

## **Will My New Kitchen Take Forever?**

Although nothing takes forever, we've all heard the nightmare stories of kitchen renovations that seem to have taken at least that long. In fact, the most frequently asked question by people considering a remodel is how long will the job take? Although no one can predict exactly how long a project will take, there are some basic guidelines as to what you should expect when doing a major renovation, and what you should do during that time.

A kitchen remodel can be broken into five distinct steps: planning, designing, preparation, construction and finishing touches. The planning stage involves your own research. Plan on spending 4-6 weeks doing your homework! Establish a budget that you're comfortable with (and then deduct 10% of it for unforeseen expenses). Next, analyze your existing situation and make a list of what you would like to change. Do you need more storage area? Do you need more counter space? What types of appliances would you like? What type of counter, floor, etc. Pick up some kitchen magazines and while browsing through them, tear out whatever interests you and put it into a folder to show your designer/contractor.

The design stage should be the most enjoyable, and requires about 3-5 weeks. During this period you need to interview and hire a designer and contractor. They will work with you to develop a detailed floor plan, combining both your ideas and their own, based on your budget. You'll also select the cabinets and finalize the choices of counters and appliances during this stage. Once these decisions have been made preparation begins.

This stage includes taking care of the paperwork, ordering the materials and getting ready for the actual work to commence. From the time the cabinets are ordered it will take 4-8 weeks for them to arrive at your home, during which time you will need to create a temporary food preparation area. Find a suitable area, near a sink if possible. Have the refrigerator moved as close as possible to this location, and if you don't already have a microwave oven, this is the time to get one. Buy disposable plates, glasses and plastic utensils. Pack up everything in the existing kitchen in boxes. If you label the boxes you'll be able to find things if you need them and it will be easier to restock the kitchen when the job is done. At this point, feel free to discard anything that you haven't used in the past five years.

The big day arrives when the construction phase starts. This is what you've been waiting for. Noise, dust, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, destruction, construction, etc., etc. Second thoughts begin to creep into your head, but it's too late . . . your committed. But don't despair, in about 4-6 weeks, (up to twelve if your expanding the footprint of the house), your dream kitchen will be completed. The workmen will be gone and you'll be left with everything you had hoped for.

After the kitchen is done it's time for the finishing touches. Make up a list of anything that needs adjustment or replacement and review it with your contractor. Usually the final adjustments take a week or two because things may have to be ordered from the manufacturers.

If I added everything up correctly the typical remodeling project will take approximately 4-6 months from the time you first started planning it. Of this only one to two months is actual construction. Although this may seem like forever, if you consider that you will enjoy the efforts of your labor for the next 20-30 years, its not really so bad.