

Let your contractor do their job

Save time and money on your renovation by never doing these five things



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THE INCOME RENOVATOR

The construction industry has a reputation that leaves many less than excited to jump into their own renovation.

After designing and managing construction sites for 18 years, the last five as the lead designer alongside Scott McGillivray on HGTV's *Income Property*, many budget and general tensions that arise between contractor and homeowner could be avoided.

In my experience the contractor may be more than capable of executing the physical aspects of the job but might not have the

smoothest and most concise voice when it comes to explaining how and why a project will be successful.

Remember, there are typically two types of contractors. The articulate salesman, who says everything right, drives a fancy car and has likely never picked up a hammer.

He charges a premium to manage those that actually execute the physical work. You pay a fee for ease in communication.

Then there is the tradesman, he or she is on site and understands how a house is built from firsthand experience.

He will be engaged in the project as both the general contractor and a laborer, resulting in lower fees, however, he is a builder not a salesman so you may need to be more accountable for having asked the right questions to begin with.

Bridging design, construction and the homeowners' points of view, here are my Top five renovation Don'ts that will save you time, money

1. Don't change your mind. Of course feel comfortable discussing new ideas that may alter the project for the better, but know from the onset that every change even seemingly minor results in a Change Order. Research plan before you begin to avoid these extras.

2. Don't be a distraction. I know it's tempting to visit the site everyday and stop the trades to question their approach but every minute you spend chatting with them they are not working on your house. Instead book weekly site meetings with the GC where you both have opportunity to table questions and review progress.

3. Don't procrastinate on decisions. The most costly and



Most budget and general tensions that arise between contractor and homeowner can be avoided, says celebrity designer Melissa Davis.

avoidable extras in renos are delays due to materials not being accessible the day the site is ready for them. Select, purchase all materials and fixtures in advance. Picking the perfect faucet will not be easier when you get a panicked call that the plumber had to move on to another site, which causes the tiling to be delayed. This pushes the completion date and drives up the budget.

4. Don't live in the house. This one is tough logistically

and financially for many but if possible plan to be out of the house for as much of the reno as you can. Having to keep utility services on to accommodate and paying a laborer to make the site safe for family will cost you time and money.

5. Don't start without a plan. Putting your design on paper will reveal issues in advance. Having to undo work once underway forces compromises and results in a completed project that may not

be the ideal or the most cost effective. Hiring a designer or architect can help set you up for success from the start.

— *Celebrity designer and contractor Melissa Davis is known for her appearances, creative design and reno work produced for various HGTV shows and has almost two decades of reno & design experience. For more information, visit www.melissadavis.com.*



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