

HOME MAINTENANCE UPDATES WORTH THE MONEY

When you're making renovations to a home, how do you know what's a solid investment? A worthy update can either serve to reduce your cost of living while you remain in the home or add significant value to the home sale price when you decide to put it on the market.

Paint
The quickest way to make a room look new again is to add a fresh coat of paint. "Paint has one of the highest returns on investment, but the color choice and the contrast and the variety that you use can have a big impact," McGillivray says. To make it worthwhile, keep any newly painted rooms neutral.

Backsplash
Adding a backsplash to your kitchen can take make a world of a difference, and it doesn't have to cost a lot. HomeAdvisor reports that backsplash installation costs, on average, \$1,000.

Windows
Old windows on a house can be an eyesore, not to mention a pain to open and close. New windows can also have the cost-saving benefit of cutting down on drafts and increasing energy efficiency.

Cabinets
Attractive cabinets are key to an enticing kitchen, but that doesn't necessarily require brand new cabinets. If you have the classic five-piece, framed look characteristic of Shaker cabinets and they're in pretty good shape, refinishing or painting is a great alternative.

Bathroom Vanity
Like the kitchen, you don't necessarily have to do a massive overhaul. Real estate information company Zillow reports a minor bathroom remodel consisting of new light fixtures, tiling the floor and adding a double vanity can result in a \$1.71 increase in the value of the home for every dollar spent on the project.

Siding
The exterior of your house can take a beating from rain, snow, hail and dirt, and after a while it shows. The Cost vs. Value report notes new siding will recoup 75.6% of the cost when you sell your house.

Functioning Fireplace
If you have one, don't get rid of it. A 2016 Angie's List survey of more than 100 real estate agents across the U.S. found more than 68 percent believe having a fireplace in a home increases its value.

Energy-Saving Thermostat
A smart thermostat, like the Nest Learning Thermostat, that can learn your habits and turn heat or air on only while you're home serves as a great potential saver on energy bills.

Garage Door
A new garage door may not provide the same enjoyment that a brand-new kitchen might in the interim before you sell, but this project has a visual impact on a house.

Solar Vents in the Attic
This update probably won't go widely noticed when it comes time to sell, but solar vents in the attic are worth it if you'll be in the home a while. The vents help to expel hot air in the attic in the summer, which has a tendency to keep your air conditioner working harder to keep the home cool.

Landscaping
The house's curb appeal is often undervalued by homeowners when they put their home on the market. But as the first thing any house hunter will see when they come to tour the home.

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