

101 Home Construction Questions for Kitchen Remodeling and Bathroom Remodeling Success

When considering a home construction project like a kitchen remodel or a bathroom remodel, analyze the existing rooms in your home and decide what you really want to gain. You might begin by reviewing what works and doesn't work in the area in question. And what about the other areas of your house? Do you want to build out to add a master bedroom suite, part of which includes a bathroom remodel? Or do you want to convert an area of your home into an office, a gym, an in-law suite? At **Fred Berger Design & Build LLC** we have prepared a list of questions and points to consider for two popular areas of home improvement; the kitchen and bath remodel. You can use this to create your wish list for your own kitchen or bath remodel, or use some of the questions to help rethink other areas of your home. Ultimately it will help you create the home of your dreams.

Home Improvement Via the Kitchen Remodel

- Who is the primary cook? That person should choose the preferred cooking fuel.
- Will the cooking fuel be gas, electric or some combination? This will dictate the choice of appliances.
- How many people use the kitchen at the same time? Don't forget toddlers, teens or guests.
- How many people cook at the same time? When two or more people cook simultaneously it is important to plan for separate task areas.
- How convenient is it to work in the kitchen?

Your kitchen remodel should reduce the chance of injury while increasing the performance of what many consider the heart of the home.

- Do people bump into each other or keep getting in each other's way?
- Is the traffic pattern interrupted when appliance or cabinet doors are open?
- Are the sink and countertop heights comfortable?
- Are the appliance controls and faucet within easy reach?
- Is the floor slip-resistant? Would an area carpet make the floor safer in a particular area?
- For maximum safety there should be two fire extinguishers handy. One should be located near the cooking area and one in another part of the room, both installed where they cannot be reached by small children. Where will you store yours?

- Are your electrical switches placed away from water sources and wet hands?
- Are your electrical outlets grounded and protected with ground-fault circuit interrupters?
- Is there task lighting placed in work areas to prevent accidents?
- Could you benefit from lock-out devices so that no one can use your range or oven when you are not there?
- Is there a need for wheelchair access or universal design?
- Are there any other special needs that need to be considered?

Observe how each family member uses the kitchen.

- What kind of meals are prepared?
- Will there be a lot of entertaining?
- Will these events be formal or casual or both?
- Can all meal preparation be done with the microwave because you eat out several times a week?
- Will most family meals be eaten together or separately?
- Will you need an eat-in kitchen?
- Would you like a booth or a separate dining table, or will a snack area meet your dining needs?

Good planning means being realistic about not just your current needs, but your future needs as well. Your home construction projects such as kitchen remodel and bathroom remodel are most successful when you anticipate the changes that may come in time.

- Is the size of your family likely to shrink or expand?
 - Will there be a baby on the way, parents moving in or kids going off to or returning from college in the near future? This could determine whether or not you need large capacity appliances.
 - Do you have young children who need supervision while you prepare meals?
 - Do you need an area to store games, coloring books and craft items?
 - Do you watch TV while preparing meals?
 - Would you benefit from an area to manage household finances or use as a home office?
 - Would you like a laundry room or mud room near the kitchen?
 - Are there pets whose needs should be considered?
- Is this a starter home you expect to grow out of soon or do you plan to retire here? This will impact how much home improvement you really want to invest in.

- If this is a starter home and you want to keep your investment modest you may want to just update things without a complete overhaul.
- Or, do you want to make the investment in remodel now so you can enjoy the home improvement before you resell?
- How old are your appliances and are they energy-efficient?
- What is the condition of the walls, floors and countertops?

- How does your storage capacity meet your needs?
- Do you have to go to another area of the house to get kitchen- or cooking-related items?
- Do you go shopping once a month and buy in bulk?
- Could you benefit from a butler pantry just off the kitchen?
- Do you crave more luxurious items like a six burner cooktop with a grill insert, an island with additional sink, and/or refrigerated drawers?
- Will you need built in wine racks and wine refrigerators?

- Is your current kitchen too small, too large, too bright, too dark?
- How is the lighting? Consider a combination of overhead, hanging, and under cabinet lighting and how it may work to your advantage.
- Would you like an additional window, French doors or skylight to add light while making the space feel more open?

- Do you want to add on or want to annex adjacent space so that the kitchen flows easily into the family room?
- Would you like the kitchen to flow into the outdoor living areas?
- Do you need an outdoor kitchen?

Ask everyone in the household what their five favorite things are in the current kitchen and which five they could live without. That should get you started in the right direction.

If you have questions of your own we would be very happy to talk with you. Call **Fred Berger Design & Build LLC** when you are ready to discuss your home improvement project with a professional.

Master Bathroom, Family Bathroom and Half-Bath Remodel Considerations

- Does the master bathroom need to be configured so that two people can use it at the same time?
- Would you like his-and-hers grooming areas?
- If this bathroom is designed for a couple would you like a generous double vanity to store toiletries and linens? Lots of cabinets add to beauty and convenience.
- Would you like to have completely separate his-and-hers bathrooms that are identical with the exception of a single feature that distinguishes them? (i.e. reverse color scheme on floor or on wallpaper.)
- Do you just want the basic ensemble of toilet, tub/shower, and sink, or would you like something extra like a spa, a double sink, or a luxury shower?
- Does your space allow for or do you require a series of separate compartments for grooming, showering, bathing and toileting?
- Would you like a steam-equipped shower or personal sauna?
- Would you like a shower equipped with personal massaging jets, a rainbar or multiple showerheads in the master bathroom?
- A bidet?
- Would you like heated towel bars?
- Radiant heat in the floor?
- Warming devices such as heat lamps in the tub and shower areas? Be sure to check with your contractor about this as some areas have stricter requirements for electrical items used near water.
- Heaters in toe kick areas?

- What tub design would you like?
- Would you like a soaker, a whirlpool, or a tub built for two?
- Would you like it streamlined, sculpted, or a classic clawfoot?
- Should it be built-in, free-standing or set into a platform?

- Do you want a dressing area or a walk-in closet?
- Does the dressing area or walk-in closet require custom cabinetry for clothes, shoes and for linen storage?
- Would you like exercise equipment or laundry facilities located nearby?
- Could a master bath that looks out into, or opens out into a private garden space work for you?

- Do you need a way to add light without compromising privacy? You could do this with a variety of window options including clerestory windows, small windows installed near the ceiling.
- Would you like a skylight to fill the room with light while maintaining maximum privacy?
- Would you like textured leaded glass or frosted glass windows to allow light in without allowing others to see in.
- If you have a window is it designed and positioned so that water does not collect and become a problem?
- In addition to good ambient lighting and task lighting would you like decorative accent lighting within coves or beneath soffits?

- Is space a concern?
- Could you annex space from a closet, a hallway or another room?
- Do you need storage nooks to provide point of use storage for bottles and toiletries? You may be able to have niches built between studs.
- To make a small bath feel larger would you consider eliminating a tub (if you have one in another bathroom) and create a large shower for two with a floor to ceiling glass enclosure to make the room more open?
- Would you like to add spa features like massage jets or rainbar? Such simple additions can make even a small bath feel luxurious.
- Don't have space for a separate toileting area? You can have a half-wall or partial partition built to allow for some privacy while maintaining a more open feel. You can also create these half-walls or partial partitions with glass block or textured glass to add some separation without making the room feel so small.

- Does your family bathroom need to accommodate small children? You may want to pass on steam features with small children around.
- Do you need a pull out step that tucks into the toekick area of the vanity to give younger family members a boost up to the sink?
- Is there a safe place to tuck away a stepstool?
- Do you need the family bathroom to function for two people simultaneously? You could make the space multifunctional by compartmentalizing it into zones or simply install a double vanity.
- If it is used by more than one person at a time do you have enough electrical outlets?

- Is the storage in the family bath sufficient for all those who use it? You can boost storage capacity with cabinets, shelves, hanging baskets, racks or even creating a niche between wall studs.
 - Is better ventilation needed. or perhaps an electrical outlet, or more counter space around the sink?
 - Do you have enough towel racks and other storage room?
 - Is the shower or tub large enough?
 - What style is your bathroom calling out for?
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- Will your family bathroom be used by someone with limited mobility? You may want to pass on a tub or anything with a high threshold and opt for a walk in shower.
 - Would you like a whirlpool tub or deep soaking tub in the family bathroom?
 - If you have an older family member living with you could they benefit from a custom-built shower with a built-in seating and massage jets or multiple showerheads?
 - Do you need grab bars behind the toilet and around the shower?
 - Do you need to accommodate a wheelchair in the bathroom? There are a variety of space considerations when creating a bathroom that is wheelchair accessible.
 - Is space really tight? You could conserve floor space by installing a pocket door.
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- Do you need to install an additional half-bath or powder room? Pantries and closets can be converted to create this for you.
 - When it comes to your half-bath or powder room would you like it to be strictly functional or a beautiful feature? Remember, this is the bathroom most visited by guests.
 - Would you like a one-of-a-kind custom vanity fabricated from a piece of antique furniture?

Just as we recommended in the kitchen remodel section, ask everyone who will be using the room to be remodeled what their five favorite things are in the current bathroom and which five they could live without.

We hope that these questions helped to spur your imagination and to clarify what you would really like to see come to fruition in your home. We are sure you have come up with a few questions of your own and we would be very happy to talk with you about them. Call Fred at **Fred Berger Design & Build LLC** when you are ready to discuss your home improvement project with a professional.