



Boost Your Home's Value Through Affordable

# Home Improvement Projects

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# 10 Ways to Add Value to Your Home Without Breaking Your Bank

Projects that can make life in a current home more enjoyable in the short-term and pay big dividends for the homeowners when the time comes to sell the home.

## 1. Create or Update a Home Office Space

People are working out of the home more and more these days. A home office space is no longer a luxury but a necessity. Convert an attic, unused den or old office into an inviting work sanctuary with windows, a fresh coat of paint and built-in shelving. You'll be sure to reap the rewards.

## 2. Increase the Amount of Usable Space

Any time you can add square footage and living space to your home, it's a win. Build an attractive sunroom or deck onto the back of the house. The creation of more living space makes life more enjoyable for a current homeowner and adds an appealing selling feature for the future. Projects that increase value center around creating flex rooms such as mother-in-law suites, upstairs laundry rooms or playrooms.

## 3. Make Necessary Home Updates

Let a future buyer know that you have taken really good care of the house. Make updates as necessary to the following:

- ▶ Replace outdated carpet with low-maintenance flooring, such as hardwood or tile. This will appeal to buyers of all ages.
- ▶ Replace or repair a shabby roof. If the roof is plain, flat and turning green in the corners, people will look at it and see major problems that could affect the inside of the house.
- ▶ Replace old windows. In the average house, 30% of its energy is lost through windows. Installing new windows will save money on energy bills, freshen up the look of the house and possibly give it that cutting edge needed to sell.
- ▶ Think about small changes you can make that won't require spending a ton of money. Remove outdated wallpaper and paint the wall a neutral color. Replace existing items like appliances and hardware. Add new light fixtures and you've got a great-looking, updated space!
- ▶ Refresh old siding. People usually judge a book by its cover, so old siding sets the tone for expectations of what potential buyers will find inside the house.

## 4. Liven Your Landscape

Create a place to entertain outside. Build a deck or patio area with decorative flooring and comfortable furniture. Add nighttime ambiance with elegant lighting. Plant drought-tolerant plants and add a splash of color using brightly colored, seasonal flowers. For your own enjoyment, install a hammock or chaise loungers for basking in the sun or shaded relaxation. How could a buyer resist a paradise outside their own back door?

## 5. Remodel an Outdated Kitchen

Studies have shown that more activity takes place in the kitchen than any other room in the house. Remodeling the kitchen will not only personalize a home, it will also increase the value of it if the remodeling is done well and correctly. Consider adding recessed lighting, quartz for the counter tops, or re-finish the cabinet fronts. New stainless appliances and new flooring also help provide an updated vibe.

## 6. Renovate an Existing Bathroom

Update an outdated bathroom by creating his-and-her areas with separate sinks or add a skylight to bring in valuable natural light. An updated bathtub and tile are also good ideas. Breathe new life into the space by installing new fixtures, linens and accessories.

## 7. Add a Splash of Color

Adding a fresh coat of paint is an easy, inexpensive way to dramatically change the look of your home. Don't be afraid to hire a color specialist or professional painter if you're not confident in your taste and skill. It's best to stick to neutral colors to appeal to the majority of potential buyers.

## 8. Spruce Up the Garage

Create a work area in the garage. Adding a work bench to the garage provides a space to store and organize tools, along with an area to work on special home improvement projects. To add more storage space, install a simple hanging storage wall system. Paint the walls and maybe even the floor. Be proud of your garage and show it off as a very usable space in the home.

## 9. Pay Attention to Exterior Mildew

Remove mildew from your home's exterior and prevent it from coming back. Start by using a garden sprayer and a mildewcide, which kills mildew without harming your siding, shrubs or grass. Once the mildew is dead, prevent it from coming back by using a mold and mildew proof paint.

## 10. Bump Out to a Bay or Bow Window

Bay and bow windows add instant visual interior and exterior appeal to homes. The extended area adds space for a window seat while bringing more light into the room.

## Remodeling Cost vs. Value

Get the most up-to-date information about the relationship between remodeling costs and resale value.

The website below compares national and regional averages for 21 popular remodeling projects. You can also download a PDF with project data for 149 U.S. markets.

[remodeling.hw.net/cost-vs-value/2018](http://remodeling.hw.net/cost-vs-value/2018)



# Affordable Upgrades for a More Energy-Efficient Home

Save money and improve home performance using an effective strategy. First, target your home's envelope: walls, attic, windows and doors. Then, improve the energy efficiency of systems, such as heating, cooling, lighting and appliances. Schedule an energy audit for more expert advice on your home as a whole. To access a list of certified ECAD auditors in your area, visit [bit.ly/2QlZwaq](http://bit.ly/2QlZwaq).

## Make sure your walls and attic are well insulated.

Effective insulation slows the rate that heat flows out of the house in winter or into the house in summer, so less energy is required to heat or cool the house.

## Upgrade or replace windows.

According to [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov), replacing windows will save 7-24% of your heating and air conditioning bills.

## Plant shade trees and shrubs around your house.

In summer, the foliage blocks infrared radiation that would warm the house, while in winter, the bare branches let this radiation through.

## Replace incandescent bulbs with light-emitting diodes (LEDs) or compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).

CFLs can save 75% of the electricity used by incandescents. Most people don't think about the fact that the electricity to run a light bulb costs much more than the bulb itself. A new CFL costs around \$2 but it lasts 10,000 hours and uses only about 27 watts to generate as much light as a 50-cent, 100-watt incandescent bulb that lasts around 1,000 hours. LEDs offer a longer bulb life with similar utility savings.

### Comparison Between Traditional Incandescents, CFLs and LEDs

	60W Incandescent	15W CFL	12W LED
Energy \$ Saved (%)	-	~75%	~75-80%
Annual Energy Cost*	\$4.80	\$1.20	\$1.00
Bulb Life	1000 hours	10,000 hours	25,000 hours

\*Based on 2 hrs/day of usage at an electricity rate of 11 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

*"Home improvement projects always equate to increasing the value of your house. Whether you're replacing an old dishwasher with a newer, energy-efficient model or simply adding crown moulding to a bedroom, every activity you do means you're investing in the future of your home."*

- Don Zeman, *Homefront with Don Zeman*

## Replace old thermostats with a programmable option.

This appeals to millennials, who appreciate the ease of a product that allows them to control the climate on their smartphone.

## Take advantage of home improvement tax incentives.

For details, visit [energy.gov/savings/search](http://energy.gov/savings/search).

Source: U.S. Green Building Council's Green Home Guide  
[greenhomeguide.com](http://greenhomeguide.com)



## Home Improvement Myths

**"Any Remodel is a Good One"** - Some people think that any improvement is a good one but not all home improvements are created equal. When making renovations, keep in mind that you might want to sell the place one day and a potential buyer may not have the same hobbies and taste as you. For example, adding a concert hall to a ranch-style home could be considered an overly customized remodel when selling the home. Unless the next homeowner is also a musician, he or she may not want such a dedicated space in the house.

**"I Can Do It All Myself"** - Doing it yourself may possibly save money but you need to know your limits. Don't be afraid to ask for help. There are certain low-risk projects that are very simple to tackle on your own but there are many others for which you need a professional. Call around, get estimates and always consider what your time is worth.

**"Pools Add Value"** - Many people think that adding a swimming pool or hot tub is a money-maker when selling a house. That's not always the case. In some regions, adding a pool can be a scary proposition due to climate conditions and liability issues. Pools and hot tubs can also become a time-consuming money pit. Often, the pros of adding this luxury are outweighed by the cons due to the large amount of maintenance required in the off-season.

**"Follow the Latest Design Trends"** - Many homeowners think it's a good idea to follow the latest design trends. This is not always true, as decorating trends come and go. Instead, go for a more timeless feel. Neutral colors or palettes will appeal to far more people when it comes time to sell.

Source: HGTV Online, [hgtv.com](http://hgtv.com)



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