

## What You Can Learn From Home Makeover Shows

While leveling your home in order to create your dream home may seem a bit extreme, millions of Americans each week tune in to many of the home makeover reality TV shows in hopes of finding that perfect idea or unique architectural layout in order to begin the designs and plans of their new home. Before and after photos and video can provide instant motivation for homeowners who are looking to work with builders to create one-of-a-kind bathrooms, kitchens, or entire floors.

Shows like HGTV's "Curb Appeal" also provide ideas on how to craft the exterior appeal of your new home, in order to increase the property's value for future resale as well. However, there are some good lessons to be learned from these shows, and they aren't as simple as deciding what rooms need dormer windows or buying a new vanity on sale at your local hardware store and handling the installation yourself after your builder has completed the framework. Here are a few takeaways that these shows don't share:

- **Building your new home requires planning.** Beautiful pictures and a remodel of a bathroom in an hour-long TV show may look simple, but what you see on TV and the reality of building that gorgeous bathroom are much different. Unless you have a motivated crew and a flexible schedule, don't expect such rapid and smooth progress.
- **Size does matter.** If you're looking to build a larger home on your existing lot, think what that larger home will look like aesthetically within your existing neighborhood. Also consider your home's resale value. Will a larger home be harder to sell in the future if it's in a neighborhood with homes of less value? Perhaps having a larger home isn't as important as having a new home, with up-to-date features and framework.

Tips and tricks from home makeover shows are great for smaller projects, but if you're truly looking for an extreme makeover, stop and look at the big picture of what you want, build a plan that works and decide how your ideas will affect a future resale. Then collaborate with your builders and designers to create your dream home.

Tags: Extreme Makeover, HGTV, home makeover, reality TV, Curb Appeal, dream home

## The Anatomy of a Great Kitchen Design

Often the kitchen is the focal point for socializing and living in a home. The aroma of tasty food simmering on the stove invites people in to chat, laugh and enjoy each other's company. It's common to see a family gathered around a kitchen island preparing meals together, or friends catching up over a glass of wine. If you walk into a kitchen showroom in a Home Depot or Lowes, you probably feel like you've walked into heaven. Long granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, never-ending cabinet and storage space. The same holds true if you flip through the pages of a kitchen remodeling magazine. The designs are gorgeous and the photographers make it look so easy to design your dream kitchen.

But when reality sets in, what is the real starting point for designing a kitchen in your new home?

- Determine your budget. Talk to a few designers and your builder about the range of expenses that people are investing in their kitchens.
- Identify your priorities. What are the most important features for you? How will you use your kitchen for "living"?
- Sketch a rough design that provides flow for both work and socializing. Is your space large enough for an island, or will it cut the room in half making it hard to work around? Collaborate with your builder in the initial stages of your home design to determine what is realistic within the overall home plan.
- Consult a kitchen designer and builder to determine the functionality of your ideas. They can offer alternatives that can improve the productivity, save you money, or both!

Your kitchen must work as a system, with each component complementing the next. Consider style, function, plumbing needs, and what will work aesthetically with all the mechanical needs of the space. Scheduling, budgeting and planning are at the backbone of great kitchen design. To skip these steps and simply buy what you like at your home service store is a recipe for disaster.

Tags: kitchen remodeling, kitchen planning, kitchen design, Home Depot, Lowes