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January, 2012

## Remodeling a Kitchen for Multigenerational Households

Multigenerational homes, which were fairly common 50 years ago, virtually disappeared in the U.S. over the past generation. Now, they are making a comeback. There are many reasons for choosing a multigenerational home. Maybe you're helping an adult child who has been laid off from a job or going through a divorce. You could be assisting a relative with a disabling injury or illness who no longer is able to live alone. You might be the parents of young children and want your children to grow up with a grandparent close by.



Today's kitchen is the central gathering space of nearly every home. But it can also provide some difficulties if the room wasn't designed to accommodate seniors or small children – or both at the same time. There are many ways to remodel your kitchen to take these issues into account.

First, consider maneuverability since wheelchairs, walkers and strollers all require more space. The Americans with Disabilities Act design guidelines for kitchens generally calls for a clear space of 30" x 48" at each appliance and fixture, and 40 inches of clearance all the way around a kitchen island. This design element is aesthetic as well as practical. It has the added effect of making a kitchen feel open and airy.

Convenient storage is a quick fix that makes everyone's life a little easier. Consider roll-out shelving in base cabinets and pantries and cabinet drawers, as well as pull-down shelves for wall cabinets. They're easier to access for children who want to help set the table or put away dishes, while placing less strain on family members with a limited range of motion.

Appliances, especially stoves, can be hazardous for kids and older adults alike, so think about investing in an induction cooktop. They're great for a variety of reasons, but a huge benefit to the induction cooking method is that the stovetop does not retain heat. That makes them a much safer alternative to standard gas or electric stoves. Induction cooktops are also very thin, making it easier to design your kitchen area for wheelchair access. Plus, they are easy to clean and energy efficient. Appliances with large digital displays are also quite helpful for not only family members with fading eyesight but also for small children.

If it's more workspace you're craving – and let's face it, there never seems to be quite enough counter space for family dinner preparations – a kitchen island is a great solution. They can be packed full of extra features. Do you need additional outlets, an extra sink or more

## In This Issue

- Remodeling a Kitchen for Multigenerational Households
- Solutions for Roof Ice – Tips to Avoid Leaks Inside
- Trends in Bathroom Flooring
- Whatever Needs Fixing, We Can Help
- You Say You Want a Resolution?
- Quick Tips: Home Tip
- Winter Window Tips

## You Say You Want a Resolution?

It's said that the Babylonians came up with the idea for New Year's resolutions 4,000 years ago – back when a little padding was considered a sign of prosperity, exercise was chasing down dinner, and everyone had "Personal Digital Assistants" – 5 permanently attached to the end of each wrist. So apparently the urge to reinvent ourselves has been around awhile. How to do it successfully? Here are two ideas:

1. The Salesman's Mantra: "Under-promise and Over-deliver." In other words, set your sights medium-low. Instead of aiming for losing 30 pounds by March (which may mean amputating a leg in February if you dilly-dally in January), decide to include at least one more serving of a fruit or vegetable in your diet daily. Then, if you manage to do that AND decline dessert, you're ahead of the game. You may not lose a ton immediately, but those healthy changes will add up. Instead of organizing your whole home office in January, do one file drawer. People who benefit from this system: Folks like Charlie Brown who are terminally down on themselves whenever they don't measure up to their own expectations. Nothing succeeds like success. So cut yourself some slack, Mack.

2. Make a New Plan, Fran. If, as Paul Simon asserts, there are 50 ways to leave your significant

storage? An island can provide all of those features. A multi-level island can offer comfortable prep areas for someone working from a wheelchair or a chair – and a handy place for kids to do their homework under an adult’s supervision.

Overwhelmed? There’s expert help available. Seek out a kitchen designer with the Certified Aging in Place Specialist designation. These designers have special training to be able to design a kitchen that caters to every member of your family.

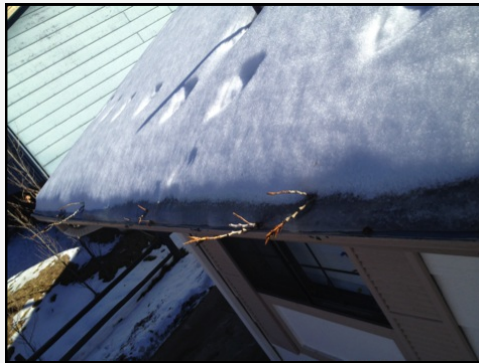
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**[back to top](#)** ↑

## Solutions for Roof Ice – Tips to Avoid Leaks Inside

It’s wintertime again here in Colorado, and that means when it snows the snow often stays on rooftops –

especially on north-facing surfaces that get minimal sun. Although roof structures and roofing materials are designed to handle the additional load, snow that remains



on these roof surfaces can cause serious problems. If you’ve ever seen icicles hanging from your gutters, that’s usually an indication that there’s more going on upstairs. Clogged gutters get filled with water that freezes, then additional snow melt from the rooftop has nowhere to go. That water flows downhill to the point where it hits existing ice, and the frozen zone builds up, causing an “ice dam” that prevents proper drainage from the roof. If allowed to continue, this leads to ice and water working its way back underneath the bottom course of shingles, and then getting behind the fascia boards and into the soffit areas. When the ice melts, water begins draining in the wrong direction, leading to leaks into the interior of the building, causing damage to walls, ceilings, etc. We see this every year, and end up assisting dozens of clients – not only with remediating the ice dams and leaks, but with numerous drywall repairs inside as well.

The good news is that all of these problems can usually be prevented by doing *two simple* things:

- 1. First, be sure to have all gutters and downspouts fully cleaned** after all the leaves are down. When people wait too long, the next thing they know the leaves and sludge are mixed with late fall rain that’s clogged in the gutters and that mixture gets frozen solid. Not only does this lead to damaged gutters and possible leaks inside, it’s *much harder* to clean the gutters at that point, to put it mildly.



- 2. Next, have heat wires installed on roofing shingles and in gutters and downspouts** on

other (but please don’t), then there must be at least several ways to put your goals into action. Write them down. Hang them up. Ask a friend to hold you accountable (we don’t recommend spouses – Danger! Flammable!). Find like-minded goal-setters for mutual support. Set up a reward system: an outfit in the next-smaller size, a massage at Le Salon Frou-Frou, a \$5 large non-fat extra-hot chai adagio latte with nutmeg sprinkles from Megabucks Cafe. You get the idea. Break the goal down into small, measurable, achievable chunks, and enjoy the rewards – the intrinsic (you can actually bend over in your jeans without busting something) and extrinsic – a mud masque and pummeling by Antoine, an hour with your favorite book, a phone call to a good friend. (This, of course, assumes you’re not constantly indulging yourself anyway – but that’s another topic.)

One definition of insanity is to keep doing the same old thing in the same old way and expecting different results. So pick a strategy and commit to it. Here’s to a blessed, healthy and prosperous 2012!

## Quick Tips: Home Tip

If your dryer is taking forever to dry, you may have a clogged ventilation system. The exhaust pipe should be cleaned out every three to six months, depending on how heavy your dryer use is. You can run a flexible dryer vent brush through the tube or you can insert a vacuum cleaner attachment into the hose. You should also check the area outside around the vent to make sure it is free from all obstructions.

## Winter Window Tips

Do you feel tempted to consider newspaper ads for new windows that promise to lower energy bills and add value to your home? Well, think again. Your old, sticky, low-tech windows are probably more cost-effective than they appear. They may simply need a little TLC to obtain efficient, trouble-free service again. Replacing worn-out weather stripping is the first order of business, and will pay off quickly. Next, cleaning off old paint drips and tightening up the stops can work miracles. Start by operating your lower sashes (assuming double-hung windows). Do they glide up and down smoothly, or do they stick? Ideally, the sashes should travel easily but snugly in

the north facing side of the building, or wherever ice dam issues seem to manifest themselves. Heat wire kits are a good investment, and easily installed with clips and fasteners. If heat systems are installed together with a temperature-based controller, the system will only turn on when temps drop below 40° F, and will only power up if moisture is also detected. Thus, the overall solution usually doesn't need babysitting, yet it's energy efficient, and should keep ice dams from building and should also keep gutters and downspouts clear, preventing backups and water leaks inside.

At A Master's Hands, we assist clients with preventive measure like those outlined above, and also help remediate ice dams and frozen gutters, and resolve problems with associated interior leaks and drywall damage when they occur.

[back to top ↑](#)

## Trends in Bathroom Flooring

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Square-cut neutral tile is the traditional bathroom flooring option. If you're looking to jazz up the space without departing from the classic feel, installing tile in eye-catching colors or a mosaic border will break the mold without breaking the bank.

For a natural look, try stone flooring. Slate, marble and limestone are great choices for a tranquil décor, but be careful. Polished stone can get very slick, and unpolished stone may need a sealant to prevent stains. Textured finishes reduce slipping risks.

Today's vinyl flooring offers many beautiful colors and design options. The quality and appearance is greatly improved from decades of the past. It's inexpensive, installs quickly, and it's easy to clean.

Cork flooring is a sustainable, beautiful, practical choice for bathroom flooring. It comes in planks or tiles, repels water, and is naturally resistant to mildew, mold and bacteria.

[back to top ↑](#)

## Whatever Needs Fixing, We Can Help

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A Master's Hands, LLC has a strong track record of delivering affordable remodeling and handyman services to our clients across the greater Denver metro area. From electrical and plumbing to drywall, tile, windows/doors and repairs of all kinds, we have the skills to get the all the tasks on your punch-list done....and no job is too small. We're glad to give our clients advice over the phone, and we typically provide free estimates too. Feel free to call if we can be of service in any way! Happy New Year! -- Jim Bartlett, Founder

[back to top ↑](#)

their channels. If not, investigate to find the root cause. The biggest impediment to fluid movement is usually sloppy accumulations of paint on the sash stops, stiles, rails, and sash channels. Clean off the excess paint with a paint scraper or sander, or use a mild paint remover if necessary. If sloppy paint is exceptionally heavy, a heat tool may help, but use with caution and only use on metal or wood windows.

Next, depending on the material used in your windows, lubricate the channels and glides with silicone spray, paste wax (vinyl, aluminum), or a bar of soap or paraffin wax (wood, fiberglass). Once your windows are free of sloppy paint and properly lubricated, they should operate smoothly again, and with new weather stripping in place they should seal nicely too.

When painting window areas, be sure to stay clear of metal channels and all fittings. When the paint dries, operate the windows several times to make sure nothing sticks. Dusting old painted windows edges *lightly* with talcum powder or corn starch will often prevent paint on adjacent surfaces from sticking when they get warm (from sunlight, etc.).

To keep windows from "frosting" during the winter, prevent water vapor inside from crystalizing on the cold glass by pre-coating the panes. Use a sponge to dampen the panes with salt water, then quickly wipe dry with a soft rag. The thin layer of salt molecules remaining will lower the freezing temperature of water vapor that comes in contact with the window, helping prevent "frosting".

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## Questions?

Contact us by phone: 720.468.3225, by email: [jim@amastershands.com](mailto:jim@amastershands.com), or visit us on the web at [www.amastershands.com](http://www.amastershands.com)

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