



# Fall Home Improvement

## Selling your home? Here are a few things to keep in mind

By GERALYN BROCK

Exactly how much of your home improvement dollar you'll recoup by selling your home depends on several factors.

These include: the direction of the broader housing market, the value of the homes in your neighborhood, how soon you plan to sell the house and the nature of the improvement itself.

And keep in mind that the longer you hold on to your home after a remodeling project is completed, the less likely you are to recoup its value. Design tastes can shift significantly over time. Remember when avocado green was all the rage?

**Don't over-improve or under-improve.** Any proposed renovations should take into account the neighborhood market.

Just because you put \$20,000 into your home doesn't mean that your house is worth \$20,000 more. I had a client who invested \$60,000 in a \$140,000 home and lived there for four years. They put it on the market for \$280,000. They were offered \$180,000.

Their mistake: over-improving their home without taking into consideration the neighborhood.

For example, a granite kitchen countertop in a starter community would be an over-improvement and therefore generate a lower payback. Conversely, a laminate countertop in an executive community may be an under-improvement. A prospective purchaser may view it as something they would have to upgrade, giving the new countertop little value.

**Make basic improvements first.** The biggest recoveries can be made by correcting

*Project	Cost	Payback
New heating or air conditioning system	\$2,000 - \$4,500	75% - 100%
Minor kitchen remodeling	\$2,000 - \$8,500	94% - 102%
Major kitchen remodeling - Kitchen and bathroom remodeling projects consistently return the most in resale value and almost always help sell a house.	\$9,000 - \$25,000	90%
Add a bathroom: Adding an extra bathroom with all the trimmings almost always pays for itself!	\$5,000 - \$12,000	92%
Remodel a bathroom	\$8,500	77%
Add a fireplace	\$1,500 - \$3,000	75%
Build a deck - Decks have become more desirable, and their resale value has increased.	\$6,000	73%
Replace Windows: The savings on your utility bill make up for the spotty resale value. Standard windows may make your money back, but as soon as you get into customizing with fancy shapes, boys, and bows you can't see from across the street, you're throwing money down the drain. If you love these types of windows, then do it; just don't expect a huge return.	\$6,000	68% - 74%
Build a pool: The main reason pools repel more prospective buyers than they attract is that they require expensive upkeep. The fear of liability runs a close second.	\$20,000 +	44%
Install or upgrade landscaping: Landscape for your own enjoyment. It looks nice and may make your home more attractive, but most buyers won't pay up for it.	\$1,500 - \$15,000	30% - 60%
Finish Basement	\$3,000 - \$7,000	15%

\*Compiled from several published surveys

deficiencies and performing required updates, like upgrading to an energy-efficient furnace, updating to 200 amp electrical service, or replacing the roof. It may not be enjoyable, but it's the basic improvements that may have the greatest return on your home's value.

You may have a beautiful new kitchen, but if your roof is leaking, you have a real problem.

Keep in mind that items like a new roof, new furnace and central air, new hot water heater and other mechanical systems will not pay you back dollar-for-dollar.

These are considered maintenance items. Replacing them

will, however, give your home a distinct advantage when comparing to other homes. Plus, you have the advantage of enjoying these improvements.

So, if you're thinking of putting your house on the market in the next year or so, be sure to tackle any problems with the home's structure or mechanical systems before you, say, install that hot tub you've always dreamed of.

**Do-it-yourself vs. Professional contractor.**

Depending on your area, a renovation completed by the homeowner may not be considered worth as much as one done by a professional contractor, due to the quality of

the finish or materials.

**Average Paybacks.** Recouping your remodeling investment may be your goal when you sell your house. But when it comes to resale value, all home improvements are not created equal.

As a rule, kitchen remodeling projects and bathroom additions almost always pay back 90 percent or more of their costs. However, finishing a basement or adding a room usually pays back less than 50 percent.

Most home purchasers do not want to tackle large projects, or if they do, they want a discount on the asking price to make it worth their while. You don't need to make your house look like a showcase.

New carpets, paint, and good maintenance are the best ways to enhance your home's salability. And be sure to fix that broken light fixture or loose doorknob.

If you haven't addressed these little problems, a purchaser might wonder how many significant items have been overlooked that may not be apparent.

Remember, how much of your investment you can recoup should be only one factor in any renovation plans.

It's hard to guess what will appeal to a potential buyer, so make sure that the renovations suit your own wants, needs and tastes first.

Who knows? You may end up staying longer than you think.

An Old West End resident, GERALYN BROCK is a licensed REALTOR® with the Loss Realty Group and can be reached at 419-450-9477.

## THE WAY TO A Beautiful Lawn.

Achieve Lawn Perfection with Simplicity.



Simplicity has it all!

\$300

Regent Lawn Tractor

**REBATE Plus No Interest & Payments for 1 FULL YEAR\***

- 18-hp Briggs & Stratton & Kohler Engines
- 38" & 44" Free Floating mower deck with full width rollers
- 14" turning radius
- Hydrostatic transmission with lifetime belt warranty
- Gear model available

www.simplicitymfg.com

### Bill's Service Inc.

"Sales • Parts • Service • Since 1956"  
116 E. Adrian St. (on US-223)  
Blissfield, MI • 12 MI. N of Sylvania  
www.billserviceinc.com  
**517-486-3104**

\*Offer valid subject to credit approval through Shoppers Charge Accounts Co. on purchases between 7/1/05 and 12/31/05. No payments required (except insurance premiums if applicable.) Finance charges will be assessed from date of purchase, unless the total purchase price and all related insurance premiums (if applicable) are paid in full within the promotional period.

