



The Kitchen – the heart of the home, the kitchen is the most expensive to remodel. It can be easy if you know where to start.

1. **Have a plan** – start a notebook of the things you like and dislike with clippings and photos. Think about what problems you hope to solve – lighting, workspace or storage might be good examples. Know how much you want to spend.
2. **Choose a professional partner** – look for someone who specializes in kitchen design or has years of experience and can show you photos of completed kitchen remodels. Testimonials from satisfied clients are good references as well.

A professional will help you address the problems you hope to solve and will be able to provide detailed drawings, appliance specifications and a cost proposal. Remember, doing it right the first time is smart and adds to the value of your home.

3. **Design Trends** – each year the new design trends and products are shown at the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show. “Fusion” the latest trend is a mix of multiple design expressions. At the moment there is a strong Asian influence that’s being added to the mix. Heavy moldings on cabinetry are beginning to disappear. Wood finishes are dark and unusual and design is more linear. The move towards ease of use is continuing with everything in your kitchen stored in a way that they pull out, roll out, tilt out or swing out to you.
4. **Countertops** – there are more possibilities for countertop material emerging every year. Although granite seems to be the standard, more often you’ll now see it with a honed or patina finish instead of shiny, high gloss. White marble is being seen again as well as other natural, softer stone materials. The new sealers are making the softer stone a more viable option. Other good options include quartz-based engineered materials as well as exotic woods. Check out some of the materials being made from waste materials or byproducts from manufacturing.
5. **Appliances** – remember when your only choice in a refrigerator was size, exterior color and whether or not it was frost free? Think again – now in addition to these considerations there are a myriad of different door configurations (including freezer on the bottom) and even technological additions – now your refrigerator can check the date on your milk as it is stored inside and reminds you when it becomes expired! Take the time to see what’s available. It’s not your mother’s kitchen any more.