

## Value Duds: 5 Projects to Avoid

- ↓ **Excessive Landscaping:** It may make for impressive curb appeal, but the high cost won't be recouped. You're better off keeping it simple. Clean and green goes a long way.
- ↓ **Pools:** While they may be enjoyable for the existing homeowners, a pool installation should be avoided if you want to sell your home within the next few years. The cost is rarely recouped and it may even detract from your home's value and market appeal, as many buyers don't want the added maintenance, expense or danger a pool brings.
- ↓ **Home Office Remodel:** Recent surveys show that home office remodels offer the lowest return of any significant improvement. Only 41 percent of money spent in this room will be recouped, on average. Paint the walls, clear the clutter, and move on.
- ↓ **Backup Power Generator:** They are definitely a nice extra, but they won't do much for your home's

value. On average they see a measly \$589 in added value for every \$1000 spent.

- ↓ **Sunroom Addition:** While sunrooms are appealing and offer aesthetics to a home, they are duds in terms of cost versus value. On average, only 43.4 percent of the cost will be recouped in a sale.



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# REMODELING'S BEST & WORST



## 6 Value Boosting Projects

*and the Duds You  
Should Avoid*

# REMODELING'S BEST & WORST

## 6 Value Boosters *and the Duds You Should Avoid*

**G**etting ready to take on a few home improvement projects? You have some important decisions to make. Renovations that may be appealing to you could adversely affect the value of your home. If you are planning on selling within the next few years, you should consider the cost of the improvements and the value they will bring.

**1** Curb appeal is king! Industry studies and appraisers agree that the best value for money spent is in a new front door. It sets a strong first impression with buyers and won't cost much to buy. On average, an insulated, steel door will bring \$1289 in value for every \$1000 spent.

**2** New siding also brings significant curb appeal and a whopping bang for its buck. While quality fiber cement siding does carry a hefty price tag (with an average cost of \$10,393 for 1250 square feet), it offers an average return of 103.6 percent.

**3** Paint is a miracle worker. It can make small rooms appear larger, dark rooms appear lighter, accent architectural elements, and breathe new life into a tired

home. A quality paint job in current neutral colors always brings a value boost, sometimes as much as 300 percent!

**4** Kitchen remodels are the most popular projects. The key to seeing a good return is keeping it simple. Instead of replacing the cabinets (which can cost upwards of \$30,000), refinish, paint or replace doors and drawers for a budget friendly face lift. Upgrade your countertops if they are laminate, choosing a mid-range granite in neutral tones. If the flooring is damaged or dated, install economical and durable tile. Update lighting fixtures and cabinet hardware, and only replace appliances if they are grossly outdated and unattractive. A minor remodel such as this recoups an average of \$720 for every \$1000 spent.

**5** Adding rooms to bring your home up to neighborhood standard will help it sell, but doesn't always add as much value as you would imagine. Play it safe by finishing space you already have such as a basement or attic. Because the structure is already in place, this is an inexpensive way to add square footage that often pays off. Stay conservative and focus on

adding features that comparable homes in your area offer, such as a third bathroom or bedroom. Use mid range materials, keep rooms open, have at least one window for good natural lighting, and avoid odd layouts. By keeping your conversion conservative, you'll boost your value by an average of \$831 for every \$1000 spent.

**6** Bathroom remodels, much like kitchens, are promising improvements. Minor projects see the best return. Neutral paint and white porcelain are safe bets, and basic storage is a must for full bathrooms. When choosing new fittings and fixtures, let thrift be

your guide.

There are many tasteful, mid-range options that won't break the bank. Keep fixtures uniform and make sure that there are an appropriate number of towel bars.

If three rooms are being served by a bathroom, there should be at least two towel bars, each long enough to fit two full towels comfortably. Re-grouting tile is often cheaper and easier than replacing and, in older homes, can preserve the vintage character that many buyers seek. On average, moderate bathroom remodels add \$710 in value for every \$1000 spent.

