



CHEAT SHEET

Ten renovation tips for adding value the cost-effective way, by **Joanna Mathers**.



ABOVE Kitchen updates always add extra value to a renovation, and tend to attract better quality tenants.

Renovations of tired, rundown homes can add big dollars to both yield and sale price. While it can be an expensive proposition (especially if you start moving walls around or redoing kitchens and bathrooms) there are some simple ways in which you can modernise old and unattractive homes without spending too much in the process.

Here are ten ways in which you can add value without breaking the bank.

1 KITCHEN CHEATS

Kitchens are often a problem area in older homes. But while kitchens (along with bathrooms) can be the most expensive rooms in any renovation, there are some simple cheats that can make kitchen makeovers more cost-effective. Cabinetry can be purchased second-hand online, and you can use stain-block on old cabinetry, followed by a sealer and top coats. It's then easy to finish the look with a suitable kitchen paint to refresh

the entire room. If the oven is in okay condition, it can be reserved to bring it back into good working order.

2 STREET APPEAL

It may seem overly simple, but a new letterbox and a coat of paint or re-staining a fence can make your home far more appealing to renters and buyers alike. It's not a big job, but one that's ideal in spring as the weather offers you the chance to paint outside when it's warm enough for quick drying.

3 BATHROOM TIPS

If you are not adding any extra sanitary fittings in a bathroom, you don't need council consent and you won't need to spend extra money on plumbing. Changing out an old shower or bath doesn't have to be hugely expensive, with decent showers starting at the \$500 mark. Just be creative with paint and keep things in the same place, and you'll save big bucks.



LEFT Keeping existing waste outlets in the same place in a bathroom is the easiest way to keep renovation costs down. **RIGHT** Paint, paint and more paint: it's the quickest and cheapest way to refresh any space.



4 GARDEN GOALS

Tidy, easy care gardens are a renter's best friend. If you have a jungle growing in the backyard, a few day's hard graft will tame the beast. It's best to go for plants that don't require too much maintenance, like natives that are endemic to the area. And make sure the front lawn is trimmed and tidy and the berms follow suit.

5 LAY IT DOWN

Carpet is another perennial bugbear in older rentals. Carpet can be expensive, but there are ways to keep costs down. Buying in bulk at trade prices is one option, especially if you have tradie mates who will let you use their accounts. If you have multiple rentals the extra carpet can be used across properties.

6 SOAP OPERA

Walls can get grubby after a few years, but before getting out the paint brushes, see if some sugar soap will work. It's amazing what can be revealed under grime if you just undertake some decent scrubbing—it will save you heaps as well.

'The offer of pizza and beer at the end of the day may be enough to entice some mates to help for the day'

7 WONDER WALLS

Painting is one of the easiest jobs to DIY. There are endless online tutorials that you can watch to familiarise yourself with the process, and paint experts like Resene can offer both instore and online advice. You can expect to pay a few thousand to hire a professional painter, and while they come with all the gear, if you are wanting to DIY a few renos you will end up saving a lot if you get the right equipment and learn to paint yourself.

8 IT'S CURTAINS

Old curtains and blinds date homes like nothing else. Purchasing new curtains

and blinds when you're about to rent or sell will freshen up the place no end. You can purchase new curtains from The Warehouse starting at \$50; you can tidy up the whole house for around \$500.

9 CALL IN YOUR MATES

Most of the renovators featured in these pages have got their mates in to help with some DIY. Even if someone is able to offer their services for a day or so, you will be able to get the job done (and have more fun) in significantly less time. The offer of pizza and beer at the end of the day may be enough to entice some mates to help out, or if you have tradie mates, they may be able to work out a great deal for you.

10 LET THERE BE LIGHT

Like walls, lightshades can get pretty grimy after a few years. Replacing them is relatively simple, but even a good scrub can get them looking fresh and new. It's a simple solution that will make a good impression.

EXPERT TRICKS

Tracey Griffin (June 2019 Renovation profile) had luck on her side when she found an ex-display kitchen at a garage sale and purchased it for just \$500. "We were lucky because the kitchen from the garage sale even included a sink," says Griffin. Keep an eye out on Trade Me or local garage sales for things that could be used in your next renovation project.

Trish Keogh and Kael Blake (September 2018) uncovered beautiful rimu floors when they pulled up the carpet in their Masterton rental. They had these stained and saved loads on new carpet. Many older homes have lovely wooden floors, which add value and look great.

Yvonne Gattung (March 2019) says that people need to be aware that renovations take a lot of work, "at least eight hours a day, full time, if you want to get it done in a reasonable timeframe". If you can do a renovation in your holidays, and commit to a schedule, you will be able to cut time and costs of having the place lie empty while you try to work around your working week. ■