



Top 6 Ways

To Approach a Home Remodeling Project

Type	Description	Desired Outcome	Ideal Project	Important Distinction	Advantages	Disadvantages	Risk
Do-It-Yourself (DIY)	Homeowner takes on the role of designer and general contractor, responsible for all of the work that the project requires.	Minimal labor costs (minimal trade support) with no importance on getting the project done in a specific time frame.	Smaller projects, particularly those that do not disturb lifestyles while in progress.	Must have an understanding of remodeling and general construction. DIY is not ideal for complex remodeling projects.	Can be a great learning experience for anyone interested in home building and design. It also allows for flexible scheduling and saves on labor costs. This approach is usually the most cost-effective.	Not ideal for complex remodeling projects. DIY projects tend to take longer and the homeowner is 100% accountable for the end result, including any damage that may occur. As a result, this avenue can be risky.	More Risky
Time and Materials (Cost Plus)	Homeowner hires a designer or architect to draw up plans, and then hires a contractor before hard costs are known ("Pay as you go" philosophy).	Homeowner wants to be involved in every decision and will rely on a trusted craftsman who has the skills needed to complete the job.	Any size project that involves design complexity. Where the homeowner already has a trusted source, and where budget control is not a primary concern.	This approach does not always require a licensed contractor, and will require more homeowner involvement in the actual day-to-day building process.	Offers the greatest investment flexibility (how you spend your money).	The homeowner would absorb the risk of project overruns and mistakes. There is also little financial motivation for hired professionals to be efficient, thus the homeowner would likely need to act as a hands-on micro-manager.	More Risky
Competitive Bid	Homeowner hires a designer or architect to draw up plans, and then requests bids from multiple contractors.	The homeowner has the time and energy to remain involved throughout the process. He/She is also interested in taking the time to become educated on every bid item; and is comfortable assessing value (cost vs. quality)	Small projects with low to moderate complexity, particularly where the homeowner has experience with all facets of the project and is capable of comparing proposals.	The homeowner places less importance on quality construction and more importance on value pricing.	Gives homeowners the ability to shop for the lowest initial price, as well as the freedom to select unaffiliated contractors and design professionals.	There is no single point of accountability when working with multiple, unaffiliated professionals. As a result, scheduling can be unpredictable and changes can severely impact final project costs. There is also little control over project costs during the design phase.	More Risky
Design/Build Contractor	Homeowner hires one firm who handles the design and construction, from start to finish	For busy people who want to be involved but not in charge of managing their home remodeling project themselves. They also value a proven system that ensures their project finishes on schedule and on budget.	Medium to large projects with moderate to high complexity	The homeowner has complex remodeling needs and/or values high quality construction (e.g., new addition, or complete kitchen or bathroom remodel that needs to blend with existing architecture of the home).	This approach provides a single point of accountability, as well as tighter control over the budget and scheduling. It's also the best way to explore design and construction options with minimal financial risk.	This approach is not a competitive bidding model. Because it is a complete managed solution, it can be challenging to assess what others would charge for the same project. This is not the best solution for bargain basement consumers.	Less Risky
Architect Managed	Homeowner hires an architect who brings in his/her own contractor.	The homeowner may be fearful of the construction process and sees value in having a third party be his/her advocate.	Large projects with moderate to high complexity	This approach is preferred if the homeowner places a lot of importance on the project design and is less concerned about the budget.	The architect is involved throughout the process, from design through construction, ensuring that the architectural intent is fully realized. The architect also approves all details, removing the homeowner from making these decisions.	Because artistic ideas don't stop when the project breaks ground, projects can frequently run over budget and take significantly longer to complete. Architectural management fees can also add up.	Somewhat Risky
Early Team Engagement	The homeowner hires an architect first, and after early conceptual drawings are available, he/she hires a contractor to provide pricing and guidance throughout the design process and through the construction phase.	For homeowners with large, multi-room projects where design is critically important, but budget and scheduling are less important.	Medium to large projects with moderate to high complexity	This approach is preferred if the homeowner has a unique, demanding architectural challenge but is not as concerned about budget overruns. They also want a third party involved to help manage the contractors.	Because the contractor is involved from an early stage in the design process, this approach increases contractor accountability. Expensive, less critical design components can be modified early on, keeping the budget on track.	This is not an effective approach for competitive bidding, so price comparison is difficult.	Somewhat Risky