

DIY or DI-don't? When to do it yourself, when to hire a pro

(BPT) - When it comes to home improvement, homeowners aren't afraid to get their hands dirty; 64 percent who plan to make improvements this year say they will do it themselves, according to an American Express Consumer Spending and Saving Report. But not all home decorating or renovating projects are suitable for the average DIYer. So how do you know when to DIY or when to call in a professional?

You can quickly assess if a DIY project is achievable. Consider if you need special knowledge or expertise beyond what you could acquire with online research or a class at your local home improvement store. Does the job require specialized tools that would be very expensive to buy or that aren't available through your local rental center? Lastly, consider the amount of time and money you have to devote to the project.-

Whether painting or building, the good news is every job can be considered a DIY project. Here are three popular home projects with suggestions for when to DIY and when to call in a pro:

Adding new window treatments

Custom window treatments that offer multiple colors, styles and light-filtering options can transform any room. Cellular shades are a great option for DIYers who want a professional-looking result without the hassle and expense of hiring a professional. Simple Fit Custom Cellular Window Shades install in seconds and require no special tools - no drill, screws or brackets - or expertise to securely install your shade. Simple Fit shades give you a polished look quickly and easily with the push of a button that activates a patented compression-mount system. View a video on installation and learn more at www.simplefitcustomshades.com.

Go pro: Installing wooden blinds or shutters typically requires tools and precise abilities. If screw drivers, level surfaces and detailed instructions are not your thing, call for help. When assessing the windows, you may notice that some windows are in need of repair. Before installing, consult with a professional to ensure the window is in proper condition.-

Installing wooden flooring

With a variety of flooring on the market to choose from, quality laminate can provide you with the look of wood at a fraction of the cost, labor and hassle of the real thing. Typically, laminate offers many options and is easy to do yourself. It's easier to "float" laminate - meaning no messy, hard-to-manage adhesive is required. Some options are as simple as cutting to size and clicking into place.

Go pro: Installing genuine hardwood requires an extensive list of materials and tools. If you are not confident with this type of installation, consult a professional. A pro can take the guess work out of the installation and eliminate costly mistakes. Refinishing existing hardwood floors is also a job better left to pros unless you have extensive experience operating a sander. This home renovation is labor intensive and errors could result in ruined planks.

Sprucing up the kitchen

Many simple kitchen enhancements are an easy job



for even novice DIYers. Painting walls or cabinets and adding new hardware can impart a whole new look to a kitchen for relatively little time and money.

Go pro: Installing granite countertops are among the most desirable kitchen upgrades, but unlike other countertop installations, granite is rife with peril. In-

correctly measuring the amount of granite you'll need will result in a countertop that doesn't fit - a costly disaster. Professionals ensure proper installation to avoid breakage, cabinet or water damage and other problems. Granite countertops are an investment, and it pays to hire a professional to ensure that investment pays

off in the best possible way.

When it comes to DIY projects, it's important to take on tasks that will yield great results and little to no frustration. Fortunately, it's easy to find plenty of decorating and home improvement projects that are simple, cost effective and high impact.



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