

Should I hire a professional?

Do-it-yourself projects have skyrocketed in popularity in recent years on the heels of Martha Stewart Living, HGTV, and other popular home improvement shows and publications. And, for certain small projects, a DIY project can be rewarding and fun - if you are prepared and have the proper skills. But before you start knocking down walls and taking out wiring, ask yourself the following questions:

- ❑ Do you have a clear idea of what you want your project to look like?
- ❑ Do you have the time to complete this project (be realistic!)?
- ❑ Have you ever undertaken a project like this before?
- ❑ Do you know everything you will need (materials, tools, etc.) to complete the project?
- ❑ Are you familiar with the applicable building codes and permits?
- ❑ Do you enjoy physical labor?
- ❑ Do you have all the tools you will need?
- ❑ Do you have the necessary skills for this project?
- ❑ If not, do you have the time and resources to learn these skills?
- ❑ Where will you obtain the necessary materials?
- ❑ If you cannot complete the project according to your original schedule, are you (and your family) prepared to handle the resulting inconvenience?
- ❑ Will you need assistance with this project? If so, who will assist you? Do they have the time and skills required for this project?
- ❑ Do you understand all the safety issues associated with this project?
- ❑ Are you familiar with the architecture and structural makeup of your home (i.e., how knocking down one wall will affect the rest of the structure)?
- ❑ Have you considered the hidden costs associated with doing it yourself - time, tools, and the possibility that you may actually decrease the value of your house if the result isn't up to professional standards?
- ❑ It is easy to look at the cost of hiring a professional remodeler and think only of labor and materials. But remember that a professional remodeler offers you an important service - years of experience, the right tools, a network of suppliers and subcontractors, and an in-depth understanding of legal regulations, cost estimating, scheduling, and the latest construction techniques.