

# Home improvement



## timeline and budget checklist

Whether you're replacing a kitchen, adding a double-height extension or reconfiguring the internal layout of your home, follow our **checklist** to help you keep to time and budget.

### BEFORE YOU START, HAVE YOU:

- Checked whether any **grants or VAT concessions** are applicable for your renovation.
- Assessed the condition of the building, including drains, service conditions and electrical wiring.

Consider getting a building/structural survey or plans drawn up by an architect for new and existing buildings. This will highlight any issues, and determine the work and materials needed, as well as the cost.
- Fixed any pre-existing problems such as **damp**, subsidence, woodworm or dry rot.
- Thought about whether you will manage the project and all tradespeople, or get a contractor to do this for you. Make sure you understand who will need to do what and when, even if you're using a contractor, to avoid delays.
- Spoken to a few different traders to get quotes.

Ask for proof of qualifications and examples of previous work, find out if they are signed up to any schemes (such as Competent Person Schemes, so they can sign off building work), and get a breakdown of the costs and jobs that are included.

See our **guide to employing traders** for more.
- Understood and got the consent you need, such as **planning permission**, building regulations approval and listed/period building restrictions.

Applications and approvals take time, so plan ahead. Also, make sure plans are final - you don't want to have to make more than one application, as they cost anything from around £200.
- Made a budget that considers all of the costs, including contractor fees, materials, machine hire, etc. Period properties are likely to cost more. Always add another **10-20%** to your budget for contingencies.
- Got a definite plan for everything you want. Changing your mind once work commences will usually add to the cost and delay things.
- Asked what materials the tradesperson will be supplying and the quality of what they are using (you might be able to cut costs here), and find out what you will need to provide yourself.

If you're getting anything yourself, where possible, buy in bulk when demand is low and the pound is weak. Check prices include delivery.
- Checked what equipment (such as **scaffolding**) and machinery the contractor will be supplying, or what you will need to get. If you're providing it, be clear on delivery dates to avoid delays. Plan how any access issues will be overcome.
- Made plans for what will happen with waste or salvaged materials - booking a skip, for example.
- Got a list of the services you will need, such as water and power, and what might be disconnected when, so you can plan around them.
- Checked when existing parts of the building will be made watertight. Cover or move anything that needs to be protected.



## TOP TIP

Make sure you have all the relevant documents once the job is finished, including compliances and warranties.

### INTERNAL WORK - STEP-BY-STEP:

- First fix wiring and plumbing.** Now is a good time to install larger items, such as hot water tanks, before any plastering work is carried out.
- Plaster and fix existing walls.** If you have had issues with damp, consider getting lime plaster, to allow walls to breathe. However, this is more expensive.
- Lay screed on floors.** If you're having water **underfloor heating**, the wiring will usually be added after plastering, and pipes laid before the screed.
- Allow everything to dry before any joinery work.** This can take anywhere from two to six weeks, depending on the size of the project.
- Add floor coverings.** Laying these under units or sanitaryware - instead of cutting the floor around them - will avoid issues if anything is moved later.
- Second fix of essential items** - light fittings, sockets, skirting, bathroom fittings, radiators, etc - before decorating.
- Prepare surfaces (for example, sanding) and clean and dust the building,** before decorating begins.



## TYPICAL PROJECT TIMELINES

Excluding planning, on average, the following projects should take around:

- **Loft conversion** - four to eight weeks
- **Conservatory** - three to six weeks
- **Single-height extension** - 10 to 14 weeks
- **Double-height extension** - 12 to 20 weeks
- **New kitchen** - five to 10 days
- **New bathroom** - three to 10 days

Visit these guides for more information on how much these jobs cost on average.

## TOP TIP

Make sure you keep everyone involved informed of **timings, issues or changes**. Give them a **main point of contact**, and let them know when they'll be around to **answer questions or sign off work**.