



## Ideas For Investing In Your Home

### 6 Cool Options For Today's Kitchen:

1. A Separate Refrigerator & Freezer. Also a small beverage refrigerator for the kids. If you have the room.
2. Dovetail Drawer Boxes. Helps to prevent the drawer fronts from falling off. Save 33% on cabinetry going from custom to semi-custom. Save another 33% going from semi-custom to stock.
3. 48" Range. 2 ovens, 6 burners, a grill & a griddle. Viking & Wolf are the big names.
4. Radiant Floor Heating. Uses tubes or cables to send heat up from under the floor. Efficient, comfortable, quiet, invisible, & distributes heat evenly unlike any other types of heating-baseboard or forced air-which can take up valuable cabinet space & heat the kitchen unevenly. Electric radiant floor heat is less expensive to install but more expensive to use.
5. An Island. Island kitchens are more popular than any other design. Better work flow & traffic flow, more counter space, & a central gathering point for family & friends. Islands without sinks or appliances can save between \$2,000 & \$10,000.
6. Other ideas for kitchens: 2 sinks. Custom stove hoods. Granite countertops. The following are "out": oak cabinets, apron-front sinks, lacquer cabinets, strong or harsh colors.

### 5 Easy Ways to turn your home Green:

1. Replace all incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, the ones with the "Energy Star" label. Each bulb costs more, but lasts 8-15 times longer & save 20% on the electric bills.
2. Install a solar water heater. Solar thermal is a fraction of the cost of solar electric. It takes up very little space on the roof & has a fast payback.
3. Recycle your cellphones. Donate them so the material can be reused.
4. Install a solar air heater on an external south wall.
5. Install geothermal heating. It is expensive & not easy, but will save the homeowner 50%-60% on all utility costs.

### 6 Biggest No-Nos for Your Front & Back Yard:

1. Do not start work until you know your town's rules. Make sure you've got a permit for everything you need.
2. Do not plant invasive species. They're bad for the local ecosystem & they'll get out of control on your land. Beware of terms like: "vigorous spreader".
3. Do not plant along the edge of your yard until you know exactly where your property line is. Using plants & trees as a screen is a nice way to improve an unpleasant view, but don't let it turn into a nightmare. If you take down a tree that you thought was yours & it was really your neighbor's, you can expose yourself to a lawsuit.
4. Do not hire an uninsured contractor. If they get hurt on the job, the homeowner is liable.
5. Make sure your landscaper knows what he is doing. 2" max for mulch. Use the right plantings & the right soil (acidic or alkaline?). Know how big a tree or shrub will ultimately grow.
6. Extra tips: When planting, less is more. Don't be afraid to pull everything out & start over. If the front of the house is a lot of overgrown shrubs, it can make the house look dark & dingy. The best bang for the buck is "foundation planting", planted directly around the house. Use shrubs to create screening of unpleasant views. Remove trees to let more sunshine into the house. Build a patio as an extension of the house, an outdoor room. Patios can be used more than 6 months per year and are great for entertaining, family dining, & cooking.