

-
-
-
-

10 DIY Projects For Your Kitchen

- [Scott Gamm](#)
-
- Oct 27, 2012 9:00 AM EDT

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-



ADVERTISEMENT

NEW YORK ([MainStreet](#)) — Kitchen renovation projects tend to have a way to break the bank – or at least cost more expected.

Budgets for major kitchen overhauls can easily reach tens of thousands of dollars – not to mention the hassle of having arguably the most used area of your home under construction for a few weeks, if not months, once you factor in the unexpected but common renovation hiccups.

During the economic recovery that's showing modest signs of life, it's especially important to re-evaluate your renovation goals and budget. To give your kitchen a more updated look without having to hire a contractor and spend thousands in construction costs, we polled the design pros themselves to share ten do-it-yourself projects to spruce up your kitchen.

1. Cabinet lighting

Lights under a cabinet make for a classy illumination of countertops. "The simplest way to install under-cabinet lighting is to visit your home improvement store and buy some readily available light fixtures – enough fixtures to place one in each of your major task areas within your kitchen," says Jill Valeri, president of The [Welcome Home: Interior Design Solutions](#).

Additionally, Valeri mentions these pointers when it comes to installing the lights:

- Typically fixtures are installed with screws directly to the underside of your cabinets and can plug in to your standard wall

outlet.

- You can secure excess wire to the underside of the cabinet as well by using a staple gun, making sure you do not pierce the wire.
- You can also hard-wire the fixtures to a switch, but that is best left to professionals.

2. Cabinet knobs

Instead of spending hundreds or even thousands of dollars by resurfacing or replacing your kitchen cabinets, a cheaper alternative is replacing the knobs and pulls on each cabinet.

“Knobs and pulls are the jewelry of the kitchen,” Valeri says. She shares these tips to make the replacement process easier:

- Measure your screw holes. In cases where it is a pull with more than one screw, measure carefully the distance between the holes to ensure you buy the right size.
- Make sure the new knobs and pulls feel comfortable in your hand.

3. Painting the ceiling

You might first think of painting the walls in your kitchen first, but the ceiling deserves just as much attention.

Valeri reveals some insider tips for painting the kitchen ceiling:

- For a ceiling, use the flattest finish available. There is actually a paint finish called ceiling flat.
- If your ceiling is drywall with no texture, use a roller with a smoother nap.
- If you have textured/stucco ceilings, choose a roller with a deeper nap intended for textured surface.
- If you have a deeply textured ceiling, you may need to touch up some of the deeper areas with a brush.
- When painting a ceiling, remember to wear a hat.

4. Kitchen sealing

The kitchen area is exposed to plenty of moisture – especially by the sink. To prevent mold and mildew from developing, Jason Toth, technical customer service supervisor of Baltimore, Md.-based DAP Products, shares pointers when it comes to kitchen sealing:

- Clean and dry the surface you will be sealing (around sinks, backsplashes, countertops and plumbing fixtures) to ensure it is free of all dirt, dust, grease, old caulk and debris. Carefully review safety precautions on the package accompanies the materials.
- Apply painter’s tape to mask off areas around the joint where the caulk should not appear and to help give a straight caulk line.
- There are many different nozzle designs on caulk cartridges. Read the instructions of your product for directions on cutting the nozzle. Some nozzles have an inner-foil lining that needs to be punctured or a removable nozzle covering an inner plastic seal that also needs to be cut.
- Load the cartridge into the caulking gun. Applying steady pressure to the trigger, fill the joint around the shower or bathtub with an even bead of caulk. If you have selected a product in a squeeze tube, cut the nozzle at a 45 degree angle with scissors or a utility knife and squeeze the product into the joint. It is best to push the caulk ahead of the nozzle to ensure it gets into the joint for a proper seal. Follow using a finishing tool to smooth the bead for a professional-looking finish.
- If you applied painter’s tape, remove the tape before the caulk skins over. To remove tape, lift the edge up at a 45-degree

- angle away from you and carefully place in a trash can.
- Wipe away excess caulk or sealant according to manufacturer's instructions (either with water and a damp cloth or mineral spirits) before the caulk or sealant dries. Excess dried caulk or sealant will need to be cut or scraped away.
- Store unused container in a cool, dry place away from extreme heat or cold.

5. Kitchen faucets

Replacing an outdated kitchen faucet with a more modern one is an inexpensive, DIY project for your kitchen, but the change will have a lot of impact.

We turned to Jeff Patterson of HomeRepairTutor.com for help:

- Turn off the water to the old kitchen faucet by turning the shut-off valves underneath it completely to the right.
- Place a bucket under the old faucet and use a crescent wrench to loosen/remove its water supply lines from the shut-off valves (and catch water from the supply lines in the bucket).
- Loosen the mounting nuts on the underside of the old faucet with a basin wrench.
- If the mounting nuts are difficult to remove, apply penetrating lubricant.
- Remove the old faucet and scrape any plumber's putty off the old sink.
- Add the plastic gasket that comes with the new faucet to the sink base.
- Place the new faucet on top of the plastic gasket and secure it to the underside of sink with the locknut that came with it.
- Use a wrench to tighten the locknut.
- Tighten the hot and cold water supply lines (use the steel braided variety) to the new faucet's hot and cold inlets.
- Tighten the hot and cold supply lines to the shut-off valves under the sink.
- Test for leaks by turning the shut-off valves on. If any leaks occur, give the fittings a quarter-inch turn to the right until water stops leaking.

6. Put in a tile backsplash

Instead of replacing the counters with fancy and costly granite or marble, a more cost-effective solution is to retile the kitchen's backsplash. Patterson reveals these recommendations:

- Make sure the wall is flat by using a level. Fill any hollow sections with quick-setting joint compound and sand the area to ensure smoothness.
- Scuff painted walls with 100-grit sandpaper.
- Use a 3/16-inch V-Notched trowel to apply mortar for glass tile to the wall.
- Smooth the mortar so there are no visible ridges.
- Adhere the glass tile sheet to the wall and press gently into place.
- Remove excess mortar that oozes between tiles.
- Add mortar to the rest of the wall, working in 1-foot by 1-foot sections, and add tile sheets.
- Let the tile sit overnight, then use nonsanded grout to fill in the grout lines.

7. Put in a custom-tile backsplash

Another unique option for your backsplash is to use custom-designed tiles for a more dramatic look.

"There are some methods to create your own custom tiles. Photos or graphics can be used. Once the image is in a digital file, the sky's the limit. For my own kitchen, I found vintage French food ads and had them transferred to tumbled marble tile," Jernigan says.

8. Put in a pressed-tin Backsplash

If tile doesn't suit your tastes and you're looking for a more unique look, using pressed tin is another option for your backsplash, according to S.A. "Sam" Jernigan of [Renaissance Design Consultations](#).

"Pressed tin is very easy to work with, since the sheets are already 24 inches wide, which is a typical backsplash dimension. These can be actual steel or are available in a synthetic material. The metal versions can be left in their original state (likely with a clear coat to protect them from stains) or both types can be painted," she says.

9. Stove hood

If you're an experienced DIY-er, building your own stove hood might be up your alley.

Jernigan shares her advice when it comes to this project, especially if you're bored with the typical stainless steel hood:

- The "guts" of the hood can be bought as components. Any housing can be rendered and finished with a variety of materials.
- I used chicken wire over a wood frame and a drywall compound to create a hand-troweled plaster look, which was painted and detailed – all simple to do and considerably less expensive than a manufactured stove hood.

10. Area rugs

Once you've completed some of the more complex DIY projects, it's time to add some accessories to the kitchen. An area rug will add warmth.

"The rug can be a runner that extends the entire length of your cabinets, a large rectangle in the center of the room under a free-standing island or maybe a piece in a high-traffic area that runs through the kitchen," Valeri says./p>

She says you don't need to limit your selection of rugs to just kitchen mats. "Choose a rug with a busy pattern and a low pile. It will stand up better to the wear and tear in a kitchen," she advises.

Show Comments

-
- [Next](#)

[Back to Top](#)

- [Contact Us](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Sitemap](#)

- [© 2016 TheStreet Inc.](#)