



Around the House

Home Repair and Remodeling

PO Box 160
North Billerica, MA 01862-0160
MA CSL# 091949 - HIC #135208

(978) 455-1806
<http://www.MyPowerCouple.com>
Info@MyPowerCouple.com

Remodeling: What to Expect

Although we have been involved in many remodeling projects, we find that the remodeling experience is new to many of our clients. In an effort to minimize surprises, we will attempt to set your expectations about the process that is about to begin.

It is best to “keep your eye on the prize” as they say. The ultimate goal is to achieve the transformation to your home that you are imagining. If you are properly prepared for aspects of this very stressful and emotional process, you may even find that you can actually have a lot of fun along the way.

Emotionally, prepare yourself for a roller coaster ride. The eager anticipation you feel when the contract is signed will plummet as you experience the mess of demolition. As the project seems to go on day after day, you may feel that your home has been destroyed and will never be the same again. If you can manage to take a few deep breaths each day and try your best to remain patient and calm, you will see your space transform and it shouldn't be too long before you can visualize the wonderful product we have created together.

Some clients have found that a little bit of “away” time, periodically throughout the process can help. Perhaps dinner or a movie or even a trip to the mall to do a little window shopping would help take your mind off the chaos at home.

Budget

As you see your home transforming, you may change your mind about the scope of the project. For example, you may decide, initially, that the doors should be reused in order to reduce the cost of the project. However, as you see the project come to a conclusion, you may decide that they will stand out next to all the new items, materials, and finishes.

We do our best to think of all contingencies when preparing our proposals. However, there may be some surprises that we cannot foresee and will only be evident once the project is underway. For example, subflooring repairs that are discovered only after the bath tub is removed.

Our suggestion is to try to build a little cushion into your budget so that surprises do not break your budget and so that you have the leeway to make minor changes in the project that will make the changes to your home be exactly what you want.

Communication

We have found that communication is often important to keeping everyone's expectations realistic and the project moving right along. We prefer hearing your concerns, wishes, and complaints as early as possible before they become huge problems.

Please leave us every phone number through which we can contact you in case something important comes up. We promise not to be on the phone constantly, but we may have a question that a quick answer can keep the job moving along.

If you aren't always available, you may find that we leave you notes letting you know what we've accomplished, directions for you ("wet joint compound"), the next step in the process, and questions ("where do you want the towel ring to go?"). We also look to you to leave us notes asking questions and telling us what you like and don't like.

You may also find that we start a "punch list." A punch list is a list of tasks that need to be taken care of before the project is considered complete. We, likely, will not handle them immediately but will keep track of them so that they can be addressed before we finish.

We may also ask you for signatures on material photographs or samples. This is mostly to keep track of the decisions we have asked you to make.

Dirt, Dust, and Noise

No doubt about it, construction is dirty, noisy work.

You will notice that we use many products and procedures to reduce the amount of dirt you experience. For example, we apply flooring protection along pathways leading to the area to be remodeled. Not only does this help protect your floors, but it is also easier for us to sweep clean at the end of each day so that you need not track this dirt throughout the rest of the house. Also, we use a sanding system and exhaust fans in the windows to try to keep the dust out of the rest of your home during drywall sanding.

Although we will do our best to minimize the dirt and noise, you should prepare yourself for it. Despite our efforts, you may find a fine layer of dust can carry throughout a large part of your house. If you have any personal possessions that may be sensitive to dust, you should take appropriate measures to protect them, etc.

Schedule

With all the remodeling shows on television, we have discovered that a few of our clients seem to have an optimistic notion about how long it takes to take a project to completion. In our opinion, it is best to go into a remodel assuming that it will take longer than the initial projections.

We try to have all materials specified prior to the execution of the contract. This helps to avoid the additional paperwork and budget surprises for later change orders. For example, it is better to know before the contract is signed that your choice for flooring will really be \$30 per square yard rather than the \$15 per square yard that would provide a medium-grade flooring material.

Once the contract is signed, we can apply for the building permit. This, too, can introduce delays. Your local building department technically must respond to an application within 30 days. We have never had one take that long and often they are ready within a few days. So, we cannot promise a starting date the day you sign the contract.

If materials have to be ordered, there can be delays in getting them delivered. For many projects, we insist on having all materials on site before we can start work. Imagine tearing your bathroom apart only to find that the bath tub you have specified won't be available for another six weeks. Now you have to decide if you would rather live with your construction site home for that length of time or feel forced to choose an alternate tub that could be available sooner.

Subcontractors have to be scheduled. Depending on their workload, this can also introduce delays. We try our best to get our subcontractors lined up enough in advance to avoid delays.

At various stages in the construction process, work will have to stop until your local building inspector(s) can come to the job site to evaluate and sign off on various stages of work. This usually happens in a timely manner, but there may be delays if the proper inspector is not available for a few days.

The work itself may appear to be moving along quite slowly. For example, it may seem to you that there are other items that can be done while waiting for the joint compound on the walls to dry. We do not intentionally delay any job. There is usually a good reason for doing the work in the order we are.

There are many other reasons the project may get delayed. Weather may play a part if we do not have an acceptable place inside to do all our work. If you change your mind on materials or specifications or if the contract was executed without having all materials and finishes specified (e.g., we generally do not require paint colors to be specified prior to the contract) we may not be able to proceed until the choices are made. Damaged materials may also require some time to get replacements on the job site.

Conclusion

We have intentionally painted a very grey picture here. It is always our intention to make the process move along much more smoothly than this, but we want to prepare you for the worst. To repeat the beginning of the article, it is best to “keep your eye on the prize.” The ultimate goal is to have your home transformed into the space of which you’ve been dreaming. So long as we both try to communicate and move toward that ultimate goal, we hope you will be able to keep patience through the trying times that might occur during our journey toward that goal.