



Herbie's Tips & Trends

Finding Ideas for your Remodeling Project

You want to change the look and feel of your house, but you also want your remodeling job to look fresh for a number of years and complement the existing features of your home. How do you choose the right project and design for you and your family?

First, take your family's lifestyle into account when selecting an area of your home to remodel. For example, if you get a lot of traffic through the house, consider hardwood floors. Families who frequently entertain in the kitchen may want to expand the room and add an island or some comfortable chairs. If your bathroom is the place where you escape the world, add a whirlpool tub or a deluxe shower.

After you've chosen an area of your home to remodel, the wide array of project options can be both dazzling and intimidating. To get started, consult the resources below, which can give you specific ideas on how to turn your house into the dream home you've always wanted.

TV Shows: There are an increasing number of shows and channels focused on decorating and simple home improvement projects to more complex remodels or home makeovers. For example, HGTV features projects that evolve from start to finish on shows like "Buying and Selling" and "Curb Appeal"; check your local television guide for listings.

Magazines: Magazines that cater to home improvement, lifestyle and remodeling can be an excellent source of ideas. Page through publications such as Dwell, Home, House Beautiful, Better Homes and Gardens, Southern

Living, Coastal Living, Food and Wine, Country Living, Ladies' Home Journal and Good Housekeeping to identify projects and materials that might work in your home. Additionally, you can request a wide range of free or inexpensive literature by completing the mail-in coupons inserted in such publications.

Websites/Blogs: Surfing the Web is a great way to find fresh ideas and to research projects. Many remodelers, manufacturers and magazines host websites that feature project photos, buying guides and product information. Web directories such as the Home Builders & Remodelers Assn of Cape Cod's member directory can help you find professional remodelers in your area. Other sites such as Pinterest and Houzz have extensive photo collections for inspiration. And, an increasing number of DIY and design blogs created by homeowners themselves can also provide inspiration for simple projects you can do around the house.

Sketches and Floor Plans: No two remodeling projects are the same, but you can gain some insight into how another homeowner solved a space problem by carefully studying sketches and floor plans. If, like most people, you are easily confused by plans and drawings, imagine yourself in the middle of the room or space on the plan.

Books: Browse a bookstore with a well-stocked home improvement section, but beware of books telling you to be your own remodeling contractor. Most remodeling projects call for a level of skill and work hours beyond those stated in these books. The job of a professional remodeler

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requires experience and competence in a wide range of disciplines, and unless you are highly skilled and licensed in all the trades, you can quickly get in over your head.

Newspapers: Most newspapers publish regular sections devoted to real estate, home design and remodeling. Also, twice a year — usually in the spring and fall — many papers print special home improvement supplements. Each of these sections contains timely articles and useful advertisements on remodeling, home improvement, repair and maintenance.

Friends, Family and Neighbors: Do you know someone who has recently remodeled their home in a style you admire? He or she may still have product manuals, magazines and other helpful information you can borrow, as well as practical advice drawn from his or her own experience.

Remodeling Professionals: One of the advantages of choosing a remodeler early is gaining access to an extensive library of resources prior to starting a project. Once you've chosen a contractor, he or she usually can offer you a wide variety of materials, including product manuals, magazines, brochures and blueprints.

Manufacturers and Suppliers: The most obvious place to find information about new products and how to use them is on manufacturers' Web sites and in magazine ads. Lumberyards, hardware stores and other suppliers also can be valuable sources of information.

Many suppliers now offer home planning centers, where you can browse comfortably among the following:

- Plan books
- Product manuals
- Sourcebooks

- Building tips
- Magazines
- Brochures
- Directories of local remodelers and builders

