

HOMIE IMPROVEMENT



How to cut costs on your home improvement project

Over the last several decades, more and more homeowners have embraced the notion that homes need not all be alike, and that an individual's home can cater to his or her personal tastes and needs. The trend of modeling a home after one's own tastes has extended beyond choosing furniture or other replaceable elements to

structural changes and full-scale renovations, thus upping the financial ante for homeowners who want to turn their homes into places more in tune with their own personalities.

When it comes to improving their homes, many homeowners associate cutting costs with cutting corners, which can put residents' safety

at risk. But there are ways for homeowners to save money on home improvement projects while still ensuring their homes are safe and sound.

* Work with recycled materials. Homeowners about to undertake small-scale do-it-yourself projects can often save money by using recycled materials.



Submitted photo

Homeowners willing and able to chip in on home improvement projects can bring the costs of labor down considerably.

Many homeowners do not go the DIY route when making larger ren-

ovations, but those that do also can save money by using recycled materi-

als. However, homeowners should know that many contractors do not work with recycled materials in an effort to avoid liability should something go awry during the project or after it is completed. But DIYers can benefit from using recycled materials, which can be purchased at various locations. For example, Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit organization devoted to building homes for the less fortunate, operates its own ReStores, which are nonprofit home improvement stores that sell recycled building materials at a steep discount. ReStore locations can be found by visiting www.habitat.org.

* Get your hands dirty. Labor costs on home improvement projects are considerable, but homeowners can cut these costs by doing some of the labor themselves. Even those men and women with little or no DIY experience can still chip in and save some money.

Homeowners about to embark on a rebuilding project can chip in and do some of the demolition on their own. For example, when replacing sidewalks, homeowners can simply break up and remove the existing sidewalk on their own rather than paying their contractors to do such work for them. It's best for homeowners to leave interior labor to the professionals, as they are more knowledgeable about how to find load-bearing walls and plumbing fixtures than the average weekend warrior homeowner. Homeowners who mistakenly take out fixtures inside their homes in an attempt to cut down on labor costs might find such miscues are far more costly than simply paying for the labor from the get-go.

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