

# New Year, New Interior

## Six Things to Consider Before Remodeling



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Lose weight. Exercise. Spend more time with the kids. Drink more, oops, I mean less! Remodel the house. Yes! A resolution I can help with! Sorry, you're on your own with the others (unless you're adding a home gym or wine cellar).

Whether you're planning a major renovation or just a little spruce up, pre-planning will help your project run smoothly. So, if home improvement is on your list of resolutions for 2010, let me get you started with a few helpful hints.

**1. Hire an Interior Designer First.** Once you read the rest of the list you'll know why.

**2. Set Priorities.** Which room is the most important to work on? What items in that room are the most critical? What features are top on your list, and which ones could you live without? If you have a lot to do, or a limited budget, setting priorities will keep you on track, alleviate stress and help to get more done in a shorter timeframe. A designer can help with your priorities list and come up with a game plan to get everything accomplished.

**3. Set a Budget.** Be realistic with yourself about how much you can afford, but also make sure you have a

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little wiggle room. Contractors don't have crystal balls that show the faulty wiring or plumbing leaks behind your walls, so "wiggle room" will help cover unforeseen expenses. A designer will be instrumental in helping you set a budget and getting you the most for your money. Remember my article about reusing and repurposing? The more open you are with your designer, the more creative she can be with what you already have, and find the best deals on what you need.

**4. Collect Pictures of Interiors You Like and Know What Existing Items You Want to Reuse.** One of the hardest things for most people is figuring out what goes with what and how to pull everything together. If you collect pages from magazines that show rooms or items you like, it will help a designer get an immediate



feel for your taste. She'll then be able to pull in all the elements to complete that look. Don't know what you want? A designer can give you options for different looks that would work well in your room, so you don't waste time and money buying things that don't fit.

**5. Get More than One Bid.** If you talk with three contractors, you'll get three different viewpoints on your project. Each contractor will bring his/her ideas and expertise to the table. Once you've met with all three, you'll know more about remodeling than you previously did, know what kind of personality you can work with and have a much better idea of the cost involved. Designers have contractors they work with on a regular basis. A designer expects quality work, so by asking your designer for contractor references you immediately know the answer to the most important question – how good are they? Beats choosing someone out of the Yellow Pages.

**6. Plan for Your Life to be Disrupted.** No matter how smoothly a project is running, your life will be disrupted to some extent. If you have children, work from home, need to be out of town, etc., be sure you have plans in place to keep yourself from

stressing out. If you're the one coordinating everything you have a big job ahead of you. A designer can coordinate your project from beginning to end. We make sure the electrician is there at the appropriate time and all the supplies have arrived before the project begins. We check the paint to make sure it's the right color and handle all the details so you don't have to.

Did I convince you why hiring an interior designer is well worth the money? If you don't want the hassle of coordinating everything, don't have the time to, don't have the vision to make the big decisions, and just the thought of remodeling is sending you to the medicine cabinet, you need a designer. Major remodel or minor spruce-up, a designer will keep things on track, help you get the most for your money and keep your stress level lower. Let a designer help you turn that New Year's resolution into a reality. You'll be glad you did.



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