

10 Big-Impact, Low-Cost Remodeling Projects

1. Tidy up kitchen cabinets.

Potential buyers do open kitchen cabinets and look inside. Homeowners can add rollout organizing trays so when the buyers peek in, they will feel like there is a lot of room for their stuff.

2. Add or replace tile.

By retiling very inexpensively, you can make a room look cleaner than it was. Every city has stores that offer \$1 to \$2 tile, so homeowners can afford to retila a dated backsplash or upgrade bathrooms.

3. Add a breakfast bar.

When a wall separates a kitchen from a family room, suggest cutting out an opening to create a breakfast bar.

4. Install granite tile instead of a slab.

Granite kitchen countertops are very popular but can be a \$5,000 upgrade. Instead, homeowners can put in 12-inch granite tiles for about \$300 in materials and get a great impact for little money.

5. Freshen up a bathroom without retiling.

With a dated bathroom it's a great idea to install a new medicine cabinet for \$100, light fixtures for about \$100, a faucet for \$50, and a vanity for \$200. Instead of replacing the tile, the existing grout can be lightly scraped and re-grouted, which leaves a haze that can be buffed out and will make the tile look brand new. Also install glass shower doors. With all that, you've done a bathroom remodel for \$1,000-\$2,000.

6. Freshen up the basement.

If you have cement block or poured concrete walls in the basement, a contractor could fill in cracks with hydraulic cement, paint with a waterproofing paint then add a top coat to add color. You can also paint the floor with a good floor paint, which spiffs it up.

7. Add a room.

Look for large spaces that can be enclosed to create a new bedroom for just the price of creating a wall. That \$400 procedure, which would take a contractor one day, can net about \$40,000 in the sales price.

8. Spruce up cabinet fronts.

Reconditioning is the least expensive way to update tired-looking kitchen cabinets for under \$1,000. Reconditioning includes taking out the nicks and scratches, reconditioning with oil, and putting on new hardware. For \$1,500-4,000 owners can replace the cabinet doors and drawer fronts, and for \$4,000-\$12,000, they can have all the cabinets refaced.

9. Replace light fixtures.

In the foyer, bathroom and kitchen, replacing light fixtures provides a lot of pop for little money. If the kitchen had track lighting, you could spend \$450 to \$600 to have an electrician replace it with recessed canned lights on a dinner switch to add ambiance. For about \$700 you could also install pendant lights over a kitchen island or peninsula.

10. Tech-up the garage.

If you replace the garage door opener with a remote touch pad entry system, it will cost about \$425 and make it look like a high-end system.

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