



# 10 Things You Should Know Before Renovating Your Home



Whether you're getting expert help or doing the work yourself, home renovations are notoriously stressful. In fact, one study found that **60% of home renovations** affect the general well-being of those who live there. That study also revealed one of the top causes of renovation stress: not anticipating that your renovation may hit a snag that requires more time and money.

Renovations can be tough. They disrupt your daily routine, and depending on which room is being renovated, make it more difficult to eat, sleep, and keep clean. But it's the unknowns that are the worst.

As subcontractors, we have observed firsthand the many issues that can arise during complex home renovation projects. So our experts decided to compile a list of the top 10 things homeowners should know before tackling a renovation.

**Let's start with the big one...**

# 01

## What Is Your Renovation For?

Are you renovating your home to prepare it for sale, or are you doing it for yourself? The answer to this question might dictate your budget. After all, if you're renovating your home to add value, you wouldn't want to pay more than you'll get back. The answer to this question might also help drive some other choices, like what styles and finishes to choose.

There's a saying among realtors, that kitchens and bathrooms sell houses. They're not wrong — kitchens and bathroom renovations **are on the list** of projects that add the most value. And even if your budget is relatively small, you can achieve stunning transformations.

If your renovation is just for you, then you can do what you want with your money based on what will work best for your family.



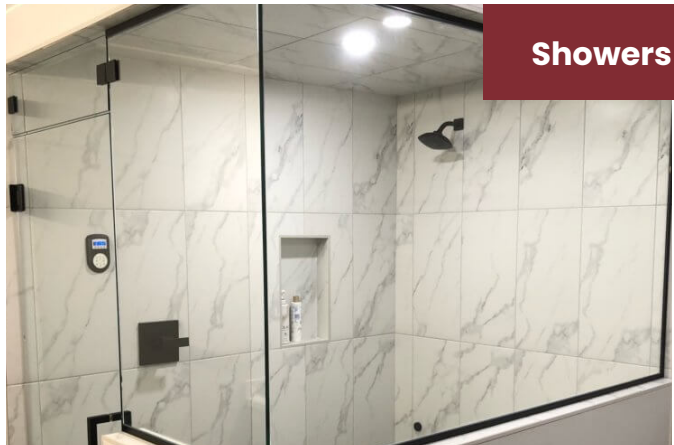
### Our Tips for Adding the Most Value

Just upgrading to a glass shower **can add a tremendous amount of value** to your home, and make your bathroom feel bigger, look brighter, and feel much more luxurious. Large custom mirrors can also completely transform the look and feel of a bathroom, and **make smaller bathrooms more functional**.

#### Mirrors



#### Showers





## Our Tips for Adding the Most Value

One of the best ways to add value to your kitchen without changing the floor plan is to **refresh your cabinetry**. Color and contrast are making their way back into kitchens, and open shelving is a great way to showcase your heirloom cookware or cookbook collection and break up a wall of cabinetry.

If you love the look of open shelving but don't want the burden of keeping storage items tidy, you might want to think about glass cabinet doors. They can give kitchens the same light and airy feeling of open shelving, but your items won't have to be on full display. You might even consider **frosted or pattern glass** to achieve the perfect amount of transparency.



# 02

## What Is a Realistic Timeframe & Budget for the Project?

Just like you should be wary of the realtor who is overly optimistic about pricing your home, you should also take a closer look at any bids that are far cheaper than the others. Some realtors use inflated sticker prices to get more clients, but ultimately your home may sell for less than it should if it sits on the market too long.

And when it comes to estimates, they are only that. An honest contractor will try their best to give you a realistic price for the time and materials, but there are some contractors out there who will make promises that aren't realistic just to get more business. We tell our clients that a glass shower door takes roughly a month from the time we order it to installation, but it can take longer.



**Whenever you're doing work in your home, do your research, but expect the unexpected.**

Unfortunately, everything seems to cost more and take longer these days! Even after good communication and thorough planning, your contractors and vendors may be unable to complete work within the expected timeframe. Material shortages and shipping delays happen and are entirely out of their control.



### Pro Tips

- When you're comparing multiple bids, make sure you're comparing apples to apples; the scope of the work should be the same in each bid.
- Get multiple bids. Many vendors and contractors will offer **free estimates**.
- Sometimes homeowners are to blame for their own sticker shock. If you have specific features and product choices in mind, make sure to let the contractor know so it can be included in the quote.
- Have a contingency plan for delays and additional costs



# 03

## What Are You Trying To Achieve?



Home renovation experts can be an incredible resource in more ways than one! If your renovation has an underlying goal in mind, like making a shared bathroom more functional, or defining living areas in an open floor plan, they might suggest ways for you to accomplish the same goal for less money, or come up with creative solutions that will add even more value.

Interior designers and contractors do this every day, and they know what has worked well in homes similar to yours. Take advantage of their knowledge!

By that same token, be sure to listen to your contractor, even if you don't like what they have to say. Sometimes what homeowners imagine and what is functional are two different things. A good contractor will consider things like making sure a door's placement and movement won't interfere with any electrical or plumbing components.



# 04

## What Don't You Know?



It's sometimes hard to know what you don't know, but be careful about making assumptions.

For example, at East Side Glass, one mistake many homeowners make is assuming that shower glass is all the same, or that it can be cut down to fit any enclosure. Unfortunately, this assumption can waste a lot of time and money.

### Cautionary Tales for Homeowners

We see a few common homeowner mistakes, and we thought we'd share a couple so that you can avoid their fate!

#### "The DIY Do-Over"

In a misguided effort to save money, some homeowners will design and build their own shower enclosure, assuming that a custom glass provider can make anything work. At East Side Glass, we can do quite a bit, but we can't do the impossible!

These homeowners often have to redo the work completely before we can install the glass.

#### "The Prefab Paradox"

We also get calls from homeowners who have already purchased a prefabricated shower door, assuming it would be cheaper than a custom solution. Unfortunately, by the time they call us, they've already tried to install the door themselves, only to realize it won't fit. But tempered glass can't be cut down after the fact. And at this point, they probably won't be able to return it to the store.

**Interested in learning more about prefab vs. custom shower doors?**  
**Get Our Complete Guide to Shower Doors**

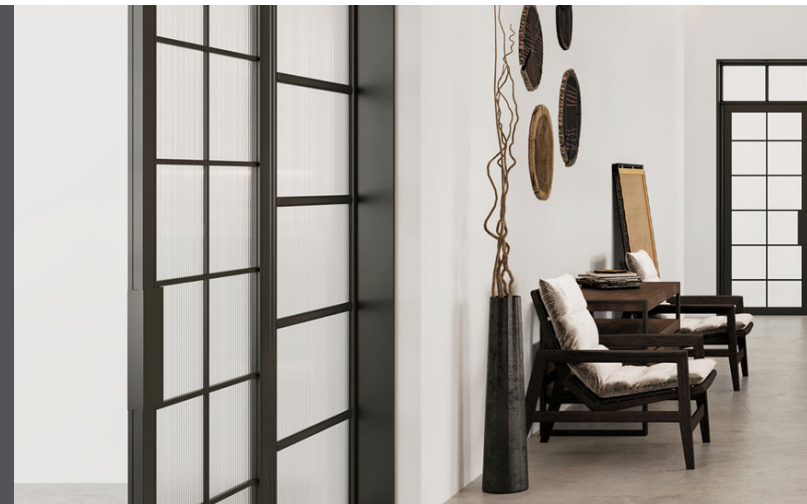


# 05

## Could You Accomplish More With Less?

One popular home renovation these days is adding a home office. Many homeowners consider converting their attic space, but attic conversions can cost up to \$80,000.

Most homeowners don't want to chop up existing living space, but a glass partition wall can be a simpler and far more elegant solution that adds privacy without blocking the light.





# 06

## Are There Any Codes You Should Know About?



If you're doing some or all of the renovation yourself, it's always a good idea to check with your local inspector to see if there are any specific codes and rules you should know about. If you use a remodeling contractor, they should help you navigate the permit process, if needed.



### Rules for Glass

Glass rules vary by state. If your project involves glass, and you're located in Minnesota, you should know that safety glass (tempered or laminated) is typically required in bathrooms, walk-through doors, and anything within a two-foot radius of a door. You'll also need safety glass for anything less than 18" from a walking surface or door. To put it another way, safety glass should be used in any place a break could cause serious harm and injury.



**Codes can be frustrating, but ignoring them isn't a good idea. You could be fined or end up having to redo the work.**

# 07

## Who Should Do the Work?



It's admirable to want to save money, and there's almost nothing like the satisfaction you can get from doing the work yourself. But we wouldn't advise a homeowner to jump into a project without really knowing what they were getting themselves into. Most handy homeowners could add a tile backsplash or install vinyl flooring, but some projects are harder than they seem.

We can't speak for other specialized trades, but projects involving glass can be notoriously tricky, and in most cases, should be left to the experts. Glass is unforgiving, and even the smallest errors in measuring can cause big problems, like leaky shower doors.

And unlike many other building materials, glass can break, and when it does, you can be injured. Tempered glass, which is used in shower doors, is designed to break into tiny pieces instead of large shards, but **it's still possible to get nicks and cuts** from a broken door.





# 08

## How To Find the Right Vendor or Contractor



Your vendors and contractor should be highly skilled, reliable, and trustworthy. But you might also want to consider their “bedside manner.” Your project may take some time, it might disrupt your life, and you might have to hear bad news from time to time.

At **East Side Glass**, if something unexpected comes up, we immediately contact the homeowner or contractor to work through it and come up with a solution that makes everyone happy. But some contractors aren’t known for being good communicators. Only you can decide how important that is to you.

Referrals are always helpful. But if your friends and family don’t have suggestions, online reviews can paint a decent picture. There are always those people out there who love to leave negative reviews no matter what, but if you see a ton of five-star reviews, that’s always a great sign!

# 09

## How You’ll Make Life Easier for Yourself



Depending on your renovation, you might have to make alternative arrangements for cleaning, cooking, and sleeping for the time being. You also might want to take a few additional worries off your plate. Renovations can be stressful, and you certainly don’t need to add to it.

## Stress-Reduction Checklist

- ☐ Remove clutter and clear pathways to make it easier for workers to bring materials and equipment into your home without breaking anything
- ☐ Make sure pets have a safe space. At various stages in your project, workers may need to come and go, and it's easy for an outside door to be left open
- ☐ Secure any valuables for added peace of mind
- ☐ Consider staying elsewhere during a particularly disruptive portion of the renovation to give yourself a break
- ☐ If you're doing some or all of the work yourself, it can be tough on relationships. Anticipate this, and talk through how you'll work through any additional challenges that pop up

# 10

## Track Your Expenses!



If you're doing some or all of the work yourself, there are plenty of apps now that help you track your expenses so you'll know when you're going over budget. Excel also has a few helpful **budget-tracking templates**.

There's an additional benefit to tracking your expenses — good record-keeping can help you reduce your capital gains taxes when you eventually sell your home. Do it — you'll thank yourself later!





## Contemplating a Home Renovation in Central MN?

At East Side Glass, we've been proudly serving the greater St. Cloud area since 1953. **Our mission** — then and now — is to build new opportunities and relationships with our customers that stand the test of time.

We can help local homeowners and contractors with **these projects:**

- Custom mirrors
- Glass shower doors
- Decorative cabinetry glass
- Windows and window/screen repair
- Glass railings
- Glass partitions

We hope this guide was helpful. And if your renovation involves glass, our estimates are always — as they say — on the house!

**Get a free estimate**

