



D-I-Y PROJECTS

Do-It-Yourself (D-I-Y) projects have become much easier for the average person. New developments in paints, papers, glues, seals, power tools and other tools and supplies have made good results possible with less time and previous experience needed. A 1997 home survey of nearly 5000 consumers revealed that 52% liked and worked with D-I-Y home improvement projects.

User-friendly, step-by-step directions are available for laying floors and tile, installing shelves and paneling, making curtains and blinds and creating soft furnishings. The secret of success is not to aim too high on beginning projects. Learn to do simple, low cost projects. After you build your skills and confidence, move on to bigger projects.

A redecorating project doesn't have to set off flurries of anxiety. Major remodeling efforts, such as putting up or taking down walls, rewiring electrical systems or adding a room, require at least the advice and counsel of a professional as well as more skills with tools and housing structures. Many decorating update projects, however, require only a commitment, a carefully laid plan and some shopping around for supplies.

Function and comfort are key factors to any project. Consider the way you live. Learn your likes and dislikes in home design. Put possibility thinking to work! Look at ideas that might work for you whether they are current trends or practical D-I-Y investments.

For every D-I-Y project there is a trade-off with time vs. money. Studies have shown that a project that takes a professional contractor 40 hours to do will take an expert amateur 48 hours, someone handy with some experience 60 hours and a beginner 80 hours. Learning to do skills well pays off in real \$\$\$ savings!

Consider your own hourly wage for working on a project. Then figure out how long it will take to complete the project. Compare this cost with the cost of buying new or having the project done by someone else. Other questions to consider are:

Do I have that much time?

Will I like doing it or learn anything from it?

Do I have the skills to do it all?

Do I have someplace to go for advice if I get stuck in the middle of the project?

Do I have the tools or can I borrow them?

Do I know what materials are needed?

Can I buy them at a reasonable cost?

Plan carefully. Never rush into a D-I-Y project. The unexpected, unforeseen and unusual can and probably will happen.

Evaluating D-I-Y Projects

This chart lists suggestions for decorating update projects in various price categories. Prices vary depending upon locale, size of project and individual needs. The chart, however, can help you make decisions on the projects you can do and those that you will want to hire done for you either now or at a later date. As you review the chart, think about where you can get the best return for the time, energy and money spent.

No Cost	Under \$200	\$200-\$500	\$500-\$1,000	Over \$1,000
Clean house!	Have carpets cleaned	Have home professionally cleaned		Install a built-in vacuum cleaner
De-clutter, de-junk; have a yard sale	Install new shelving units in closets	Have closets professionally designed	Build in new storage area	Add a room!
Rearrange furniture	Refinish furniture	Recover a chair	Buy a new leather recliner	Buy a new sofa
Store all small items in boxes covered with wallpaper	Purchase new sheets and pillowcases	Buy chaise lounge for master bedroom	Buy new mattress and springs	Buy electronic adjustable bed
Use what you have in unusual ways	Purchase new towels and shower curtain	Buy (and use) exercise equipment	Add grab bars and massage shower head in bath	Add a hot tub, whirlpool or sauna
Rearrange and repot house plants	Buy large new house plant	Add a flower garden for a prettier view	Add some landscaping around patio	Add a greenhouse
Rearrange all accessories; display items creatively	Buy new lamp, vases, pillows or other home accessories	Buy an area rug to use on a wood or tile floor	Buy new carpeting for a room	Install a home theater!
Display a collection or family heirloom	Frame or re-mat picture(s)	Buy an original painting or sculpture	Install special lighting for art work/rooms	Buy a masterpiece!
Wash windows Repair screens	Add room molding (price varies)	Replace window treatments		Install new doors or windows