

Remodeling your Basement

Need more living space? Don't want to move? One of the easiest ways to add space to your home is by remodeling your basement. Most of our basements are dark areas, where we store old toys, seasonal decorations, sports equipment, and anything else that we don't use on a regular basis. We rarely go down to the basement, and much of the stuff we've stored gets thrown out or given away when we move.

Perhaps it is time for you to reconsider how you use your basement. Remodeling your basement is a cost-effective way to expand your home's living space. You could have a guest room, a home office, a children's play room, a recreation room; the possibilities are limited only by your imagination.

Below are five easy steps to help you reclaim your basement.

1. Solve any water problems first.

Even problems with dampness or flooding occur only rarely, it's best to solve the problem before beginning any remodeling work. A permanent solution can take time to implement. A good place to start would be to talk to an independent home inspector who specializes in waterproofing problems.

2. Decide what the best use of your basement would be.

Consider using the space for something the characteristics of your basement lend itself to. Lack of light is useful when setting up a home theater or a dark room. Isolation helps create a sound barrier for a play area, a teenager's hangout, or a place to practice a musical instrument.

3. Get help with the design.

Your basement may not be much to look at now, but you'll want to end up with a quality living space. An architect or an interior designer can help you get the most out of the space. A little forethought and some careful planning now can help you to create a space that is comfortable, attractive, and useful.

4. Pay attention to air circulation.

The odds are, that, when your home was first built, there were few if any air registers or vents installed in the basement. When you remodel your basement, you need to think about the importance of good air circulation, and add openings wherever necessary.

To be on the safe side, install a carbon monoxide detector in your basement. This way you'll have an early warning of any problems with the venting of your furnace or any other major appliances.

5. Maximize the natural light.

You'll probably want to add more light in your basement. Enlarged windows provide not only more light, but alternative escape routes in case of fire.

A concern some people might have about basement windows is that they can provide thieves with access to the home. One way to mitigate that risk, is to install glass bricks (rather than conventional windows) at any high-risk locations.

Maximize the light in your basement by mounting windows in the interior walls, between rooms. This opens pathways for natural light to reach interior rooms.