



# Contractor

## Choosing a remodeling pro or do-it-yourself advice

**D**IRT AND confusion." That's how one veteran of the remodeling process describes his experience.

After six months of acting as his own general contractor for a major renovation of his home, this do-it-yourselfer gained a new family room and

kitchen, bath and laundry room, and a new master bedroom suite.

"It was a monumental undertaking," he says of his self-appointed job of organizing and supervising the work. "I never drew an untroubled breath for the whole time."

And that from a happy survivor, one who is satisfied with the results.

On any redo, from a "simple" kitchen makeover to a full-blown gut and reframe remodeling, the general contractor (or GC) is the project's field marshal and dictator: he is the man (or woman) with the clipboard of blueprints and access to the purse strings, with trade connections and business contracts around town.

**BEFORE YOU DECIDE** you want to "play the general" on your home remodeling project, consider these less-glamorous elements of the GS's job:

- He selects, buys and arranges for delivery of all materials, and then

plans to be there to accept delivery and sign for the materials.

- He supervises all work, organizes all processes and inspects all installations.

- He hires (and fires) all "subs" (subcontractors).

- The GC is the one who "has words" with the brick man in your front yard (progress is too slow, cost is too high, the brick doesn't match).

- He is the master of the schedule — so that you do not wake at 6 in the morning to find the painter standing at the foot of your bed. So that you do not head out the driveway only to find a ton of Sheetrock blocking your path.

- He is the on-the-spot authority, the person to whom every worker turns when there's a problem to be solved or a judgment call to be made.

Why would any homeowner knowingly let himself in for such grief? In a word — money.

By acting as your own GC, you can

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