

Can You Over-Improve Your Brooklyn Home?



Yes, you can over-improve your Brooklyn home.

What does it mean to over-improve Brooklyn home? Simply put, you over-improve your Brooklyn home when you make improvements that are not typical for the neighborhood. More money is spent on the improvement than you can recoup when the property sells. A home's value is determined by the location, square footage, and comparable home sales in a neighborhood. The finishes inside may help the home sell quicker but may not increase the home's value equal to the cost.

You cannot expect a dollar-for-dollar return on improvements in most areas of the home. However, when you over-improve your Brooklyn home, you will get a small or no return on the improvement.

The return on improvements may vary from region to region also. For example, New York is located in the Mid-Atlantic region. If you were to do a mid-range bathroom update, you should expect a 51% return on your investment. If you were to improve the Pacific region, you could expect a 58% return on your investment. Remodeling Magazine has published a National [Cost vs. Value](#) comparison.

You may also expect a different return on investment from one local neighborhood to another.

If you update a kitchen with top-of-the-line cabinetry, appliances, and counters, you may not receive any return on investment if it is in a neighborhood that you would not expect that type of improvement.

If your updates are too taste-specific, it is unlikely you would be able to recoup any costs. Your updates should appeal to a broad range of buyers to get the most bang for your buck if selling your home.

When you are considering an improvement or update, stop and think things through before you commit.

Is the update something that is needed? If the roof is leaking, you need to replace it. On the other hand, a hot tub may not improve the value and will not appeal to all buyers. Are you making this improvement because it is something you want to enjoy, or are you improving to increase your home's appeal for potential buyers?

Can you do the work, or will you need to hire a professional to do the job? If you do not have the skill or the time, you should consider hiring a professional. You will be able to save on some of the costs if you can do the work yourself. But, if you cannot do the job well, you may end up losing in the long run.

Where is it wise to spend money on home improvements so as not to over-improve your Brooklyn home? Remember, if you are considering selling soon, the selections you make should appeal to a broad range of potential buyers.

1. **Kitchens** – The old real estate adage is that kitchens and baths sell homes. Your kitchen update should be in line with other homes in the neighborhood. You should select the best quality cabinetry, counters, and appliances that will look good and function well for your budget. Changing a kitchen layout may make sense, but you need to account for the additional cost required to move water, sewage, or gas lines.
2. **Bathrooms** – A worn-out, tired bathroom can leave the impression that the home is not well maintained. If you watch any home improvement shows, you will see that the spa-like bathroom is trending.
3. **Flooring** – Updating your flooring can be an easy fix compared to other improvements. Replace the worn-out flooring with something new and fresh looking. Whether you are updating carpet, tile, laminate, or wood, you should be able to find some cost-saving choices.
4. **Exterior** – Think curb appeal. Flaking or peeling paint does not make a good first impression. If you need to replace siding, that is an investment that will return some costs and save the hassle of maintenance. Don't neglect to landscape either. Fresh mulch, some new plantings, and a fresh-cut lawn certainly boost the curb appeal. Find out more about improving curb appeal from this previous [blog post](#).
5. **Maintenance** – Staying on top of home maintenance items is well worth the investment of time and money. Regular maintenance may extend the life of some high-priced home components and prevent safety issues from cropping up. Ensuring that your home's structure and major components remain sound should be a priority for every homeowner.
6. **Addition** – you may find you need more space but may not want to make a move to a larger home. Be careful not to overbuild for the neighborhood. The type of room you add will affect the value. A bathroom addition is one of the more valuable additions made to a home.
7. **Basement** – Adding additional living space utilizing unfinished space in the basement can be a good investment. You may be able to create a man-cave, playroom, guest space, or home office to make good use of the area without the expense of adding an addition.

When taking on any home improvement project, you should consider how long you plan to stay in the home. If you know you will not be staying long-term, you may need to make different decisions on the improvements you make to avoid the chance you will over-improve your Brooklyn home.

Saving money is always a good idea whether you plan to stay in the home or sell it. Some ways to save money include:

1. **Budget** – The word budget does not mean cheap. You should establish the amount of money you want to spend on a project. Determine how much you'd like to spend on this project before you start designing and planning. Next, make selections that fit within the money you have allotted. Buy the best quality products in your price range.
2. **Reuse** – You can save money by reusing cabinetry or fixtures and giving them an update. Consider buying items from salvage yards, and stores like Habitat for Humanity Restores to save money where you can.
3. **Estimates** – Get estimates from several contractors. Compare the estimates to be sure they include the same things. Be sure to get references and check them before hiring any contractor.
4. **Classics** – Choose classic design when possible on the higher-cost items. Trends come and go so quickly. If you select tiles with a bold pattern and color, you may tire of it quickly. The cost of replacing the tile may be a hefty expense down the road. Select a more classic style and add your trendy pieces with more manageable and less costly items to replace.
5. **Sell** – If you are replacing items, try to sell the old ones. One man's trash is another man's treasure. You may be able to use the cash you generate on your project.

With home improvement projects, you will have some unexpected expenses. Be sure to allocate a contingency in your budget for those unknowns.

Every municipality has its regulations for home improvements. Check to see if you must have a building permit or inspections through your municipality before starting any project.

If you know you will be selling your home in the future, it is essential to understand which improvements could hurt resale:

1. Covering up period details in older homes.
2. Sacrificing bedroom space.
3. Built-in furniture.
4. High maintenance landscaping.
5. Converting a garage.
6. Installing solar panels.
7. A swimming pool.

Although you may enjoy these items, potential home buyers may not hold the same enthusiasm.

As a reminder, before you start any home improvement project, you should consider:

1. How long do you plan to live in the home?
2. Is the improvement similar to other homes in the neighborhood?

3. Will the improvement increase the home's value?

A good idea before undertaking improvements is to talk to friends, neighbors, and professionals for input on your ideas. As your real estate professional, I would be happy to discuss any improvements you are considering. As a real estate agent, I see many homes and learn firsthand from buyers what they find appealing. Making decisions isn't always easy. Gathering information and input from others can help you see things more clearly.