

**TORONTO SUN** NEW HOMES & CONDOS

# A kitchen reno reality check



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## THE DESIGN FEED

The world of reality TV has led many homeowners to believe they can renovate a kitchen for \$5,000 to \$10,000 while still getting everything on the wish list. Looks like it time for a reality check!

To set the budget properly, here's two ways to renovate an average size kitchen on your own; what you'll get, and what it will really cost.

### The facelift

*(A DIY refresh using base grade materials.)*

For a quick style refresh, without the major short term investment (or the long term value), aim to declutter, change up the visual palette, and replace the biggest eyesore. For example, put away your mis-matched gadgets, repaint the walls in a stylish warm grey, upgrade the knobs, and replace that one appliance that's been driving you crazy. Top it all off with a new beautiful pendant light to add brightness and flair.

Sample budget: paint and supplies [\$150], new knobs [\$300], new fridge [\$2,800], two pendant lights and electrician [\$900], hiding clutter [free!]. Total budget \$4,150.

### The all-in

*(A full upgrade with DIY design/planning, and savvy shopping for sale materials.)*

If you're giving your kitchen a more serious renovation, you might as well go all-in, a good upgrade can add home value, but if you go half-hearted future buyers won't appreciate any of it.

Bringing the appliances up-to-date alone can be a major investment but keep in mind that any other upgrades bring labour (including demolition!), material costs, and the possibility of costly surprises.

Sample Budget: Superior shaker style soft closing door cabinets [\$15,000], quality knobs/pulls [\$400], mid-range appliance suite (microwave, oven, range, dishwasher and fridge) [\$8,000], sink and faucet [\$900], porcelain tile backsplash [\$900], quartz slab counters [\$4,000], hardwood flooring [\$1,200], new trim [\$600], pair of eye-catching pendants [\$800], three counter stools [\$1,200], accessories [\$500], paint and supplies [\$150], unexpected electrical



Carefully consider changing up the cabinet knobs.

costs [\$1000], installation/delivery and labour [\$12,000]. Total budget \$46,650.

### The pros know

It can certainly save your budget to do the design management work yourself but the reality is you run a much higher risk of making a costly mistake — good communication and coordination of a busy job site is key to a successful renovation.

A knowledgeable, experienced designer working with a team of reputable, insured trades will get the design right the first time, so you don't end up with the oven sitting below the counter, the lights hanging off-centre, or the tiles not lined up to the cabinets — the seemingly picky details

that are easy to miss during the installation but hard to ignore once they've gone wrong!

This being said, good work has its price — one that usually isn't shown on tv makeovers or in magazine spreads. You should expect to set at least 1/3 of your budget aside for labour and fees, and reserve 1/5 for emergencies and surprises.

### Other options

Carefully consider cabinet door/drawer refinishing: \$1,600+ for an average size kitchen kitchen (est. \$80 times 20 units).

It's a smart move if you have



Good lighting helps a kitchen feel larger and airier.

quality cabinets but a waste if what you really need is a full replacement.

Under-cabinet lighting isn't just a tech-gimmick: lighting the counters makes work easier and helps any kitchen feel larger and airier — add in \$200-\$500. To really brighten your day, a

dropped ceiling panel can allow for new potlights and pendants even with a concrete ceiling.

— For more design tips, facts and inspirational photos, visit [tidg.ca](http://tidg.ca), or find Yanic on Instagram and Twitter at @yanicsimard.



Make a splash with white bevelled subway tiles.

### REALITY BITES

1. A Kitchen facelift can cost under \$5,000, if you focus on essentials. Don't forget the power of decluttering to get a sharper look at no extra cost.
2. Eye-catching pendants make a good investment on any budget, to create a focal point and add brightness.
3. Go big or go home! To make a long term investment, fully upgrade, but expect to spend at least \$45,000.
4. Remember to budget for overlooked details like knobs and trim, and finishing touches like good stools and attractive accessories.
5. Draw up your own budget list before design begins, adding 1/3 for labour costs, and 1/5 for construction surprises.

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