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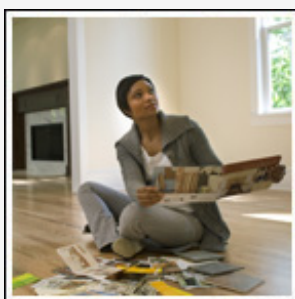


Affordable Remodeling & Handyman Services - 720.468.3225 [www.amastershands.com](http://www.amastershands.com)

March, 2012

## 2011 Remodeling Cost vs. Value Report: Today's Remodeling Focuses on Maintenance, Replacement and Repair

Construction costs have dropped over the past three years, but not enough to counter the steep drop in house prices. However, the rate of decline is slowing and some markets show a slow and steady recovery. Remodeling small but significant portions of the home can be a boon to resale. *Remodeling*



*Magazine's* annual Remodeling Cost vs. Value Report compares the average cost of 35 home remodeling projects with the value that the projects retain upon resale.

As always, regional differences play a big role in the numbers. High resale value in the Pacific (71.3 percent), West South Central (67.6 percent), and South Atlantic (67.3 percent) regions have kept the cost-ratio value well above average, despite having higher remodeling costs. The Mid-Atlantic and North Central markets are below the national average of 57.7 percent – something to consider if you are planning a remodel to increase the resale value of a home in these areas.

Replacement, maintenance, and repair projects have been shown to perform better than remodeling projects overall with regard to resale value, partly due to their lower project cost, as well as immediate curb appeal. Seven out of the 10 top-ranked projects are door, window or siding replacement projects with a cost-value ratio of 71.6 percent.

Siding replacement with new fiber-cement siding topped the list at 78 percent of cost recouped, and steel entry door replacement came in second at 73 percent. Removing the existing entry door and jamb and replacing it with a new 20-gauge steel unit, as well as replacing the existing lock set with a new bored lock in a complementary finish, can greatly improve the curb appeal of a home for sale.

For the third year running, the attic bedroom interior remodeling project is in the top 10, despite its significant expense (\$50,148). The success of this particular project, ranked third at 72.5 percent, may be due in part to it being one of the least expensive ways to add a bedroom and bathroom to a home while keeping the original footprint.

Minor kitchen remodels placed fourth overall (72.1 percent) in the top 10 ranking. A remodel like this typically includes replacing cabinet doors and drawers, replacing the wall oven and cooktop with energy-saving

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## Caring for Your Houseplants

Houseplants add serenity and beauty to your home. There is also the added benefit of cleaner, healthier air. With a little luck, and these tips, growing healthy and hearty houseplants can be easy.

Place your plants in the sunniest parts of your home, especially in winter, or use artificial lighting that mimics sunlight. Keep your house plants away from extremes of hot or cold, such as drafty windows, fireplaces, or heater vents.

Although houseplants need plenty of moisture, too much water in the soil itself is harmful to your plants' root systems. Do not water every day. Plants prefer to dry out between waterings, and can go days or even weeks, until the next watering. Provide proper drainage for your potted plants as well.

Your house plants can absorb air more easily the cleaner they are. Dust your houseplants regularly or clean them with lukewarm water, both on top of and underneath the leaves.

## Quick Tips: Healthy Living Tip

If you are looking for a great food to aid in appetite and blood sugar control, look no further than black

models, painting trim, and replacing flooring and laminate countertops.

Mid-range garage door replacement (71.9 percent) and upscale garage door replacement (71.1 percent) come in fifth and sixth. On average, both of these projects cost less than \$3,000 and greatly increase the curb appeal of a home. The scope of the project includes installing a new four-section garage door with galvanized steel tracks while retaining the existing motor mechanism.

Adding a 16-by-20 foot wooden deck addition provides outdoor entertaining space, a high-value item with today's buyers. Installing pressure-treated deck boards in a simple linear pattern with a built-in bench, planter, and complete railing system recoups a 70.1 percent of its cost.

Vinyl siding (69.5 percent), insulation-backed vinyl siding (69.6 percent), and vinyl window (69.1 percent) replacements complete the top 10 ranked projects. Replacing existing windows with energy efficient vinyl windows without disturbing the interior trim is a great way to brighten up the exterior of a home, as is replacing old siding with new vinyl siding or foam-backed vinyl siding. As an added bonus, both of these projects can help cut energy costs.

**If you have questions or would like more information call 720.468.3225 or email us at [jim@amastershands.com](mailto:jim@amastershands.com)**

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## Easy, Preventative Deck Maintenance

With some regular maintenance, your deck will be enjoyable for years to come. You will want to replace loose nails or screws and warped or rotting boards, reinforce loose railings, and sand down any splintered areas.

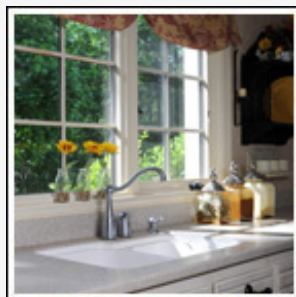
Prevent mold and mildew by sweeping away dirt and debris, trimming back overabundant vegetation, and removing debris from between the deck boards. If mold does become an issue, use an oxygen bleach cleaner, which will be much less caustic than chlorine bleach on the deck surface.

Clean your deck every year, or as needed. You may not even need a pressure washer. Grab a hose, a broom, and biodegradable detergent instead.

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## How Do I Choose My Kitchen Sink?

Kitchen sinks are generally constructed of stainless steel, enamel coated cast-iron, composites, and solid surfaces. If you tend to be hard on your sink, consider heavy-duty stainless steel. While some homeowners complain that they tend to be noisier, this issue can be resolved by picking a stainless steel sink designed for sound absorption. Enamel-coated cast iron sinks have more visual appeal, but they wear more easily over time. A solid-surface sink (integrated into the countertop) makes cleaning much easier, and inexpensive composite sinks come in a variety of colors but aren't as sturdy as other materials.



Kitchens often feature a double-bowl sink, designed specifically for washing dishes. Having at least one

beans. These beans are one of the best meat-free sources of protein, with over 15 grams per cup. They are also packed with fiber, giving you that full feeling. The starch in black beans helps regulate blood sugar. Black beans also have the highest antioxidant level of any bean. Add some black beans to burritos, salads, soups, chili, salsa, omelets, and nachos.

## Internet Tidbit

You know you can go to the post office to change your address when you move. You also need to notify companies, schools, and organizations that you do business with. Wouldn't it be great to eliminate the hassle of changing your address? With Updater you can do just that. At Updater.com, you will find everything you need to easily change your address. You can also send opt-out requests to companies that send out junk mail. Why use Updater instead of doing it all yourself? Well, Updater is free and saves you time. They are also very careful about your privacy and help you to eliminate unwanted mail.

## Questions?

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oversized sink bowl makes hand-washing pots, pans, and baking sheets much easier. If your kitchen is lacking space, and you feel that a double-bowled sink is a necessity, think about combining an oversized bowl and a standard bowl.

Another option is a one large single-bowl sink. They're nice and deep, and perfect for washing big casserole dishes or baking sheets. A popular version of these sinks is the farmhouse, or apron-front, sink. These sinks have a stylish front panel that dresses up the cabinetry. If you have room in your kitchen for more than one sink, consider adding a prep sink. They're very handy in an island for rinsing vegetables or draining pasta.

The other decision to make is the type of sink mount. Top-mount, or drop-in, sinks are the most popular and easiest to install. Undermount, or under-counter, sinks make the countertop look clean and smooth, and simplify cleanup. The third option is an integrated sink. As mentioned earlier, these sinks are manufactured as part of the countertop. These sinks offer a great seamless look and have no rims that can catch crumbs and bits of food.

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