

# 10 Tips to Help You Survive Your Home Remodel



Everyone who has been through a remodel knows that it isn't just the end result that you remember, but the experience you had in getting there. When thinking about starting a remodeling project, beyond just things like budget, schedule, tile choices, etc, it is also helpful to think about ways to make the process go more smoothly for your family. In our 36 years of remodeling and building custom homes, we have found these 10 tips to be very helpful in providing a great experience for our clients.

- 1. Get an Agreement:** You should receive, read and fully understand a comprehensive construction agreement from the contractor. If any part of the agreement is unclear or if you have any concerns about an item ask your contractor for an explanation. Keep asking until you are comfortable. This is the first step of a long, close relationship and it should be transparent, open and well understood.

Determine how you will reroute your family during the morning routine, getting out the door, meal times, etc. Map out your daily tasks in advance and ask your contractor or lead carpenter to help out with the plan. Separate your daily life as much as possible from the work site.
- 2. Insist on Regular Communications:** This is the key to a successful project. There will be lots and lots of details and of course those dreaded "unforeseen issues." The contractor should provide you with a complete list of names and contact numbers for all the members of the project team with whom you will be working. Regularly scheduled meetings on the job site are crucial to a smooth running project. If not offered and scheduled in advance, tell your contractor that you would like to meet regularly with the team.
- 3. Plan and Set a New Routine:** Every home remodeling project will affect your daily routine in one way or another.
- 4. Establish Project Rules:** Your contractor should schedule a preconstruction meeting before the job start to outline schedule, work days and hours, and areas of your home that are off limits. Another important point is to establish bathroom use policy. Will the crew have access to a bathroom in your home or will a portable toilet be provided. How will the cost be covered?
- 5. Remove and Store Prized Possessions:** Valuables, heirlooms, artwork, and furniture should be removed from the work area and all rooms adjacent or leading to work areas. Vibrations, dust and lots of big, heavy, sharp tools and materials can cause heartbreak in an instant if your cherished items are not securely put away.

**6. Set Aside Work and Storage Spaces:**

The craftsmen in your home will need adequate room to work and a lay down area to store tools and supplies. Agree with your contractor on areas of your house that they will use for these purposes. You don't want to be constantly walking over or moving things to get to what you need for everyday living.

**7. Safeguard Children & Pets:**

A construction site is a fascinating place for children. But be aware there are tools, saws and supplies out and active during the day. Let the kids watch from a safe distance, but prohibit playing in the work areas. Let them know tools and supplies are not toys.

Remodeling can also be very stressful for pets. If possible, keep pets away from work areas. The noise of saws and hammering can annoy a dog's sensitive hearing. Be sure to tell the project manager where pets are to be kept during working hours along with the pets names so they can assist them if necessary. Post a note on the door if the pet is closed in a room or the garage. **Be sure pets have ID tags/collars on.**

- 8. Get Out of Town (if possible):** To help relieve the stress of a remodel project some homeowners who have been through major remodels will suggest scheduling a vacation during the construction process. However, only do that if you trust the contractor fully, the details of the project have been worked out and you can provide your contractor

with means to reach you. During especially critical times of the project (noise, odors, etc) you might consider a night or two at a local hotel. Think of it as a mini vacation. The kids will love it and it will be a great break for you.

- 9. Stay Flexible:** There are hundreds if not thousands of parts and pieces that must be considered in every remodeling project. There will be changes and issues to be addressed throughout the project. Communicate with your contractor or lead carpenter and work through the unexpected as a team. **There will be challenges; a professional contractor will help you prepare for them.**

- 10. Think Through Decisions:** Try not to let the stress of remodeling affect or change your family relationships. If big issues or disagreements come up on the job site, discuss them later with your family so that each decision is well thought through. Then you can have time to reach an agreement without the pressure of making a snap decision. Don't allow jobsite pressures force you into making a major decision that you're uncomfortable with.

**Following these tips will really help you do more than survive—they will help you feel confident and composed during the entire process. The feelings at times of anxiety that are replaced with feelings of elation and pleasure while loving your new home is an experience not to be missed.**

**Have fun, be flexible and go with the flow.**