



# THE 'DO'S' AND 'DON'TS' OF HOME IMPROVEMENT

## 'DO'S'

### PLAN IN ADVANCE:

Ask licensed contractors about proposed schedules. If it's DIY, create your own schedule so a project doesn't drag on too long.

### SCHEDULE EVERYTHING:

Include demolition time, potential licensed contractor delays, appliance shipping time, and other anticipated tasks.

### HIRE A PROFESSIONAL WHEN NEEDED:

Many tasks can be DIY, but licensed contractors are necessary for some jobs that require specialized experience.

### KNOW THE PROJECT SCOPE:

In a recent study, the biggest DIY regrets came from expanding on and renovating rooms without understanding the true extent of the task.

### SPLURGE WHEN NECESSARY:

Budget for quality items: Increased lighting, better windows, new fixtures in kitchens and bathrooms, good paint colors, kitchen cabinets.

### CONSIDER A HOME EQUITY LINE OF CREDIT:

It's a good alternative to help fund a larger home improvement project or to cover unexpected costs without having to dip into your savings, typically offered with lower and tax deductible interest rates.

## 'DON'TS'

### UNDERESTIMATE PROJECT COSTS:

Materials, licensed contractors and home inspection fees can add up. Make a budget, and then add at least 20 percent on top of that for extras.

### FORGET ABOUT BUILDING PERMITS:

Find out the rules and regulations for your projects, including building codes and inspections.

### NEGLECT TO SHOP AROUND:

Compare prices and do research on everything from licensed contractor time to light switch covers to understand your costs.

### CREATE ROOMS THAT ARE TOO SPECIFIC:

Spaces that are specific to only your lifestyle may limit the value of your home. Examples include: game rooms, sunrooms and second kitchens.