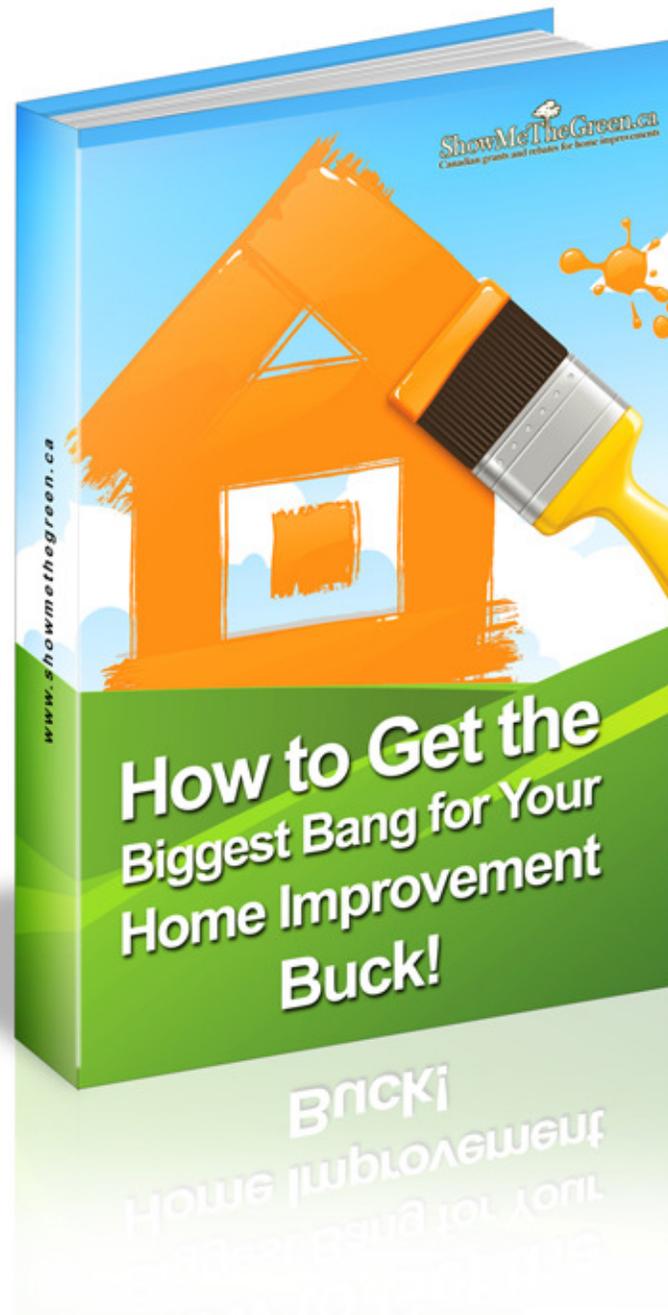


How to Get the Biggest Bang for Your Home Improvement Buck!



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Special Message from the Publisher

Dear Home Renovator,

Congratulations on taking an important step toward saving money on your home renovations!

What you are holding in your hands is the result of much feedback from www.ShowMeTheGreen.ca members. We're constantly surveying our members, asking them about the challenges they're facing in renovating their homes.

You might be wondering: when we ask our subscribers about the home improvement challenges they're facing, what's the most common answer?

Well, there are two common answers, actually. Here's what people always ask us:

“What is the most cost efficient way to repair a home?”

and

“How can I get the most for my home improvement dollar?”

Do you notice the common word in those two questions? It's the word “most”. Canadians are looking to get the most for their money – and we're here to help!

This report will help you to get the “most” out of your home improvement project. It will show you how to decide which renovations to do, common mistakes that homeowners make, the highest return-on-investment projects, and we'll point you to some great government grants that every Canadian homeowner should be taking advantage of.

Turn the page to get started!

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Section 1:

Six Questions to Ask Yourself When Planning Your Renovations

Close your eyes and picture your dream home. Don't be shy - include all the trimmings. Would your home include a swimming pool? Granite counters in the kitchen? How about a whirlpool bath?

Now imagine how much all of that would cost!

The reality for many people is that some home improvements will have to wait for later (whether "later" is next year, or a few years down the road).

Deciding what you can do now - and what needs to wait - doesn't have to be a painful exercise, however. With a bit of thought before starting the renovations, you can avoid the stress that comes from thinking "am I doing too much?"

Keep these questions in mind when deciding what to do, and not to do:

1. How much is each home improvement going to cost?

Some improvements cost more than others (a lot more!). Here are some ballpark price ranges for the most popular projects:

<u>Type of Renovation</u>	<u>Ballpark Cost</u>
Kitchen makeover	\$10,000 to \$40,000
Bathroom makeover	\$10,000 to \$20,000
Basement finishing	\$30,000 and up
Additions	\$120 per square foot, on average
Deck construction	\$5 per square foot, minimum
Fence construction	\$12 per square foot, minimum

And price ranges to hire professionals for your job:

Designer: \$5,000 per job
Engineer: \$5,000 to \$10,000 per job
Architect: \$5,000 to \$20,000

Source: *Make It Right* by Mike Holmes

Keep in mind that these are ballpark costs. For more detailed cost estimates, take a look at Appendix A of this report, starting on page 19.

2. Which home improvements will save me the most money over the long run?

Keep in mind that while all renovations will make your home a nicer place to live, some home improvements can also save you a lot of money over the long run.

See Section 4 of this guide for six simple home improvements that will cut down on your energy and water costs.

3. Which improvements are necessary, and which are "nice to have"?

A home gym might inspire you to jump out of bed in the morning, but will it keep water out of your basement (like weeping tile around your home's foundation will)?

When considering the home improvements you're going to do first, think first about what needs to be done to maintain the value of your home. Does your foundation or roof leak? If so, repairing these essential things should be your first priority.

4. What are the needs of your family?

Maybe you're expecting a baby, or your kids have all left the house. Anticipating the needs of your family in the coming years will allow you to figure out how you're going to use your house.

Design is important, but also try to think "functional"!

5. When do you plan to sell?

If you're planning to sell your home in the next two years, maybe the in-ground pool can wait for your next home!

On the other hand, if you plan to keep your home for awhile, you can feel more comfortable putting money into it that might not return to you quickly.

Keep in mind that not all home improvements are a good investment. (See Section 5 for the home improvements with the best return-on-investment.)

6. What price range do the improvements put your house in?

If the renovations you plan will make your house the most expensive on the block, you might want to consider paring things down.

It's common knowledge that you should never buy the most expensive home in a neighbourhood. But it's also true that you should never renovate your home to make it the most expensive on the block!

The reason for this is simple – the value of more expensive homes tend to get dragged down by the lower value of the homes around them. But the reverse is also true – the value of less expensive homes will be *pulled up* by the more expensive homes around them!

The six questions in this section should have focussed your thinking on the types of renovations you plan to do.

But there are things you need to do before you put “shovels in the ground”!

Turn the page to learn what you must do before construction starts...

Section 2:
Finished Planning Your Home Improvements?
3 Things You Must Do Before Construction Starts

One of the dirty little secrets of the home improvement industry is that there's a lot of government money available for homeowners. Governments these days are jumping on the "environmentally-friendly" bandwagon, and the amount of grant money for homeowners is increasing every year.

The problem is, most homeowners don't know *how* to access these government grants – they don't know the steps involved, or where to get information.

This section covers three steps you must take before starting your renovations. If you skip these steps, you'll disqualify yourself from potentially getting thousands of dollars in grants and rebates.

1. Get an Energy Audit

At ShowMeTheGreen.ca we hear this question countless times: "I just finished a renovation, but didn't get an energy audit done. Can I still apply for a government grant?"

Unfortunately, in most cases the answer is "no". Many government grants (the ones that pay good money, anyway) require that you do an energy audit before you do the renovations.

One of the first steps in applying for government grant money is get an energy audit done. With a pre-renovation energy audit, you simply won't qualify for many grants. As a bonus, the energy audit will also uncover things you can do to make your home more energy efficient!

What is a Home Energy Audit?

An energy audit is an assessment of your entire home's energy use (from basement to attic). During the audit an energy auditor comes into your home and performs a number of tests to see how much energy your home is using and, more importantly, what changes you can make to your home to save energy.

How to Get a Home Energy Audit

- a. The first step is to hire an auditor licensed by Natural Resources Canada for a pre-renovation audit, which typically costs about \$300.

You can find a licensed energy auditor on Natural Resource Canada's website. Just enter your postal code on this web page:

<http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/personal/new-home-improvement/contact-advisors.cfm>

- b. The auditor carries out the pre-renovation audit and will give you a report that contains recommendations for energy efficiency improvements.

If you'll be applying to the ecoENERGY Retrofit for Homes grant (see Section 6: 4 Grants that Every Canadian Homeowner Should Take Advantage of, starting on page 20), the next two things will happen automatically:

- c. Once the pre-audit is complete the auditor notifies the federal ecoEnergy program. (In Ontario, the federal government notifies the provincial Home Energy Audit Program.)
- d. In Ontario & B.C., the provincial government will issue a \$150 rebate cheque to the homeowner for the pre-audit.

2. Look into Manufacturers' Rebates

Not looking into manufacturer's rebates is a huge mistake that many people make!

Did you know that many manufacturers of windows, furnaces, and home appliances offer rebates or cash-back offers? If you didn't know that, don't feel bad – you're not alone. An appliance salesman once told us that fewer than 5% of consumers actually fill in the manufacturer's rebate coupon!

If you're planning to upgrade your furnace, windows, or even your kitchen appliances, always make sure to check into the additional rebates you can get from your local utility and/or the product manufacturer.

To see if there are additional rebates you're eligible for, go to www.ShowMeTheGreen.ca, select your province, then select the type of upgrade you're doing (i.e. furnace, windows, etc.).

Also, a good website to check out for appliance rebates is www.RedFlagDeals.ca.

3. Look into Provincial and Municipal Grants and Rebates

Let's face it – the big government grant programs like the ecoENERGY Home Retrofit program get all of the attention. But there are lots of government grant programs that are only available in specific provinces or cities. If you're only applying to the biggies, you might be missing out on a lot of grant money.

Make sure to start your search on the www.ShowMeTheGreen.ca homepage. Click your province on the map, then choose the kind of home improvement you're doing.

Section 3:

Avoid These 5 Mistakes to Maximize Your Government Rebates

Okay, so you've thought through some of the critical pre-renovation questions (Section 1 of this report), and you've set yourself up to receive big government grants by looking into three key areas (Section 2). Anything else to consider before shovels hit the ground?

Keep these 5 common mistakes in mind when planning your home improvements. It'll help your pocketbook, and will direct some of that government "stimulus" money where it belongs!

- 1. Make sure that your property is eligible for the grant/rebate.**

This may sound like a no-brainer, but if you are planning to upgrade the windows in a vacation home or cottage, you might not be eligible.

- 2. Make sure that your project is eligible for government rebates.**

At ShowMeThegreen.ca we often get questions like this: "I just replaced two of my windows. Can I get a rebate?" For such small jobs it's unlikely that there will be a government rebate that will be worth applying for – especially if you have to get an energy audit done (which can cost up to \$350).

If there's no government grant program that is worthwhile applying to, make sure to check with the manufacturer to see if they have a rebate program.

- 3. Check the specific requirements of the program that is offering the grant or rebate**

Each province, hydro company, and/or retailer who offers rebates may have product-specific requirements for their grant/rebate.

For example, window rebate programs may have different requirements depending on which province is offering the rebate. Make sure that your new windows meet the specific minimum requirements set out by each individual program. Most programs will provide a list of eligible windows for you to choose from.

4. Keep your energy audit records and files in order.

Some grant/rebate programs require that you send in a copy of your pre-renovation energy audit, as well as a copy of the energy audit done after the renovation.

5. Keep all your original receipts and product information!

Some grants require that you provide the original receipt and product model number of your windows (for example).

Make sure to keep the retailer's invoice, which has information like the installation address, the number of windows installed, the brand of window bought, the name of the manufacturer, the type of windows bought, and the date of installation.

This is a very common mistake. How many times have you gone looking for a receipt and realized that it just fell out of your pocket? Here's a simple thing you can do to solve this problem: buy a 10-cent envelope, and write on it "Home renovation receipts" (along with the month your renos took place). Put the envelope in one of your desk drawers, or your home filing cabinet. Now you have a designated "file" for your receipts! Every time you get a receipt or invoice for your renovations, stick it in there!

The take-away from this section is to check the details of the grant/rebate program you're interested in.

Section 4: Save Energy, Save Money: Six Easy & Cost-Effective Home Improvements

Are you planning a home improvement but don't know which renovations will give you the biggest return? As indicated in Section 1 of this report, some renovations increase the value of your home much more than others. But what about the home improvements that reduce the operating cost of your home?

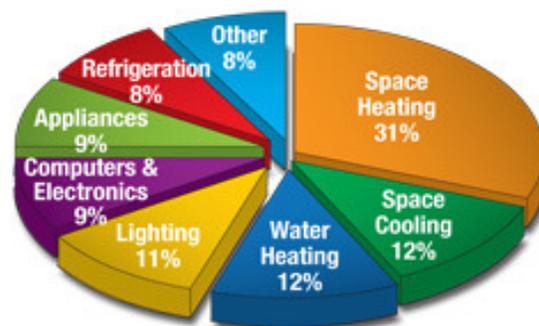
In other words, which renovations will give you the maximum savings in energy (without breaking your bank account)? In this section we cover six cost-effective home improvements for reducing your energy costs.

But first, a quick look at where your money is going.

Which Areas of Your Home Use The Most Energy?

As you can see in the chart below, the biggest uses of energy in your home are for:

1. Space heating (e.g. your furnace)
2. Space cooling (e.g. your air conditioner)
3. Small electronic devices (such as small appliances)
4. Water heating
5. Lighting



Source: [U.S. Department of Energy](#)

Combined, these five areas account for over three-quarters of your home's energy use!

Knowledge truly is power. Now that you know where your energy is going, you can work on how to improve your home to maximize energy conservation.

Six Cost-Effective Home Improvements to Save Energy

1. Have an Energy Audit Done on Your Home

An energy audit might be the single best energy-saving investment you make in your home.

An energy audit (performed by a qualified energy advisor) will pinpoint where the energy "leaks" are in your home, and will recommend the home improvements that will have the biggest impact on your home's energy efficiency.

They'll provide you with a detailed report including suggestions for specific changes that you can make to your home. Find a qualified energy advisor in your area through [Natural Resource Canada's website](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/personal/new-home-improvement/contact-advisors.cfm):

<http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/personal/new-home-improvement/contact-advisors.cfm>

2. Install a programmable thermostat

You can save as much as 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills by simply turning your thermostat back 10% to 15% for 8 hours. You can do this automatically without sacrificing comfort by installing a programmable thermostat.

Using a programmable thermostat, you can adjust the times you turn on the heating or air-conditioning according to a pre-set schedule. Programmable thermostats can store and repeat multiple daily settings (six or more temperature settings a day) that you can manually override without affecting the rest of the daily or weekly program.

Learn more about programmable thermostats on this [Natural Resource Canada web page](#):

<http://oee.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/residential/personal/thermostats-controls.cfm?attr=4#programmable>

3. Seal your windows and doors with weather stripping and caulking

Warm air leaking into your home during the summer and out of your home during the winter wastes a great deal of energy. One of the quickest dollar-saving tasks you can do is caulk, seal, and weather strip all seams, cracks, and openings to the outside of your home.

You can save 10% or more on your energy bill by reducing the air leaks in your home. There are good tutorials on how to weather strip windows and doors on these websites:

[Weatherstripping 101: Prepare Your House for Winter](#) (This Old House)
[Weatherstripping windows and doors](#) (Lowe's)

4. Replace regular light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs

CFLs use 25% of the energy of regular light bulbs. The [ENERGY STAR website](#) has an excellent, brief tutorial on compact fluorescent light bulbs.

5. Insulate your hot-water pipes

Insulating your hot water pipes reduces heat loss and can increase water temperature to a level hotter than with un-insulated pipes. You also won't have to wait as long for hot water when you turn on a faucet or showerhead, which helps conserve water.

If you'd like to insulate your hot-water pipes yourself (and it's really not very difficult), check out this [DIY Network](#) web page.

6. Insulate your hot-water tank

Insulating your hot-water tank can reduce standby heat loss by up to 45%, and save up to 9% on your water-heating costs, according to the U.S.

Department of Energy. To learn how to insulate an electric water heater, visit the [Department of Energy's](#) website.

And there you have it! By doing these six simple fixes to your home, you'll use less energy and save money on your heating bill. And as a bonus, your home will be treading more lightly on the environment!

Section 5: Five Home Improvements with the Highest Return-on-Investment

Here's a shocking statistic for you: 38% of renovators surveyed in 2006 said they exceeded their home improvement budget...by an average of 88%!

While you should do everything you can to keep renovations on budget, looking at the value you're getting from the renovation will allow you to keep things in perspective.

Consider how much payback you can expect from particular home improvements. Here are two sources of information

1. Appraisal Institute of Canada (AIC) Survey of Appraisers

The AIC conducts a survey every two years to ask professional appraisers...

Top Four Greatest Payback Potentials:

<u>Type of Reno</u>	<u>Payback</u>
Bathroom renovation	75-100%
Kitchen renovation	75-100%
Interior painting	50-100%
Exterior painting	50-100%

Ten Average Payback Potentials:

<u>Type of Reno</u>	<u>Payback</u>
Roof shingle replacement	50-80%
Furnace/heating system	50-80%
Basement renovation	50-75%
Recreation room addition	50-75%
Installing a fireplace	50-75%
Flooring	50-75%
Constructing a garage	50-75%
Window/door replacement	50-75%
Building a deck	50-75%
Central air conditioning	25-75%

Six Lowest Payback Potentials:

<u>Type of Reno</u>	<u>Payback</u>
Landscaping	25-50%
Interlocking paving	25-50%
Building a fence	25-50%
Asphalt paving	20-50%
Adding a swimming pool	10-40%
Installing a skylight	0-25%

Also, make sure to check out the Appraisal Institute of Canada's online calculator. It calculates the dollar value you can expect your home to increase by after doing specific renovation projects.

Go here to access the [calculator](#):

http://component.aicanada.ca/e/resourcecenter_renova.cfm

2. RE/MAX Return on Reno Index

The RE/MAX Return on Reno Index is a proprietary tool to help you get the most value out of every renovating dollar you spend. RE/MAX took an exhaustive look at the various renovations people commonly do on their homes and judged their return on investment based on a variety of criteria.

One interesting finding from their study was that the return-on-investment for a particular renovation depends on the value of the home.

Here are the renovations with the highest return-on-investment, according to RE/MAX:

Bathroom

Making your bathroom the best it can be will generate a **56%** better return on investment than the average renovation.

The goal should be to create a spa-like environment in your bathroom by installing a soaker tub with relaxing jets, or perhaps a new steam shower stall.

Kitchen

Kitchen upgrades can really deliver, with a **44% higher return** on investment over the average return on other popular renos you might consider.

Whether you're working with a contemporary kitchen or more of a country feel, stainless steel appliances continue to hold a lot of interest. In cabinetry, look at fine-grained maple, stained or natural, over the traditional heavy oak look of the past. Laminates and marble are great choices for countertops, but granite continues to be the most popular surface of all. Check out the latest fixtures in today's new, brushed nickel finishes.

Painting

Simple repainting of walls gives you a **29% return on the dollar** over the average.

Whether you go neutral with splashes of colour or warm and dramatic, today's trends include a mix of strong colours, mixed with nature inspired neutrals, and energy colours like orange, aqua, sage and blue, along with neutral palates leaning toward bisque, fawn, gray and walnut.

Floors

Upgrading floors can generate a **22% better return on investment**.

Start by ripping out that dated wall-to-wall carpet. Then, sand your existing floors down and refinish them, or choose one of the many easy-to-install and affordable laminates now available. A darker stain gives an elegant, yet up to date look. Use area rugs to accent and ground the space.

Fireplace

The fireplace in your home will generate **11% return on investment**.

Gas fireplaces have made huge advances in popularity thanks to recent increases in efficiency as well as advances in design. A gas fireplace delivers the best of both worlds - all the comfort without the mess and maintenance.

For more information, take a look at this RE/MAX web page:

<http://www.remax-oa.com/SmartRenovator/Pages/RenoIndex.aspx>

Section 6:

4 Grants that Every Canadian Homeowner Should Take Advantage Of

1. ecoENERGY Retrofit for Homes Grant

The Government of Canada's EcoENERGY Home Retrofit grant is available to owners of single family homes including detached, semi-detached and low rise multi-unit residential buildings.

Property owners can qualify for a maximum of \$5,000 in federal grants by improving the energy efficiency of their homes, and reducing their home's impact on the environment.

Examples of renovations that pay include installing an energy-efficient furnace, installing better insulation, and sealing drafts in your windows and doors.

For more information on this grant, please visit this web page:

<http://showmethegreen.ca/home/home-improvement/ecoenergy-home-retrofit-grant/>

2. Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (\$24,000)

The RRAP (Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program) was set up by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to encourage homeowners to create "secondary suites" in their homes, and rent them out to low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

The \$24,000 is a forgivable loan - as long as the program requirements are being met (i.e. you're renting to a low-income senior or person with a disability) you don't have to pay back the loan. And at the end of 15 years, you can rent to whoever you want.

Some important things to keep in mind about the RRAP:

- Work carried out before the RRAP loan is approved is not eligible.
- You must rent the unit out to a low-income senior, or person with a disability, for 15 years

- There's a cap on the amount of rent you can charge the tenant (for example in Ottawa the cap for a one-bedroom unit rented to one person is \$815 per month)

For more information on this grant, please visit this web page:

<http://showmethegreen.ca/home/home-improvement/residential-rehabilitation-assistance-program-rrap-for-secondarygarden-suites/>

3. GST/HST New Housing Rebate (1.5% of GST/HST)

Don't let the name of this one fool you - this is not just for new-home builders. The New Housing rebate is meant to defray part of the GST/HST paid on a new house OR substantially renovating an existing house. The catch with this one is that if you're renovating your house, it can't be worth more than \$450,000 once the renovations are completed.

For more information on this grant, please visit this web page:

<http://showmethegreen.ca/home/home-improvement/gsthst-new-housing-rebate/>

4. Genworth Financial Energy-Efficient Housing Program or CMHC Mortgage Loan Insurance Refund (10% of mortgage insurance premium)

Canada's two main mortgage insurance outfits (Genworth Financial, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation), will take 10% off your mortgage insurance premium if you buy an energy efficient home, or do energy-saving improvements to your current home.

For more information on this grant, please visit these web pages:

<http://showmethegreen.ca/home/home-improvement/genworth-financial-energy-efficient-housing-program/>

<http://showmethegreen.ca/home/home-improvement/canada-mortgage-and-housing-corporation-cmhc-mortgage-loan-insurance-refund/>

Appendix A: Average Home Improvement Costs

* This information is courtesy of www.AllAroundTheHouse.com. Please [visit](#) the site for extensive information on home inspections.

The following costs are intended as ballpark estimates for repairs and improvements to a typical three bedroom home. The costs are based on information obtained in the east-central area of Ontario. Actual contractor quotations can vary by as much as 300%. It is advisable to obtain estimates from more than one contractor. *

Roofing/Flashings/Chimneys	
Install conventional asphalt shingles over existing shingles	\$1.50-\$2.50 per sq. ft.
Strip and re-roof with conventional asphalt shingles	\$2.50-\$4.50 per sq. ft.
Strip and re-roof with top-quality asphalt shingles	\$4.00-\$8.00 per sq. ft.
Strip and re-roof with low-slope asphalt shingles	\$3.00-\$5.00 per sq. ft.
Strip and re-roof with cedar shingles	\$8.00-\$10.00 per sq. ft.
Strip and re-roof with cedar shakes	\$10.00-\$18.00 per sq. ft.
Strip and re-roof with steel shingles	\$6.00-\$8.00 per sq. ft.
Strip and re-roof with aluminium shingles	\$5.50-\$7.25 per sq. ft.
Strip and re-roof with plastic shakes	\$5.50-\$7.25 per sq. ft.
Install concrete tile roofing (assuming no structural reinforcement)	\$8.00-\$16.00 per sq. ft.
Steel sheet roofing	\$6.00-\$10.00 and up per sq. ft.
Install new slate roof	\$12.00-\$24.00 per sq. ft.
Repair loose slates or tiles	\$30.00 per slate/tiles
Install asphalt roll roofing	\$2.10-\$4.20 per sq. ft.
Strip and replace built-up tar and gravel roof	\$10.00-\$20.00 per sq. ft. (min. \$1500)
Strip and install modified bitumen roof membrane	\$8.00-\$16.00 per sq. ft. (min. \$1500)
Synthetic rubber membrane	\$12.00-\$16.00 per sq. ft.
Improve flat roof drainage prior to installation of new membrane	\$2.00-\$4.00 per sq. ft.
Paint modified bitumen membrane	\$0.50-\$1.50 per sq. ft. (min. \$200)
Install sheet metal on small roof surfaces	\$10.00-\$20.00 per sq. ft. (min. \$500)
Re-flash typical skylight or chimney on asphalt roof	\$500.00-\$800.00
Re-flash skylight or chimney on built-up or bitumen roof	\$600.00-\$900.00
Install metal cricket for wide chimney	\$400.00-\$800.00
Repair valley flashings on existing roof	\$25.00-\$50.00 per lin. ft. (min. \$500)
Replace parapet wall flashing	\$30.00-\$50.00 per lin. ft. (min. \$500)
Rebuild typical single-flue chimney above roof line	\$150.00-\$300.00 per lin.ft. (min. \$500)
Rebuild typical double-flue chimney above roof line	\$200.00-\$400.00 per lin.ft. (min. \$500)
Repoint typical single-flue chimney above roof line	\$20.00-\$30.00 per row (min. \$350)
Repoint typical double-flue chimney above roof line	\$25.00-\$40.00 per row (min. \$350)
Install concrete cap on typical single-flue chimney	\$250.00-\$500.00
Install concrete cap on typical double-flue chimney	\$500.00-\$700.00
Install rain cap on typical chimney	\$150.00-\$200.00 each
Replace roof sheathing (plywood or waferboard)	\$1.50-\$2.00 per sq. ft.

Exterior	
Install galvanized or aluminum gutters and downspouts	\$4.00-\$5.00 per lin.ft. (min. \$500)
Provide downspout extensions	\$15.00-\$25.00 each
Clean gutters in fall or spring	\$50.00-\$150.00
Install copper gutters and downspouts	\$15.00-\$30.00 per lin. ft.
Install aluminium soffit and fascia	\$8.00-\$16.00 per lin. ft.
Install aluminium siding	\$5.00-\$8.00 per sq. ft.
Install vinyl siding	\$6.50-\$12.00 per sq. ft.
install cedar siding	\$8.00-\$16.00 per sq. ft.
Install paint grade siding	\$6.00-\$12.50 per sq. ft.
Install stucco	\$8.00-\$12.00 per sq. ft.
Re-point exterior wall (soft mortar)	\$3.00-6.50 per sq. ft. (min. \$500)
Re-point exterior wall (hard mortar)	\$6.00-\$10.00 per sq. ft. (min. \$500)
Replace deteriorated bricks	\$25.00-\$50.00 per sq. ft.
Rebuild parapet wall	\$25.00-\$50.00 per sq. ft.
Chemical cleaning of unpainted brick	\$2.00-\$3.00 per sq.ft. (min. \$1000)
Chemical cleaning of painted brick	\$4.00-\$6.00 per sq.ft. (min. \$1000)
Sealing of brickwork	\$0.75-\$1.00 per sq. ft.
Paint exterior trim (not including any repairs)	\$1500.00-\$2500.00 and up
Paint trim and wall surfaces (not including any repairs)	\$3000.00 and up
Parge foundation walls	\$3.00-\$4.00 per sq.ft.
Damp-proof foundation walls and install weeping tile	\$150.00-\$200.00 per lin.ft. (min. \$1000)
Install a deck	\$12.00-\$25.00 per sq. ft.
Install deck on a flat roof	\$25.00-\$40.00 per sq. ft.
Resurface existing asphalt driveway	\$2.50-\$4.00 per sq. ft.
Seal asphalt driveway	\$50.00 and up
Install interlocking brick driveway	\$6.00-\$8.00 per sq. ft.
Install a concrete driveway	\$6.00-\$10.00 per lin. ft.
Install drain at bottom of sloped driveway	\$1000.00-\$1500.00
Install concrete slab patio	\$5.00-\$8.00 per sq.ft.
Install concrete patio stones	\$2.00-\$5.00 per sq.ft.
Rebuild exterior basement stairwell	\$3500.00-\$5000.00
Install drain at existing basement stairwell	\$500.00-\$800.00
Build detached garage (single)	\$8000.00 and up
Build detached garage (double)	\$12000.00 and up
Break wood-soil contact at detached garage	\$25.00-\$40.00 per lin.ft. (min. \$500)
Demolish and remove detached garage (dependent on dumping costs)	\$1500.00 and up
Install garage door (single, metal, one-piece)	\$600.00-\$800.00
Install garage door (single, wood, sectional)	\$800.00-\$1000.00
Install garage door (double, wood, sectional)	\$1200.00-\$1500.00
Install garage door opener	\$300.00-\$450.00
Build retaining wall (wood)	\$20.00-\$25.00 per sq. ft. (min. \$500)
Build retaining wall (concrete)	\$30.00-\$40.00 per sq. ft. (min \$500)
Replace porch steps (wood)	\$200.00-\$300.00
Replace porch steps (concrete)	\$300.00-\$500.00
Replace porch flooring	\$4.00-\$6.00 per sq. ft.
Replace porch skirting	\$10.00-\$15.00 per lin. ft.
Replace step railing	\$100.00-\$200.00
Install wooden fencing	\$16.00-\$50.00 per lin. ft.
Install chain link fencing	\$7.00-\$12.00 per lin. ft.
Lay sod	\$1.00-\$2.00 per sq. ft.
Install lawn sprinkler system	\$1000.00 and up

Structure	
Underpin one corner of house	\$3500.00 and up
Underpin or add foundations	\$300.00 and up per lin. ft. (min. \$3000)
Lower basement floor by underpinning and/or bench footings	\$150.00-\$300.00 per lin. ft. (min. \$5000)
Replace deteriorating sill beam with concrete	\$60.00 and up per lin. ft. (min. \$500)
Replace main beam in (unfinished) basement	\$1000.00-\$2000.00
Re-support (sister) a floor joist	\$100.00-\$300.00 (unobstructed)
Install basement support post with proper foundation	\$300.00-\$500.00
Perform chemical treatment for wood-boring insects	\$1700.00 and up
Pest inspection performed by licensed specialist	\$150.00-\$300.00
Remove or open load-bearing wall	\$2000.00 and up (excluding decorating)
Remove partition wall	\$500.00-\$1500.00 (excluding decorating)
Install door opening in interior wall	\$500.00-\$1000.00
Rebuild arch above window or door opening	\$800.00 and up
Install lintel above opening in masonry wall	\$500.00 and up
Install exterior basement stairwell	\$5000.00 and up
Repair minor crack in poured concrete foundation	\$400.00-\$800.00
Build an addition, foundation to roof	\$150.00-\$300.00 per sq. ft.
Build an additional storey	\$100.00-\$300.00 per sq. ft.
Install collar ties	\$30.00-\$50.00 each
Install lateral bracing on collar ties	\$100.00-\$200.00
Replace roof sheathing	\$4.00-\$6.00 per sq. ft.

Electrical	
Upgrade electrical service to 100 amps (including new panel)	\$1000.00-\$1300.00
Upgrade electrical service to 100 amps (if new panel not required)	\$500.00-\$800.00
Upgrade electrical service to 200 amps	\$1800.00-\$2200.00
Replace main ground (grounded to conductive water main)	\$100.00-\$150.00
Replace main ground (rural, install ground rods)	\$250.00-\$450.00
Install new circuit breaker panel	\$500.00-\$900.00
Install auxiliary breaker panel	\$200.00-\$400.00
Replace circuit breaker (20 amp or less)	\$50.00-\$100.00
Add 120 volt circuit	\$150.00-\$300.00
Add 240 volt circuit	\$250.00-\$400.00
Add exterior outlet with waterproof cover	\$200.00-\$300.00
Add conventional receptacle	\$150.00-\$300.00
Add kitchen split receptacle	\$150.00-\$250.00
Provide ground for conventional receptacle	\$75.00-\$100.00
Replace conventional receptacle with ground fault circuit receptacle	\$60.00-\$90.00
Replace conventional receptacle with aluminium compatible type (CO/ALR)(assuming several are required)	\$10.00-\$15.00 ea.
Upgrade entire house with aluminium compatible receptacles, connectors, etc.	\$500.00-\$1000.00
Rewire outlet with reversed polarity (assuming electrician already there)	\$5.00-\$10.00 each
Install switches (assuming electrician already there)	\$10.00-\$20.00 each
Install standard light fixture	\$100.00-\$200.00
Install exterior light fixture	\$150.00-\$250.00
Install fluorescent light fixture	\$150.00-\$250.00
Rewire entire house during gut or renovations	\$3000.00 and up

Heating	
Install mid-efficiency forced-air furnace	\$2000.00-\$4000.00
Install high-efficiency forced-air furnace	\$3500.00-\$6000.00
Annual service by heating contractor	\$100.00-\$150.00 minimum
Replace blower or motor	\$400.00-\$600.00
Install humidifier	\$200.00-\$400.00
Install electronic air filter	\$500.00-\$800.00
Install mid-efficiency boiler	\$2500.00-\$5000.00
Install high-efficiency boiler	\$5000.00-\$9000.00
Rebuild fire pot (refractory) on boiler	\$500.00-\$800.00
Install circulating pump	\$400.00-\$600.00
Install expansion tank	\$250.00-\$300.00
Install backflow preventer	\$100.00-\$150.00
Install chimney liner for gas appliance	\$400.00-\$800.00
Install chimney liner for oil appliance	\$700.00-\$1800.00
Install programmable thermostat	\$200.00-\$300.00
Replace indoor fuel oil storage tank	\$1200.00-\$1500.00
Remove indoor fuel oil storage tank	\$400.00 and up
Remove abandoned underground fuel oil storage tank	\$3000.00 and up
Replace radiator valve	\$250.00-\$500.00
Replace radiator	\$500.00-\$900.00
Add electric baseboard heater	\$250.00-\$400.00
Convert from hot water heating to forced-air (bungalow)	\$8000.00-\$10000.00
Convert from hot water heating to forced-air (two storey)	\$15000.00-\$20000.00
Clean ductwork	\$250.00-\$500.00
Duct conversion from gravity to forced-air furnace	\$1000.00-\$1500.00
After-warranty parts and service plans	\$150.00-\$400.00 per year

Cooling/Heat Pumps	
Add central air conditioning to existing forced-air system	\$2000.00-\$3000.00
Add heat pump to existing forced-air system	\$4000.00-\$7000.00
Replace heat pump or air conditioning condenser	\$1200.00-\$2500.00
Install independant air conditioning system	\$8000.00-\$15000.00
Install ductless split-system air conditioning	\$3000.00 and up

Insulation	
Insulate open attic area to modern standards	\$0.50-\$1.25 per sq. ft.
Blow insulation into flat roof, cathedral ceiling or wall cavity	\$2.00-\$3.50 per sq. ft.
Improve attic ventilation	\$40.00-\$50.00 per vent
Remove UFFI in wood-frame walls	\$20.00-\$35.50 per sq. ft.
Remedial approach to UFFI (caulking, heat-recovery ventilator)	\$3000.00-\$5000.00
Insulate exterior walls with rigid foam board, prior to re-siding	\$1.00-\$2.00 per sq. ft.
Insulate basement from interior	\$2.00 per sq. ft. and up

Plumbing	
Replace galvanized piping (varies w/fixtures, storeys, sq. footage & finishes)	\$500.00-\$3500.00
Replace water line to house	\$150.00-\$200.00 per lin. ft. (min. \$2000)
Replace main water shut-off valve	\$150.00-\$300.00
Install new water heater	\$600.00-\$800.00
Water heater rent or lease	\$10.00-\$20.00 monthly
Replace toilet	\$400.00 and up
Replace toilet flush mechanism	\$100.00-\$150.00
Unclogging toilet	\$100.00-\$200.00
Replace toilet seal	\$150.00-\$250.00
Install bidet	\$500.00 and up
Replace vanity basin	\$200.00 and up
Replace pedestal basin	\$350.00 and up
Replace faucet set	\$150.00 and up
Replace bathtub, including ceramic tile	\$1500.00 and up
Replace bath or shower faucet set	\$300.00 and up
Install refinished claw foot bathtub	\$1800.00 and up
Install whirlpool bath	\$3000.00 and up
Retile bathtub enclosure	\$800.00-\$1200.00
Install plastic bathtub enclosure (tub-surround)	\$200.00-\$400.00
Rebuild tile shower stall	\$1500.00-\$2500.00
Replace leaking shower stall pan	\$1000.00-\$1600.00
Install plastic shower stall	\$600.00-\$2000.00
Install bathroom exhaust fan	\$250.00-\$500.00
Remodel four-piece bathroom completely	\$6000.00 and up
Install modest basement bathroom	\$4000.00 and up
Replace laundry tubs	\$250.00-\$500.00
Install laundry facilities	\$900.00 and up
Install single kitchen sink	\$300.00 and up
Install double kitchen sink	\$400.00 and up
Install dishwasher	\$600.00-\$1000.00
Install garbage disposal	\$400.00-\$600.00
Install kitchen range hood	\$250.00-\$500.00 and up
Install solid waste pump	\$1200.00-\$1800.00
Connect waste plumbing system to municipal sewers	\$3000.00 and up
Clear obstruction in main sewer line (to street or septic tank)	\$200.00-\$400.00 and up
Repair collapsed or damaged section of sewer line	\$1000.00 and up
Install submersible well pump	\$800.00 and up
Install suction or jet pump	\$400.00-\$800.00
Replace pressure system tank	\$250.00-\$500.00
Install water softener	\$1000.00 and up
Install outdoor faucet	\$150.00-\$250.00
Replace sump pump	\$150.00-\$250.00
Install sauna	\$3000.00 and up

Interior	
Add drywall over plaster	\$1.50-\$3.00 per sq. ft.
Remove old plaster and install drywall	\$3.50-\$4.50 per sq. ft.
Add wire lath and new plaster over existing plaster	\$3.00-\$4.00 per sq. ft.
Spray stipple on existing ceiling	\$1.00-\$1.50 per sq. ft.
Install suspended tile ceiling	\$3.00-\$5.00 per sq. ft.
Install acoustic tile ceiling	\$1.50-\$2.00 per sq. ft.
Sand and refinish hardwood floors	\$1.50-\$3.00 per sq. ft.
Install 3/8" thick hardwood strip flooring	\$6.00-\$8.00 per sq. ft.
Install 3/4" thick hardwood strip flooring	\$10.00-\$12.00 per sq. ft.
Install hardwood parquet flooring	\$5.00-\$7.00 per sq. ft.
Install ceramic floor tiles	\$10.00 and up per sq. ft.
Install vinyl floor tiles	\$3.00 and up per sq. ft.
Install vinyl roll flooring	\$7.00 and up per sq. yd.
Install synthetic wall-to-wall carpet	\$20.00 and up per sq. yd.
Install wool wall-to-wall carpet	\$50.00 and up per sq. yd.
Install carpet underpad	\$5.00 per sq. yd.
Professional carpet cleaning	\$30.00 per room
Install replacement (sliding) windows	\$35.00-\$45.00 per sq. ft.
Install replacement (casement) windows	\$50.00 and up per sq. ft.
Install replacement (awning) windows	\$50.00 and up per sq. ft.
Install replacement (double-hung) windows	\$40.00-\$45.00 per sq. ft.
Install replacement (fixed) windows	\$30.00-\$40.00 per sq. ft.
Install replacement (bay) windows	\$40.00-\$65.00 per sq. ft.
Install storm window	\$100.00-\$300.00 each
Convert coal-burning fireplace to wood-burning unit (not including chimney relining or replacement)	\$2000.00 and up
Install masonry fireplace (if flue already roughed-in)	\$2000.00 and up
Install masonry fireplace with single-flue chimney	\$6000.00 and up
Install zero-clearance fireplace (including chimney)	\$3000.00 and up
Install gas fireplace	\$2500.00 and up
Install glass doors on fireplace	\$300.00 and up
Chimney cleaning	\$100.00-\$175.00 each
Install fireplace damper	\$200.00 and up
Install interior hollow core door	\$150.00-\$200.00
Install interior custom wood door (including casing and hardware)	\$450.00 and up
Install interior French doors	\$700.00 and up
Install louvre doors on closet	\$150.00-\$250.00
Install sliding mirror doors on closet	\$350.00 and up
Install exterior solid wood door	\$700.00 and up
Install exterior insulated metal door	\$500.00 and up
Install closer on garage man door	\$150.00-\$250.00
Install metal storm door	\$350.00 and up
Replace hardware on metal storm door	\$100.00-\$150.00
Install sliding glass door (brick wall)	\$2500.00-\$3500.00
Install sliding glass door (wood frame wall)	\$2000.00-\$2500.00
Replace sliding glass door	\$1000.00-\$1700.00
Install basic skylight	\$1000.00 and up
Install roof window or ventilating skylight	\$1500.00 and up
Remodel kitchen completely	\$10,000.00 and up
Install kitchen cabinets	\$200.00 and up per lin. ft.
Install kitchen counter	\$20.00 and up per lin. ft.
Install ceiling fan	\$200.00 and up
Install conventional alarm system	\$1000.00 and up
Install central vacuum system	\$800.00-\$2000.00
Install central vacuum cantsiter only	\$500.00-\$1000.00
Paint interior (walls, ceilings, door, trim) of entire house	\$1500.00 and up
Hang wallpaper	\$2.00 and up per sq. ft.
Urethane injection of leaking basement cracks	\$350.00-\$500.00 each
Damp-proof foundation walls and install perimeter drains	\$70.00-\$120.00 per lin. ft.

Annex B: Additional Resources for Home Improvement ROI

Here are a couple more online resources that will give you a good idea of the return-on-investment for a range of home improvements:

1. [CNNMoney.com](http://money.cnn.com/tools/renovation/renovation.html) Home Improvement ROI Estimator

This is a great online tool that can help you figure out if a reno project will pay off.

Just select the type of home improvement that you're planning, and the tool will tell you the average cost (in 2005 dollars), along with what you can expect to get back when you sell your home.

Keep in mind that this tool is a little old, and for U.S. homeowners. But it's still a great "ballpark" estimator.

<http://cgi.money.cnn.com/tools/renovation/renovation.html>

The screenshot shows the CNNMoney.com website interface for the Home Improvement ROI Estimator. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Business News, Markets, Personal Finance, Retirement, Technology, Luxury, Small Business, Fortune, Video, My Portfolio, and CNN.com. A search bar and a "Get Quote" button are also visible. The main content area is titled "Will this renovation project pay off?" and includes a sub-header "See the average cost of 25 common projects and how much they can add to the value of your home." The tool is currently set to "Attic Bedroom Remodel" under the "Type of project" dropdown. The "Results" section shows fields for "Average job cost (2005 Natl Avg):", "What will you get back?", "% Cost recovered", and "Value at sale". To the right, there is a "RENOVATION WIZARD" section with a "Related stories" list and a "More real estate tools" section. A "Top Stories" sidebar is also present. At the bottom right, there is an advertisement for Walden University's "ONLINE MASTERS DEGREES" with a list of programs: Nursing, Education, Public Health, Public Policy, and Business.

2. Remodeling.com's 2008-09 Cost vs. Value Report

This online report is also geared toward American homeowners, but the trends it covers definitely apply to Canadian homeowners. (For example, the report identifies energy-efficiency renovations as a big trend. This is a trend that applies to both American *and* Canadian homeowners.)

Most useful in this report is the section on Top-Performing Projects:
(<http://www.remodeling.hw.net/remodeling/seeing-the-return.aspx>)

You can view the entire report here:

<http://www.remodeling.hw.net/facts-and-figures/cost-vs.-value-report/>

The screenshot shows the Remodeling.com website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the site logo and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there are several menu items: Expert Opinion, Management, Design Build, Sales & Marketing, Green, Facts & Figures (which is highlighted), Products, and Upscale Remodeling. The main content area is titled "Cost vs. Value Report" and features a map of the United States with different regions color-coded. To the right of the map, there is a section titled "2008-09 Cost vs. Value Articles" with a list of articles including "READ THE REPORT: Top-Performing Projects", "2008-09 Cost vs. Value Report Kitchen and Bath Trends", "Energy-Efficient Changes Rank High on Value List", "Downsizing the McMansion", "Home Additions Are Still a Good Investment", and "Are We Experiencing a Suburban Slowdown and Urban Uptick?". Below the list of articles, there is a "Go to the data..." link. On the right side of the page, there are three advertisement boxes: one for GRACE, one for Whirlpool, and one for Andersen Windows & Doors.