

8 IMPROVEMENTS THAT INCREASE THE MARKET VALUE OF YOUR HOME

If you're preparing to [sell your house](#) – maybe your family is expanding and it's time to start looking for a house with more room! – you need to analyze how you can increase the market value of your home. You first need to create a budget on how much money you can spend on home improvements – you need to spend some to make some! Then you need to think about the improvements that pay – where the money is! In other words, which home improvements will increase the overall value of your home, giving you the highest return on investment.

First, you need to tackle all necessary major repairs, such as:

Plumbing: fix any known leaks

Electricity: make sure all outlets work correctly

Roofing: is it time for replacing?

Insulation: don't forget the attic

Heating & Cooling: do both systems function well?

Windows & Doors: do any leak?

Once you've taken care of the necessary repairs, you can focus the remaining budget on general home improvements. To save on expenses, try to do as much of these improvements DIY-style so that your budget can go further.

Sure, an interior designer can give you some helpful advice to know which home improvements are most important, but most will charge \$50 – \$200 per hour, money that could be spent on further improvements. Your real estate agent can give you accurate advice based on his experience – for no cost.

When you or your agent are busy showing-off your house during showings, remember to brag about all the improvements you've done. Point out the areas that have been upgraded and highlight the home's value. Make the most of every effort you put into it!

So check out this list of home improvements, in order of most important/expensive to least.

1.KITCHEN

The kitchen is often the center of the whole house, and if yours appears updated and fresh, you can significantly increase the value of your home.

Some simple updates include replacing the hardware – all cupboard and drawer handles. Adding a backsplash, with matching light switches, can look stunning. Although a more expensive upgrade, try to update all kitchen appliances so that they match. A more cohesive-looking kitchen can increase the value buyers see in the house.

Countertops set the tone for the entire kitchen, so if you want to add major value to your home, select stylish, updated materials. The kitchen sink, faucet, and backsplash should match the style and look of the overall countertop remodel.

2. BATHROOM

The bathroom is the next most important room to address. Remove any wallpaper and apply fresh paint, something bright and cheerful. If the lighting fixtures and sink are relatively outdated, consider spending a portion of your budget to install more modern designs.

Take a look at the floor as well. If it looks worn or stained, consider adding sheet vinyl or vinyl tiles, which can be installed on top of the existing floor. Much more affordable than a complete replacement!

3. PAINT

Paint is an easy, affordable fix. Neutral colors (not necessarily white) generally have higher appeal to the mass population, and will still cover up any stubborn, impossible stains and marks. Begin with the kitchen and living area, and then, if funds afford, continue on to the rest of the rooms on the first floor and any rooms on other floors that desperately need it.

4. STORAGE

Buyers are seriously interested in how much storage a house offers. If possible, consider adding storage closets in strategic locations around the house – specifically in the kitchen, next to bathrooms, and at least one next to the bedrooms.

Pro Tip: A den doesn't qualify as a bedroom because it doesn't have a storage closet. If you can add a closet to the room, you just increased your number of bedrooms by one. A 3 bedroom house typically sells for 10K-25K more than a 2 bedroom, depending on the region, location, and the real estate market.

5. FLOORING

Hardwood flooring is the most popular flooring option but costs \$2,582 – \$6,446 for materials and installation services. Consider installing hardwood floors only in the most important areas, like the kitchen and living area. In some homes, the hardwood already exists beneath the carpet, so take a peek and consider simply ripping up the carpet.

If hardwood flooring isn't an option, at least shampoo all carpets. It's a gamble to replace wall-to-wall carpeting; brand new carpeting can improve the appearance of the house, but it may or may not increase its value. Some buyers want to choose their own flooring. Ask your agent what he would suggest before you replace the carpeting.

6. CEILINGS

Popcorn ceilings often decrease the offers you'll get for the house. Buyers usually know how much work they'll be to remove, so they'll lower their offer. Eliminating them is an affordable but messy task. It can, however, prompt a quicker sale.

7. LIGHTING

Recessed lighting is trending, so consider upgrading your current lighting fixtures to these with LED lighting. If you can't afford recessed lighting, replace the fixtures with other more modern styles.

8. LANDSCAPING

Think of curb appeal as your positioning statement to potential buyers. Positive curb appeal may not increase the market value of your home, but it does contribute to a buyer's first impression. Even simple improvements – weeding, trimming hedgerows, planting flowers and shrubs (depending on the time of year) – can put your viewers in a good frame of mind before they set foot in your house.