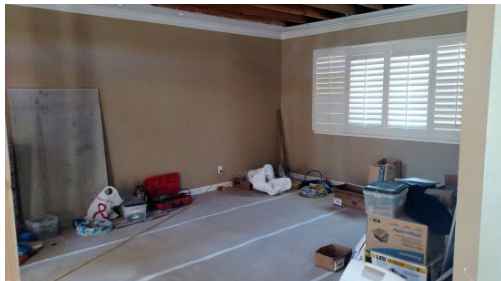


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## Home remodel planning during a pandemic

By Amanda Eck



Before

Now more than ever we are seeing that our homes have become a place of not just comfort, but an office, a classroom, and even a vacation substitute. Homeowners are embarking on remodels now more than ever. I thought I'd share some tips on what to expect during a remodel if you are choosing to stay in your home during construction. And how to make the best of upending your life to hammers, drills and dust.

Did I mention the dust?

1) The dust gets everywhere (I mean everywhere). Especially when things are being torn out. Even when areas are taped off in plastic, those little particles have an amazing ability to sneak into other parts of the home. You might want to consider moving pieces into storage if you are concerned with dust, especially if you suffer allergies.

2) Sleeping in is no longer an option. You will have people in your home day in and day out. Most crews like to start as early as possible. If you need your beauty sleep, like I do, consider an earlier bedtime.

3) Set up a separate living space. You will need a place to sit, work, cook, eat and wash up. Try and make this space as clean and organized as possible. You will want a space that feels "put together" as the rest of your home is in chaos.

4) Consider installing a portable sink in your laundry room to make clean up easy. Set up a microwave in the garage or extra room you are not using. Purchase an electric tea kettle for hot water for tea, hot coco for the kids, or instant oatmeal for an easy breakfast. An outdoor grill or camping stove are a must.

5) This is not the time to worry about the environment. Yes, I said it. Paper plates, bowls, cups, towels and plastic utensils are your best friend.

6) Stay organized. If you are not working with a designer, keep a binder with all the info for your project. Designers keep a selections binder with all the pertinent information for your project like paint selections, hard surface selections (flooring, countertops, tile), elevation sketches, carpentry details, tile layout patterns, etc. Have divider tabs for each room you are remodeling. Keep all the phone numbers, emails, etc. of all the trades that are working in your home. Print out any email or text exchanges you have with your GC or other trades. There is nothing worse than a trade saying, "You didn't tell me that." Guard this binder with your life. A clear plastic sleeve to keep all your receipts and invoices in one place is also helpful. You can also add a sleeve for takeout menus because, hello, takeout is your new best friend. And it helps support our local restaurants - it's a win-win.

7) Your contractor and their trades will be your new family. Having a good professional relationship with your GC is gold. Ask friends and neighbors for referrals. Specifically ask how they treated the home while onsite. Did they leave trash everywhere at the end of the day? Are they careful with your outdoor landscape? But keep in mind renovation is a messy job, things will get damaged, this is not the time to plant \$2,000 of perennials only to get them trampled on.

8) Make sure you get your contractors schedule on what he needs and when he needs it. There is nothing worse than a job getting held up because you didn't know he needed the faucet before the countertops are selected and fabricated. Having all your selections ahead of time and ready before he needs them will make for a very happy GC. Also keep in mind we are in the middle of a global pandemic; things take twice as long to come in.

9) Have a budget buffer. Things will always cost more than what you expected. Let me say that again, things will always cost more than what you expected. Surprise expenses always pop up. That wall they just tore down revealed a leaky pipe or mold or crappy electrical wiring. I like to suggest have at least 15% and closer to 25% more than your estimated budget to save you from these unexpected "gifts."

10) Take a deep breath and remind yourself this is only temporary; patience and a sense of humor go a long way. Also, don't forget to take photos throughout the project. Having before and after photos are always fun to look back on and help create a history of the project.

I hope these tips help ease some of the stress and chaos of home renovation. I have yet to have a client

come back and say, "I regret doing this." It's always, "I wish we had done this sooner."

Until next time, friends!



After



As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home's interior should be both approachable and well- appointed. She often asserts, "Beauty is a necessity." With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art. Visit <http://amandacarolinteriors.com> for more design ideas.

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