designed kitchen with plenty of cabinets and counter space can often compensate for other shortcomings in the home. Updating your kitchen can vary from smart, low-cost cosmetic improvements such as new wallpaper or window treatments, to a total renovation of the space. An enjoyable kitchen is both efficient and attractive. Improvements should be made with this in mind. They should also coordinate with your family's lifestyle and the amount of time the family spends in the room.

### Investment

Remodeling the kitchen is almost always an excellent investment in terms both of adding space for your family's enjoyment and in increasing the resale value of your home. Remodeling costs vary depending on the number of appliances, quality of cabinets, type of countertops, and labor required to do the job.

Most experts agree that for the average American home, a mid-level remodel that includes new flooring, good quality cabinets, new countertops, and reasonably priced fixtures and appliances is the best way to ensure a good return on your investment. For a complete remodel, the rule of thumb is not to spend more than 15% of the value of the home.

### Planning

Solid planning is the main ingredient in determining the outcome of your remodel. Begin by thoroughly thinking through what you want the outcome of the remodel to be. The more complicated the project, the more important it is to receive professional advice. A kitchen remodel is something that you should only

have to do once, so you want to take the time to do it right.

Because of the wide range of costs and types of products available, it is important to first establish a realistic budget. Avoid under-improving or over-improving the space by selecting materials that are comparable in value with those used in other homes in your neighborhood. This is necessary if you want your house to increase in value in relationship to the cost of the remodel.

### Components

When selecting the new components for your kitchen, you have a lot to look forward to. Cabinetry and its accessories have come a long way in the last 15 years. Whether you choose the traditional look of wood or the high-tech style of Euro/contemporary, you can select convenience

features like lazy susans and appliance garages that will make your kitchen extremely functional and cleverly uncluttered.

While plastic laminate is still the most popular countertop material available, your options also include ceramic tile, wood, natural stone, and synthetic solid surfaces that resemble marble or granite.

Today's appliances are sleek, flexible, and offer more convenience than ever before. As a group, they are better looking than those of the past. They have a built-in look, fit flush, and blend in well with surrounding cabinets. Most come in colors or specialized finishes that fit in with any kitchen decor.

As the center of family activity, your kitchen is the most important room in the house. A well-designed kitchen establishes a base where the family's lifestyle flourishes.

