

Home Improvements

Changes That Sell, Changes That Don't

Think home improvements will substantially increase the selling price of your home? You may want to think again. Before you invest a lot of money into home improvements and upgrades, you should consult with a real estate agent to determine which changes will most impact your home's sale.

Some renovations not only fail to improve resale profits, but could actually detract from your home's overall value. Swimming pools, water gardens and greenhouse additions fall into this unfortunate category.

So if you're considering the change simply to increase the value of your home, check out this list first. The list includes improvements that enhance the sale of your home. Each includes an estimated* rate of return on the improvement or upgrade.

*Rates of return vary by region, trends and period of time.

- **Remodeled Kitchen, 150 percent**
Kitchen updates can offer a substantial payback. Simple, functional and neutral are the key words here.
- **Revitalized Lawn and Garden, 100 percent**
A lush lawn and a splash of floral color can draw potential buyers like hummingbirds to sugar water. A few hundred dollars invested in this area can result in thousands of dollars in profit.
- **Fireplace, 100 percent**
Fill your home with feelings of warmth and tradition by installing or upgrading a fireplace. This home improvement is a sure winner – especially if it's energy-efficient (like many gas models).
- **Second Bath , 90 percent**
Add a second full- or half-bath to your home and you'll reap some benefit. Even a humble lavatory can make a difference for many potential buyers.
- **Room Addition, 80 percent**
This is one of the most popular choices for improving resale value. You'll do better if you go with a family room or an extra bedroom.
- **Remodeled Bath , 60 to 80 percent**
With a master bath on most buyer wish lists, this is a wise place to invest your money. Consider installing two sinks, which goes over big for buyers who have to handle morning rush hour.
- **Deck, 70 percent**
Regardless of locale, outdoor living spaces are in high demand. Low-maintenance deck materials give potential buyers more time to enjoy the view.
- **Exterior Paint, 50 percent**
You'll take years off the appearance of an older home with fresh color and finish. This home improvement ranks the highest in adding curb appeal.
- **Finished Basement, 40 percent**
A terrific way to add space without building a costly addition is by simply finishing your basement. And if you can include walk-out access in the mix, you'll add even more value.
- **Heating System, 40 percent**
Replace your existing heating system only if it's dysfunctional. Be aware that buyer preferences vary on this upgrade.
- **New Windows and Doors, 35 percent**
Although new windows and doors can offer energy-efficiency and are visually appealing, these upgrades don't necessarily translate into a return for you. You can, however, increase the appeal of your home if you alert prospective buyers to the reduced energy bills your new windows and doors offer.

Now if you aren't ready for major home improvement projects like these, get started with some quick-fixes to make your house

more appealing. Or, connect with a real estate agent to get some professional insight on the topic.



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