

Home improvement



timeline and budget checklist

Whether you're replacing a kitchen, adding a double-height extension or reconfiguring the internal layout of your home, follow our **checklist** to help you keep to time and budget.

BEFORE YOU START, HAVE YOU:

- Checked whether any **grants or VAT concessions** are applicable for your renovation.
- Assessed the condition of the building, including drains, service conditions and electrical wiring.

Consider getting a building/structural survey or plans drawn up by an architect for new and existing buildings. This will highlight any issues, and determine the work and materials needed, as well as the cost.
- Fixed any pre-existing problems such as **damp**, subsidence, woodworm or dry rot.
- Thought about whether you will manage the project and all tradespeople, or get a contractor to do this for you. Make sure you understand who will need to do what and when, even if you're using a contractor, to avoid delays.
- Spoken to a few different traders to get quotes.

Ask for proof of qualifications and examples of previous work, find out if they are signed up to any schemes (such as Competent Person Schemes, so they can sign off building work), and get a breakdown of the costs and jobs that are included.

See our **guide to employing traders** for more.
- Understood and got the consent you need, such as **planning permission**, building regulations approval and listed/period building restrictions.

Applications and approvals take time, so plan ahead. Also, make sure plans are final - you don't want to have to make more than one application, as they cost anything from around £200.
- Made a budget that considers all of the costs, including contractor fees, materials, machine hire, etc. Period properties are likely to cost more. Always add another **10-20%** to your budget for contingencies.
- Got a definite plan for everything you want. Changing your mind once work commences will usually add to the cost and delay things.
- Asked what materials the tradesperson will be supplying and the quality of what they are using (you might be able to cut costs here), and find out what you will need to provide yourself.

If you're getting anything yourself, where possible, buy in bulk when demand is low and the pound is weak. Check prices include delivery.
- Checked what equipment (such as **scaffolding**) and machinery the contractor will be supplying, or what you will need to get. If you're providing it, be clear on delivery dates to avoid delays. Plan how any access issues will be overcome.
- Made plans for what will happen with waste or salvaged materials - booking a skip, for example.
- Got a list of the services you will need, such as water and power, and what might be disconnected when, so you can plan around them.
- Checked when existing parts of the building will be made watertight. Cover or move anything that needs to be protected.