

let's remodel

# Do-it-yourself? Here's a test to see

Homeowners are presented with three choices when they are unhappy with the design of their current home: remodel, move or grin and bear it. If you choose to remodel, the question will be whether to hire a professional contractor or do it yourself. Before you do decide to do it yourself, take the following quiz to determine if you really are the person to do the work.

- Do you enjoy physical work?
- Are you persistent and patient? Do you have reliable work habits, meaning that once the project is started, will it get finished?
- Do you have all the tools needed and, more importantly, the skills required to do the job?
- What quality level do you need for this project. Are your skills at that level?
- Do you have the time that will be required to complete the project? (Always double or triple the time estimated for a DIY project, unless you are highly skilled and familiar with that particular project.)



- Will it matter if the project remains unfinished for a period of time?
- Are you prepared to handle the kind of stress this project will create in your family relationships?
- Have you done this kind of work before?
- Do you know all of the steps involved in the project?
- Have you gotten the installation instructions from the manufacturer to determine whether this is a project you still want to undertake? (Most manufac-

turers will send you installation instructions before purchase to determine whether the product will meet your needs. The instructions outline all the steps involved in installation and can be an excellent guide to determining the skill levels required.)

■ Is this a job you can do completely by yourself or will you need assistance? If you need assistance, what skill level is involved for your assistant? If you need a professional subcontractor, do you have access to a skilled labor pool?

■ Are you familiar with your local building codes and permit requirements? (Some jurisdictions require that the work be completed by a licensed professional in order to meet code. It is better to check these requirements before beginning work on the project.)

■ What will you do if the project goes awry? (Most contractors are wary about taking on a botched DIY job, and many just won't.)

■ Is it safe for you to do this project? (If you are unfamiliar with roofing or do

not have fall protection restraints, you may not want to venture into a roofing job. Similarly, if you know nothing about electricity - leave it to the professionals. Some jobs can have fatal consequences if not performed correctly. Your health should be the primary concern. Never enter into a DIY project that could jeopardize those.)

■ Will you be able to obtain the materials you need and who will be your source of supply?

■ Are you attempting a DIY project to save money? Have you looked at all of your costs, including the cost of materials, your time and the tools you need to purchase.

■ If you are trying DIY for the satisfaction of a job well done - can you ensure that the job will be "well done"? Will you be able to afford to redo any unsatisfactory work?

If you answer "yes" to more than half of these questions, you might attempt a

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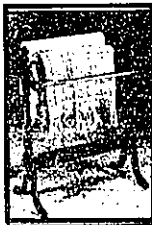
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