



# The Ultimate Home Remodeling Guide

From Pre-Construction to Finishing Touches:  
*Everything You Need to Know About Remodeling Your Home*



## *So you're thinking about remodeling your home...*

Here's the big misconception: it's easier to move than remodel. You have probably heard realtors tell you this on countless occasions. They point to the hassle of having a construction crew in your home, or that it is too expensive. The reality is that remodeling offers homeowners the chance to customize their current home to fit all their needs, without having to search for it on the market, which is continually climbing in price. Remodeling gives you the opportunity to not move, but rather change the house to meet your needs.

If you like your neighbors, your community, your yard, the parks nearby, the commute, or the school system, you should strongly consider a remodel. A remodel gives you the option to change your space without leaving your neighborhood. Additionally, this means that there are no moving costs or changes of address. Let's face it, no one likes the moving process whatsoever.

Whether or not you have children, this is incredibly important to consider. There are most likely a handful of safety issues with your home that should be addressed, but you have no idea where to start. The issues can range from some mold spores to electrical issues. With your house, it is imperative that you are willing to put in the money on the front end of an issue, so that you are not regretting it on the back end. Do the wise thing, and renovate areas that are troublesome now-that way, you don't have to pay more later.

Whether you are a new empty-nester, or you are preparing for your senior years, this is your golden opportunity to upgrade your residence. You have the ability to re-purpose space, create the open concept you have always dreamt of, or craft your forever home. A renovation allows you to create a space where your family and friends can gather together for a meal or stay for the weekend.

In your home, there are possibly aspects that you wish were different. For example, you may wish that your sink was larger, or your washing machine and dryer were in the house rather than the garage. There are potential upgrades that would make your life much easier in the long run. Why not renovate your home now, and reap the rewards for years to come?

You want a beautiful home-everyone does. You want a home that you can be proud of. You don't need to move to achieve that dream. You can keep the same house that you made a home, while upgrading it so that it transforms to exactly what you envisioned. You need a contractor that is willing to work with you to bring your vision to life throughout the process!

With this Ultimate Home Remodel Guide, it is our goal to provide a sense of ease and confidence in the home remodeling process to anyone looking to begin their remodeling journey.

*Aaron Niemela*      *Danny Niemela*

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# The 3 Most Important Things to Consider Before Remodeling

You may be asking yourself, “What should I be thinking about as I plan my remodel?” Often, the idea of construction may be foreign to you as a homeowner, and you may not know exactly what it will entail. Homeowners have the tendency to rush into projects without thoroughly considering all the options, and how the project will affect their day-to-day lives. If you are reading this, you may be the researching type that wants to execute their home renovation flawlessly. The truth is that not every aspect will go perfectly, but there is hope that it can be an enjoyable process. In order to achieve that, here are three key components that you must ponder before remodeling.

## Timing

Remodel projects or really any type of construction projects often run into hiccups. Circumstantial items like change orders, material back-orders, shipping issues, and scheduling conflicts can delay a project. The larger the project, the more significantly it can be deferred. Additionally, many contractors have busy calendars, so they may be scheduling out anywhere from two weeks to three months. If you want your home renovated by Thanksgiving, often you need to start reaching out to contractors by the beginning of summer. If you delay, you may not get to use your top pick in a contractor, or an unforeseen delay may push back the project right into a holiday. If you are set on a certain timeframe, plan way in advance and it will undoubtedly pay off.

## Finances

Everyone’s least favorite point of conversation, finances. In any project or investment, finances need to not only be looked at, but be focused on. As a homeowner, you need to find whether the renovation to your home will pay off in the end. Whether that be through increased equity or through your own dreams being satisfied. In addition, it is imperative to reflect upon whether there is enough money in the budget to make payments on time and keep construction rolling. Many contractors will stop progress if payments are not paid in a timely manner. You do not want to be stuck in limbo on a half-renovated house for days, weeks, or months. Ensure that you can maintain the progress payment schedule before starting the project. If not, simply wait until you have the budget to move forward without any setbacks.



## **Living Conditions**

Another crucial factor is going to be living conditions. Simply put, construction is messy, dusty, and gritty. For whole-home remodels, this is months of contractors coming in and out of your home, loud clamors, potentially hazardous debris, and unusable space. Depending on the project, truly contemplate whether it is worth sticking it out or moving to a different space for a short time. If you value having a stress-free lifestyle, take a closer look at what living through a renovation truly looks like.

At the end of the day, make sure that you are comfortable with the choices you make about your home. There may be research involved, but it will be well worth it. Make sure you bring it up with your contractor as well and communicate your expectations for the project so that no unnecessary conflict arises.

# 5 Tips to Find a Trustworthy Contractor

Have you ever felt nervous about the cost of fixing or repairing your car? The uneasy feeling likely stemmed from your lack of expertise about automobiles. When mechanics use jargon, it can be hard to tell if they are being honest or inflating the price unnecessarily. The construction industry can often feel the same way. Generally, most homeowners know little about their home and all the components that help make it a functioning and safe shelter. When faced with a restoration or full-blown new home build, it could be daunting to try to find a reliable and honest general contractor. Rest assured, you can undoubtedly find a trustworthy contractor, it may simply take some additional footwork on your end.

## **License and Insurance**

First and foremost, the contractor needs to be licensed and insured. Even though the tip may seem like a no-brainer, it is absolutely imperative. You should be able to ask the contractor for an insurance certificate and copy of their ROC license. If you can not find them in the Arizona ROC contractor search, do not use them. You should ensure that the agreement outlines that the sub-contractors utilized on your project are verified as licensed and insured.

## **References and Referrals**

One of the most obvious indicators of a contractor's reliability lies in their references. References could be other contractors, vendors, or previous clients. One of the easiest ways to find references would be the company's business listing on Google, Facebook and more. It is important to note that a general contractor should furnish a reference list if asked. If they will not, you should probably take that as a red flag. In addition, it is a great idea to ask your family and friends about the companies that they have used previously. Whether the contractor was great to work with or horrendous, it will still help you find a trustworthy contractor.



## **The First Impression**

Even if you don't know much about construction, you most likely can tell the difference between honest and dishonest people. Don't be afraid to call the contractor or a representative directly. Observe how they take the call, what they talk about, and whether they are considerate. If you do schedule an initial consultation, take notice of whether they show up on time, how they present themselves, and if they are looking to make your vision a reality. Most general contractors should be ruled out if homeowners trusted their first impression.

## **Ask About Their Process**

A vital aspect of contractor dependability lies in a consistent process that is followed time and time again. The process should include items like:

- An initial consultation
- A detailed proposal
- An in-depth payment schedule
- A pre-construction meeting
- A client calendar with a steadfast timeline
  - If a contractor simply “plays it by ear”, you may want to look elsewhere to find a trustworthy contractor.

## **Genuine Care**

Although it may seem tough to tell if a contractor cares about your project, you can see it in their preparedness, earnestness, and ability to follow through. A caring contractor will try to assess whether they are a good fit for you as well because they truly want the best for you and your project.

A photograph of a modern bathroom. In the center is a glass shower enclosure with a sliding door. Two light-colored towels are hanging on gold hooks on either side of the shower. The floor is covered in small, light-colored tiles with a dark dot pattern. In the foreground, a potted plant with green leaves sits on a gold sequined stool. The walls are white, and a light switch is visible on the right wall.

**We put all our  
faith in their hands  
and they delivered  
ten-fold.**

**JULIE BEER-BREUER**

# 3 Reasons You Need to Hire an Interior Designer

Interior design is crucial when renovating your home. If you are looking to remodel, chances are, there is something in your current home that you are not satisfied with. Why allow the opportunity to repeat a similar mistake? Repeating a blunder like this is one of the many reasons why you need an interior designer. Among the plethora of other motives, here are some exclusive items that interior designers can offer you.

## **Execution of Your Vision**

Currently, you may have an idea of what your dream home looks like. You may even daydream about it often. Unfortunately, inspiration can be challenging to get down on paper. A quality designer is able to efficiently show you what you have been visualizing. In addition, an interior designer can help guide you to key decisions and crafting your vision to meet your budget. You don't want to settle for less when it comes to designing your home.

## **Plenty of Experience and Resources**

The interior designers we work with have an abundance of experience. We are talking about decades of making homes beautiful and personal. Seriously contemplate what experience alone brings to a process you may be unfamiliar with. Additionally, interior designers typically have the infrastructure and connections to make every aspect of your project a success. Why not allow professionals in the trade to empower you to make the best decisions possible? Interior designers have the brilliant ability to customize a design solution to meet your objectives. Due to their in-depth experience and wealth of resources, they may even save you money.

## **Simplification of the Process**

If you are not familiar with the process, the design is not simple. The design takes immense skill, natural intuition, and the ability to thoroughly comprehend what a client truly desires for their home. When you picture your dream home, do you picture yourself being stressed over the minute details? Or do you picture yourself watching your vision unfold before your eyes? Get rid of the anxiety and worry, and hand it over to a professional that will help you achieve your goals. Collaborating with a designer allows for the weight to be taken off your shoulders and gives you the freedom to simply be inspired. If you don't have an eye for design, a keen sense of style, or the time it takes to diligently focus your attention, re-think designing your project.

# How Much Does a Remodel Cost?

It's one of the most common questions contractors receive in the remodeling industry. How much does a remodel cost? This is an extraordinarily difficult question to answer without having more information on hand. Whole-house remodels typically range from \$100 - \$250 per square foot, while additions can range from \$150 - \$300 per square foot. For those not interested or able to handle such large projects, kitchen remodels can range from \$45,000 to \$125,000, and master bathroom remodels can range from \$20,000 to \$75,000. It all depends on the look and function you are going for, as well as what your personal budget ranges are.

The cost of each remodel gets split up into 2 categories: time and budget.

## **Time**

Time is one of the largest costs when it comes to remodeling. It accounts for labor, meetings, and accounting. During the first few meetings, your contractor is spending time trying to understand the needs and wants of the client. This is a critical point in the relationship between the client and the contractor because the more time the contractor can spend with the client in the early stages, the more likely the project will achieve the desired results. It is much easier to make changes early in a project than later since later more work would have already been done and even more work would need to be done, therefore increasing the project cost. In a nutshell, time is spent understanding the needs and wants of a project, designing the project, and building the project as well.

## **Budget**

According to many clients, their largest fear is that the contractor would take their ideal budget number and say, "OK, that is the minimum of what this project is going to cost." In reality, your ArDan Construction contractor is really just trying to see if what you want and/or need will realistically fit into your budget or not. If it doesn't, they would let you know, and a solution would need to be agreed upon. After the budget and needs match, the design process begins. During the design process, the designer works to understand the existing conditions within the home and create an idea to match the client's ideal result. Once the idea is reviewed and agreed upon by the client, the production teams step in and begin the work required to bring the client's dream to a reality.



**I would recommend  
them to my friends...and  
to anyone else who  
needed an excellent  
general contractor.**

**IDUNA HOLLIS**

# Vision vs. Budget

Before swinging the sledgehammer or breaking ground on any home construction or remodeling project, there are three key questions to answer: 1. What is your budget? 2. What is your vision for this project? 3. If those two factors are at odds, which one is more important to you?

Ideally, you will be able to accomplish your vision for your home office addition or kitchen remodel and do so within your budget – working with professionals can also help with this, we have all kinds of tricks up our sleeve to bring your vision to life. But as we all know, vision and budget don't always match up.

Here are several factors to consider when finding the balance between “vision vs. budget”

## **Should I DIY or Hire a Professional?**

The choice of whether or not to hire a professional contractor really depends on the scope of your project and your own remodeling expertise. If you are a contractor or you have some building experience, you may feel comfortable tackling some or all of your project on your own.

Maybe even more importantly, a professional contractor can help you decide where it makes sense to start on your remodel. By learning about the current layout and construction of your home and your vision for your new space, we can work with your budget and timeframe to get the results you want, either by starting with your highest priority area or diving into a whole house remodel. We wrote a whole piece on this topic, read the blog [here](#).

## **Is there flexibility in my budget?**

Whether you're paying out of pocket or financing, it is important to consider the value of your home as well as the net value gain you are hoping to accomplish with your remodel. After setting the goal for your home renovation, create a detailed plan that includes expected costs. The average home renovation is about \$20 - \$200 per square foot. As you do your research with your GC or by taking trips to the local home improvement warehouse the possibilities or limitations of your budget may become more defined and you may be able to see where you are willing and able to make adjustments.



### **Where am I willing to make substitutions?**

It is more common than you may think that homeowners discover that they have expensive taste, maybe even “break the bank” taste. If that happens to you it is important to ask yourself where you are willing to make substitutions. Are you willing to put off the remodel a bit longer so that you can afford those marble countertops you’ve been dreaming about? Or are you willing to see the benefits of granite countertops instead?

### **Our “Do Not” Advice**

The biggest piece of advice we can provide to accomplish both vision and budget is to avoid the “shopper” approach to a remodel. The Shopper Approach, simply put is when a homeowner never quite settles on anything. This causes tension on all factors whether you’re working with a contractor or opting to DIY: timelines, scope, vision, and budget are all out the window. With any project, it is important to realize that there may be some ebb and flow with these factors, but there should not be drastic changes when there is a solid plan in place before getting started.

In order to find the perfect balance between vision and budget, it is important to ask yourself the questions we outlined above and develop a plan to accomplish your remodel perfectly to your vision, in budget, and right on time.

# How to Maximize Your Return on Investment

In order to maximize your return on an investment in your home, many factors come into play. Several questions come to mind when attempting to answer that question, and unfortunately, there is no clear-cut answer.

Here are some questions to think about:

## **How long are you going to live in the house after the remodel?**

Some people flip houses for a living, and some plan to live in their home after they complete a remodel. It totally depends on how much money a person wants to spend and the area they live in. For example, if someone spent \$100,000 on a full home remodel, their immediate return on investment wouldn't be as great if they were planning on moving out following the remodel. On the other hand, if they were to live in their home for 5-10 years, they would stand to make much more money off of their home.

## **What part of the home is going to be remodeled?**

It is very common for contractors to receive calls requesting quotes on remodels of their kitchen, master bathroom and/ or bedroom, living room, or other bedrooms and bathrooms. The rate of return on investment differs depending on which portion of your home you want to remodel. One thing to keep in mind is that even though you may spend a certain dollar amount on new countertops in your home, the buyer may not like them or even care about the style. Replacing certain items may bring more money in than others.

## **How long is a remodel considered a remodel?**

Depending on the area you live in, a remodel may be considered a remodel if it is still up to date or more modern than the surrounding houses. For example, in a wealthier neighborhood, a home may only be considered remodeled for 5 years, while in an older neighborhood it may be considered remodeled for 10-15 years.

## **What are some things I can do to get the most amount of money from my remodel?**

Kitchen and master bathroom remodels seem to be where most of the money is made. When kitchens are opened up to the living room and master bathroom showers are updated to tile and glass doors, the buyer value of your home definitely jumps. Other things like modernizing your floor plan tend to cause more buyer interest as well.

# Benefits of a Pre-Construction Agreement

Would you let your mechanic tell you what's wrong with your car without even looking under the hood? No. A Pre-Construction Agreement is exactly that, it is the contractor's version of looking under the hood to see what exactly the project is going to entail. The agreement allows your contractor to clearly define the scale of work as well as engineer and fully specify all details of your project from start to finish. Not a fan of surprises? You're going to want a pre-construction agreement. A pre-construction agreement will help your contractor, sub-contractors, and you fully understand the cost, contract, and scope of work.

## How Much Does a Pre-Construction Agreement Cost?

Early in the process – we will get the question “how much does this agreement cost”. There are many different factors, every project and client are unique. So, we try to give you a good understanding of what that pre-construction agreement is going to cost in that initial meeting.

For example, we may ask the following questions to accurately estimate the scope of work:

- Does your project need structural engineering?
- Does it need civil engineering?
- Are we doing an addition on a hillside lot?

Most projects typically run between 5-10% of the whole project. Contractors typically have a \$1,500-\$6,000 weekly retainer off of which they will work, billing weekly. Your contractor should be providing a detailed invoice weekly or bi-weekly, outlining how much they have spent that week, hourly, in-house, category 2 and 3 costs such as outside elements, structural and civil engineering, architecture, design, etc.) all covering the contractors' portion of the Pre-Construction Agreement.

## Do I have to sign the Pre-Construction Agreement?

Your contractor should not make you sign the Pre-Construction Agreement upfront. In our case, if you're interested in remodeling your home, business, or building a new custom home on your lot, we would like to do is at least start off with a phone call or come into the office and speak to us.



During this initial conversation it is our goal to learn about your project, priorities, and what you are looking for in your experience and your building project. By the end of that conversation, if we feel like we're going to be a good fit for you and your project we will set up an initial consultation where we meet with you on site for about an hour to dive deeper into the project, priorities, what you're looking for. That way we can help come up with a plan that makes sense moving forward.

At this point, both parties should know if they would like to move forward working together. If for whatever reason you decide not to use us that is completely okay. However, if you do decide to move forward with us, that is when the Pre-Construction Agreement comes in.

In our experience, Pre-Construction Agreements save time, money, and the ever-dreaded "do and redo" that no one wants to deal with during a residential construction project. We recommend signing a Pre-Construction Agreement with any contractor you work with.

**The quality of their work is  
exquisite and the way in which  
they manage their process is  
literally perfection.**

**NICHOLAS WEBB**





# FAQs

We've collected answers to some of the most common questions that we are asked by homeowners, property owners, and managers who are considering a project with ArDan.

## **How much does a full home remodel cost?**

One question we often get asked by potential clients is how much my whole home remodel is going to cost. That question is difficult to answer with a generic answer because it really depends on the size of your home, the complexity of the remodel, and the level of finishes you end up selecting for your home. Here at ArDan, we recommend is that you reach out to us, and we will come out and provide a free initial consultation where we can meet at your home, discuss your vision, and come up with a realistic budget for your project.

## **Can I supply my own materials?**

When you are considering your project, you may wonder if you can supply your own materials. Typically, we would advise that you don't. Our team has found that it is much simpler if ArDan supplies the material. This is mainly due to the coordination of getting materials on-site in a timely manner. Additionally, we cannot warranty any material that you supply.

## **How long is my remodel going to take?**

Our team members are often asked how long a residential remodel will take. The answer to that varies depending on the size and complexity of the project. Typically, whole home remodels which involve the kitchen, at least one bathroom, and other parts of the home take a minimum of three months from start to completion. At ArDan, before we start your project, we have a project specialist put together a calendar laying out exactly what to expect and a reliable timeline for the completion of your project.

## **Can I use ArDan and other subcontractors?**

We understand that as a homeowner you may have relationships with plumbers, electricians, roofers, and other contractors. At ArDan, we have found that it is better to utilize our own trade partners and vendors on our projects. Over the years, we have developed relationships with these contractors. We know how they schedule, we understand their pricing structure, and most importantly we have a good relationship with them. When we utilize our own sub-contractors, issues that arise can be resolved quickly leading to a successful project.



# FAQs

## **How soon can you start?**

As a general contractor, we generally have multiple projects running simultaneously. If your project is a one to two-day project, it may be a shorter lead time. If this is a larger project, where there are new fixtures and special-order items, it usually takes four to six weeks. In order to ensure an efficient project, our team must plan accordingly.

## **Is the proposal the final price or will there be any unexpected costs?**

For most contractors, this is a daunting question. Our team does everything that they can to make sure we create an accurate proposal for each of our clients. During our PSA, professional services agreement, we want to dive into your project as much as we can to eliminate the unforeseen. Our best-case scenario is that we spend time in the PSA process where we can open walls, check the status of plumbing, camera the lines, and figure out electrical work. These are aspects of the project that can pose risk if not thoroughly inspected beforehand. The more we discover before the project, the better the chance that the final proposal created will not have to be changed.

## **Does your company use subcontractors?**

As a licensed contractor in the state of Arizona, we do bring in sub-contractors for several aspects of our projects. This includes roofing, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and a few other sub-trades. However, we do have in-house crews that we use for project management, masking and demolition, and all our carpentry. We use specialized sub-contractors because they are licensed in their trade and skilled in their craft.

## **Do I need a permit in order to remodel my home?**

Often, the answer is yes. Each city and project have different variables involved in the permitting process. Thankfully, we are experienced in the field, and we will help walk you through each step, in order to obtain the proper permits for your project.

## **What is your hourly rate for labor?**

Once a project is started, our clients sometimes ask how much we charge for hourly labor. If you are looking to add to your existing project with ArDan, we charge \$100 an hour for our foremen, and \$75 for our skilled laborers.



# FAQs

## **Can I get an estimate today?**

Unfortunately, we are not able to give you an estimate immediately for most of our projects. Most of our remodel projects are complex and there are many moving parts involved. Generally, from the day that we meet with you on-site and sign a PSA, professional services agreement, it will take about two weeks to get you a full, detailed scope of work and a cost proposal for your project.

## **Once the contract is signed, when can you start?**

The first question we usually get from our clients after they sign the contract is when our team can start the project. We are excited to start, and we know you are as well. There is a sizable amount of planning and organization so that we can successfully execute your project. A good rule of thumb, especially for kitchen remodels, would be 6 to 8 weeks from signing the contract. When there are cabinets involved, the wait time is typically six weeks, and we like to visually inspect the cabinets beforehand to make sure there is no damage.



# Contact Us

Thank you for downloading and reading our Ultimate Home Remodeling Guide. We hope that it provided valuable insight into how to begin your project. Just in case, keep our contact info handy!

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