

Smart Renovation Returns

Practical Upgrades That Can Boost Comfort and Resale Value

Homeowners often renovate for day-to-day comfort, but it is also natural to wonder which projects may help at resale. National research offers a clear theme: routine, visible improvements that keep a home in good working order tend to hold value better than highly personal changes.

Return on investment varies by region, home type and timing, but the same categories show up year after year. In its 2024 Cost vs. Value Report, Remodeling magazine tracked average costs and resale values for common projects across the country and found that many of the strongest paybacks were smaller exterior and system-focused updates.

Curb appeal upgrades, modest kitchen refreshes and basic efficiency steps can also help a listing photograph well and show cleanly, which matters in any market. The goal is not to chase trends. It is to make the home feel cared for and easy to live in.

SMALL EXTERIOR FIXES

Exterior projects often provide a strong blend of livability and resale appeal because buy-



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ers can see the impact immediately. Remodeling's 2024 report showed that replacement garage doors, entry doors and manufactured stone veneer recouped a large share of their cost on average. Those projects can also address wear, weathering and security.

Siding replacement and new roofing can be harder to "feel" day to day, but they can

reduce buyer concerns during inspections. Even when a seller does not recoup every dollar, newer exterior materials can help shorten negotiations by answering questions before they come up.

KITCHEN AND BATH BASICS

Major remodels are expensive and can become a matter

of taste, so many homeowners focus on smaller updates. Remodeling's report found that a minor, midrange kitchen remodel typically returns more than a major upscale kitchen remodel on average.

Simple choices tend to age well: durable countertops, easy-to-clean surfaces and neutral finishes. In bathrooms, replacing a worn vani-

ty, updating lighting and improving ventilation can make the room feel brighter and better maintained without changing the footprint.

ENERGY AND MAINTENANCE

Efficiency improvements can pay off in comfort first, then in buyer confidence. The U.S. Department of Energy notes that air sealing and insulation are among the most cost-effective ways to improve home comfort and reduce energy use. Well-installed attic insulation and careful sealing around gaps can also help rooms feel less drafty.

Maintenance is not glamorous, but it is persuasive. Fresh interior paint, repaired drywall and updated fixtures signal that bigger systems may have been cared for, too. Buyers may not calculate a precise dollar return, but they often respond to homes that feel move-in ready.

Before starting, homeowners can compare the home to others in the neighborhood, then choose improvements that bring it up to par. A renovation that fits the home's price range and style can support value while making daily life better.



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REAL ESTATE 101



Pick One Visible Win

If you can only do one project, choose a repair or refresh buyers notice fast, like paint, lighting or an entry upgrade. Visible care can reduce second-guessing at showings.

HOMEWISSE GLOSSARY

Return on Investment (ROI): Return on investment measures how much of a project's cost is recovered at resale. It is usually expressed as a percentage, comparing resale value added to the total project cost.

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