

Remodeling A Kitchen : A How To Guide

One of the most timely and costly home improvement projects any homeowner can take on is a kitchen makeover. Whether a homeowner desperately needs a kitchen revamp, or is tired of the dated look of the kitchen, there are several options to freshen up the area. The easiest fix for a sparkling new(ish) kitchen is a good thorough cleaning. Over years of use, kitchen cabinets take on food, heat, and grease that tends to build up. Though it might seem simpler to leave cabinet doors attached to clean them, taking time to remove the doors allows for easier access in the long run, though it's advisable to number the doors to keep track of which goes where. There are many cleaners on the market, but trisodium phosphate, known as TSP, has a great track record as a heavy duty degreaser and cleaner. After cleaning doors and cabinet sides, the hardware will also need a good soak. Remove the hinges and drawer pulls, and let them sit in a good soapy water mix for 30 minutes. Giving them a light scrub and polish can make them look brand new. If the kitchen needs some updating, changing the hinges and handles or pulls on cabinets is inexpensive, and can dramatically change the look of a kitchen. For those looking to make a bigger change, and spend a greater amount of time on their cabinets, they can also be refinished. Before refinishing, it's still advisable to clean the wood thoroughly, as sanding them down could embed dirt and grime even further without a proper cleaning first. To remove old stain or paint, the easiest way is with a chemical, or paint, stripper. By following the directions of the stripper, the chemicals end up doing most of the work, and the old stain should easily peel away. After the stripping is done, it's time to sand. Starting with 120 grit sandpaper should help remove any of the old paint or stain left behind by the stripper. Afterwards, smooth out the wood with 220 grit sandpaper. After the cabinet is properly sanded, apply a primer if painting, or a sanding sealer if staining (which works much like primer, allowing stain to absorb evenly). Once the paint or stain is applied to the cabinets, add a final finish, such as varnish or lacquer to protect the wood. Water-based polyurethanes also do a great job, and are environmentally friendly. If refinishing cabinets won't help the kitchen's appearance, and an entire renovation is out of the question, there are companies that specialize in refacing. After measuring the sizes of the current cabinet doors, a refacing company will custom build new cabinet doors, with a wide choice of stains, finishes and hardware to choose from. This is a good option for those living in older homes whose kitchen cabinets are sturdier and well crafted compared to today's modular cabinet options.

About the Author

Ki helps buyers interested in Austin real estate <http://www.escapesomewhere.com> his website has a free search of the Austin MLS http://www.escapesomewhere.com/realestate_searchthemls.html along with updates on his Austin real estate blog <http://www.escapesomewhere.com/austinblog/>

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