

# Renovating? Call a designer first



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CONFIDENTIAL

Do designers tear down walls? Physically, no. As a designer I help put the team together: architect, engineer, contractor with construction team, to make sure that wall can come down safely.

It's a complementary working relationship, each with our own scope of work on every project. Unlike most home makeover TV shows where you don't see all the work that happens before the first weighty throw of a sledge hammer, a professionally trained designer has already completed the project ... on paper.

Adding a space or modifying a layout is an exact science. You need to know if what you have will fit into a new space, where it will go and what other options will cost to replace it if necessary.

That's not the contractor's job, nor does every architect deal with the tiniest of details that finish a room. That's up to the designer.

Do you know where your TV will go? Do you know how to make it seamlessly fit in a wall with the electronics hidden? With a plan, your designer will have marked out where to recess the area to fit your screen, and where exactly the outlet will be placed.

Not all contractors think about creating a recessed niche and not all electricians think about where the outlets go on a wall. A designer ensures all those details come together with clear drawings. The result is a thoughtful, functional design, personalized for your needs.

With architecturally-trained staff we take care of drawing all the plans and submitting them to the appropriate government offices for permit approval.

We also have a lot of inside information that can prevent costly mistakes. Everything

from where each tile in the pattern must be laid to raising vanity heights to 36" so there is less bending.

Whereas, an architect is looking at the whole home, it's the little details, such as the design of the trim on the ceiling, the right height of baseboards and lighting design we select.

We know exactly where every recessed ceiling light should be placed to prevent the Swiss cheese ceiling effect from over-lighting.

We work closely with the team from the beginning to the end so those details get addressed. Have you ever seen an outlet in the middle of a wall, mid-height? The project lacked a designer's vision.

Contractors are an important key to a job being finished in a timely and efficient manner. Designers work with the most reliable teams to get the job done. They have to because our work is all connected and everyone has to strive for perfection. That's

what you're looking for, right?

Need your expensive espresso machine to sit on the kitchen counter? Many coffee makers aren't designed to fit under your upper kitchen cabinets. It can affect the whole plan and layout if how you function every day is not considered.

A designer will ask you all those questions, right down to the size of your shampoo bottles so the bathroom has proper storage for it in the plan.

Approaching a renovation is a very personal thing first, then it's a process, a sometimes messy, process but your designer will work with you right to the shopping.

So if it's your first time doing a home renovation or full build, call a designer first. They can take you through the process and they'll be there for you until the end.

— Jane Lockhart is a celebrity designer, TV personality and leading expert in the world of design. Visit [www.janelockhart.com](http://www.janelockhart.com).



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# Mike Holmes wants to do laundry rooms right



NATALIE DEANE  
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Businessman, investor, television host, philanthropist, Mike Holmes

wears many hats but most of all he is unequivocally Canada's most trusted contractor.

We have seen him rescue many a homeowner from renovations gone wrong, expose mistakes in building and tackle some painful projects.

Holmes recently gave us

some tips on one of the most underappreciated but most used rooms in your home — the laundry room.

Most people take the time to plan out their kitchen or washroom renovations but seem to feel this little room is not as important. With special plumbing, venting and electrical it is crucial that you take the time to make it right.

Any fan of this reno guru will not be surprised that his first tip is: 'Make a plan and make it right.'

As with any home renovation, planning is the key to success. Lay out timing and budget for your project,

but be flexible — leave time and money for unexpected delays and surprise discoveries once you get underway.

What will you be using the room for? This is something to think about with any of your renos throughout your home.

**Think multifunction.** As you prepare your design and layout, consider all the steps involved in doing laundry, and how you might want to incorporate them into the space. Do you hang a lot of your clothes to dry? Want to fold clothes right in the space? Need shelving for storage? Mapping out your

needs before work begins will ensure the final product is a multifunctional room that meets all of your needs.

**Safety always comes first.** To get your home insured you need to use registered professionals.

**Bring in the professionals.** Wiring and plumbing are not DIY projects. Enlist the help of licensed tradespeople who have all the necessary permits and qualifications to do the job right. Getting the job done right the first time means avoiding unnecessary repair costs down the road, not to mention safety issues.

**Select the right appliances.** What would a laundry room be without a great laundry pair? You should spend as much time choosing your appliances as you do your paint colour — and look beyond style to find functionality that will make your life easier. "Top load laundry pairs, like GE Appliances' Designer Line Evolution, are making a big comeback," says Holmes. "What I love about top loads is their ergonomic design, reliable performance and the fact that they don't retain moisture — which can often lead to issues with mould and mildew."

**Flooring matters.** Ask anyone who has ever had a leak! You want to choose a material that's going to give you the biggest bang for your buck. Choose tile — it's durable, relatively low maintenance and very easy to clean.

— Natalie Deane is a lifestyle connoisseur who explores home decor, travel and entertainment trends. Find her at [nataliedeane.com](http://nataliedeane.com), @nataliedeane on Instagram and @natalie\_deane on Twitter.



Mike Holmes says top load laundry pairs are making a big comeback.



Like any other room in your house, you need to plan for the laundry room to make it right, advises Mike Holmes.