

Replace, Reface or Refinish?

CABINETS

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Have your old kitchen cabinets seen better days? Thinking about going in a different direction during your next remodel? Sure, you can replace your cabinetry, but if you're looking to save money while still dramatically changing the look of your kitchen, consider refacing or refinishing the cabinets instead.

Did You Know?

When refinishing or painting cabinets, you can go from one stain to another or to a solid color, but you typically can't go from a solid color to a stain. The material under solid-color cabinets usually is not stainable. Cabinetmakers will not buy expensive stain-grade wood only to paint over it with an opaque color.



Replace

Why? Your current cabinetry is in poor shape, or you're completely changing the kitchen's layout.

The good: This option offers you the most flexibility. You can select any design, size, door, material and color your budget will allow. You can also customize the cabinetry, relocate appliances and add storage to accommodate your needs and desires.

The bad: You will pay more for that flexibility, as this is the most expensive option of the three.



Reface

Why? A viable option if your cabinet boxes are in good shape and you're keeping the kitchen layout.

The good: Because you are selecting new doors, hardware, panels, veneers and colors to be placed atop your original cabinet boxes, it will look like you purchased brand-new cabinets. However, you'll be saving money: up to 50 percent compared to new cabinets.

The bad: You do lose the flexibility of reconfiguring your kitchen, although you can probably make a few tweaks and even add cabinets if you choose.



Refinish

Why? You love the design of your current cabinets, but you're just wanting to change their appearance.

The good: You can refinish or paint your cabinets for up to 80 percent less than totally replacing them, while still achieving a dramatically different look for your kitchen.

The bad: It can be a messy and smelly process. You may be tempted to DIY this project, but it's best left to a pro who is used to working with the delicate nature of cabinetry.



Choosing Colors

By following these tips, you're sure to select the perfect shade:

Know your design: If you're going with a traditional look, consider classic colors such as creams and whites. If you're going modern, consider incorporating bright hues with contrasting tones.

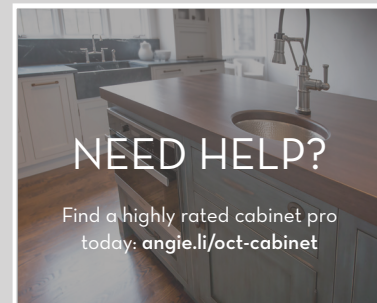
Look at size: If you have a tiny kitchen, go with a light color to help visually open up the small space.

Include the walls: Your cabinets don't reside in a vacuum. Consider how your wall and cabinet colors will complement each other. You'll want the right blend of contrast for a visually appealing kitchen.

BOTTOM LEFT AND TOP TIGHT PHOTO COURTESY OF WHITNEY GAINER

Flip out: Thumb through interior design magazines and online idea galleries to gain inspiration and to see what cabinet color combinations work.

Think ahead: You will likely sell the house at some point, so resist the urge to go chartreuse and choose neutral colors with vast appeal.



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Design Trends

1. Painted cabinets

Whites, off-whites and shades of gray have become the star of many kitchens. Stained oak, once a coveted look, has taken a back seat as painted cabinets continue to grow in popularity.

2. Open shelving

Many homeowners are opting to remove some or all of their upper cabinets for open shelves. This allows them to display dishes and give the kitchen a more open feel.

3. Brass fixtures

Today's brass handles, faucets and lamps are not the same as the shiny ones popular in 70s and 80s kitchens. These brass tones are brushed and come in a variety of golden hues to match your cabinets' style.