

# RENOVATION SURVIVAL GUIDE

**By Designer Lisa Kooistra**

Lisa Kooistra is the Creative Director  
and Principal Designer  
for **Lisa Kooistra Design**.

This multi-disciplinary sought after GTA design  
firm has become known for creating exceptional  
well curated interiors and custom builds.

**www.lkdesigns.ca @lisakooistradesigns**

**H**ome renovations have spiked recently, as people struggle with a challenging housing market across the country, and continue to adapt to new and changing needs as a result of the learn/work/play-at-home lifestyle that has now emerged. Homeowners are looking for potential in their homes and discovering there's a lot to be loved – though perhaps with a few updates and upgrades. If you're among them, here are some of my tips for planning a successful home renovation, and surviving to tell the tale! With some strategies, your renovation story will have a happy ending.

Plan well in advance. Depending on the type of work you're planning for your home, a renovation can take anywhere from a few days to a few months. A renovation has a lot of moving parts, and with current supply chain issues and trades shortages to contend with, a little advance planning goes a long way.

Funnily enough, your plan should begin with your end goal. Determine what works for you in your space and what doesn't. If you're anticipating any major lifestyle changes in the next 10 years, as most of us are, be sure to factor these into the outcome. For example, planning ahead for the needs of a growing family.



As part of  
your planning

process, know that the room being renovated will be largely unusable while the work is being done. Have an “escape plan” in the form of temporary accommodations or as holiday away.

Get professional help. As part of your advance planning process, research and book your trades early on. Depending on the time of year and how “picky” you are on who you hire for the project, there may be a waiting period. With that said, don't get caught up in the excitement of your “dream home” and settle for less than the best. A home renovation is expensive, so ensure you're spending your money wisely (and more on that, later). Check references, and ask for recommendations from family and friends who can vouch for the contractor's quality of work, their steadfastness to timelines, and whether they stayed on budget – the big three! Consider



working with a professional designer like myself, who will work with you to put your goals on paper, create a budget and then manage the project from top to bottom.

Stay on budget. Overspending is one of the biggest concerns related to home renovations, but there are some things you can do to stay on target with your vision and your budget, and they're all entirely within your realm.

Be realistic. Super-sizing your space is sometimes necessary, but not always. Are there ways to make your space more efficient, instead? This could mean a change in floor plan, or something as simple as creative storage solutions – overall, much cheaper than building an addition. When a full-scale renovation is in order, your designer can help bring you “down to Earth” when your dreams surpass your dollars.

Some good-old elbow grease can save on costs as well. Some homeowners opt to do their own demo and pick up materials.

Then, once the renovation has begun, stick to the plan. Making changes mid-way through the process causes delays and drives up the price – especially if those changes involve different materials and re-booking trades.

There's a lot to consider and plan for with a home renovation in the works. But there's also a lot to look forward to. Here's your chance to make your home what you want and need it to be. A little forethought will ensure the result is worth the effort and the investment.