

Bath Renovations



Get the Spa-like Baths You Want...
Affordably

... “But How Much Will it Cost?”

To be sure, bathroom remodels can be an expensive. Pricing can run the gamut depending on where you live, the costs of materials, labor, what the condition of your home is, and of course what you want to have done.

Houzz expert Mitchell Parker shared that home owners should think of their remodels in terms being in of three categories: low end, mid-upper range, and the deluxe remodel. Each category then has its own characteristics based on the types of materials used, level of customization and the degree of remodel. For example, Parker says that on the low end, some remodels can cost as little as \$3,000 (often a DIY remodel). But the more remodeling required, the more it will cost. A deluxe remodel, using his categorizations, could run as much as \$100,000 (or more).

*“The average
bathroom
remodel in New
York costs just
over \$32,000.”*

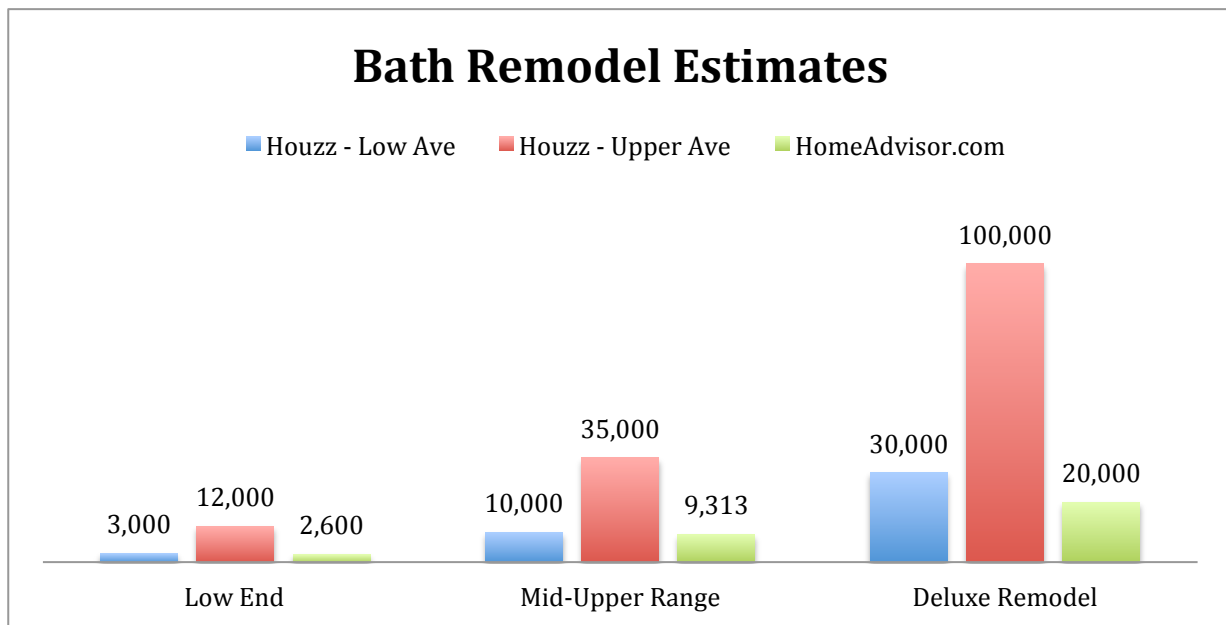
Houzz
Real Cost Finder
(2016)

To add confusion, even different remodeling websites provide vastly different averages based on how the data is gathered.

For example, Houzz.com used anecdotal information from bath designers and professional remodelers. This method helps a homeowner “group” the types of remodels into larger categories – particularly if you aren’t as familiar with the lingo of the industry.

In contrast, Homeadvisor.com, a site that links home owners with professionals in their area, however, used data from more than 10,000 bath renovation projects as reported back to the website. This is quite concrete data: it’s “real numbers” from “real projects” and “real home owners.”

It doesn't, however, get market specific: so if you live in an expensive market (like New York City) you can't expect to pay the same rates a homeowner in Billings, Montana might pay, due to the differences in the competitive markets for both labor and materials in these different cities.



Costs are, of course, important.

But remember – these are averages. Now that you have a sense of price ranges (even if they do vary wildly), give some thought to your own specific situation – both in terms of needs (what you need in your bath area) and wants (spa-like? Separate bath and shower) as well as the financial aspects (will you pay for the remodel in cash? From a tax refund? Home improvement loan?)

Questions to consider:

Still interested in renovating your bath? Great! Take the next step: What is it you are trying to accomplish? What do you like (or not like) about your existing bath? Get specific.

- ***Is your bath too small?*** Will it require expansion into adjacent rooms? Or can you get creative with how space is used through vertical storage or relocating items to other rooms (i.e.: hall closets, bedrooms etc.)
- ***Is your bathroom an eyesore?*** Is it stuck in the 70s, cursed with ugly yellow or pink tiles?
- ***Is your bathroom floor plan working?*** How is your bath area organized – and does it fit with your lifestyle? For example, is it ok for one person – but challenging if two people need to get ready for work in the morning? Or maybe you might have accessibility challenges to manage?

This is just a quick list to get you thinking. It's far from comprehensive: there are as many complaints about baths as there are homeowners!

On the next page, we've provided a quick comparison chart based on Houzz's categories of bathroom remodeling projects. It may give you some additional ideas for your project.

Bathroom Remodel Comparison

	<i>Low End</i>	<i>Mid – Upper Range</i>	<i>Deluxe Remodel</i>
Price Range	\$3,000 - 12,000	\$10,000 - 35,000	\$30,000 -100,000
Characteristics:	Often includes some (or all) DIY	The design is for you (as opposed to with an eye for resale).	“A full-gut job.” Everything is removed and done the way you want it. May include expansion.
Materials			
Plumbing	Not likely	Likely some adjustments to the layout.	New layout.
Countertops:	Low-end granite or cultured marble.	Higher grade remnant or custom granite, marble or quartz.	Natural marble, limestone or granite.
Tile:	Bath or shower area with basic quality ceramic or subway tiles.	Porcelain tiles with accents/borders.	
Walls:	Tile in bath area/back splash. Paint for the rest.	Possibility to tile most of the room instead of just the bath area, or even beadboard.	Possibly removing walls to expand the room. Tiled wall coverings with more hand crafted tiled patterns/treatments.
Cabinets:	Off the shelf (or refinish/paint if in good condition).	Semi-custom pieces, higher end finishes.	Solid wood construction, custom finishes and decorative accent pieces.
Lighting, fixtures and finishes:	Off the shelf products.	Better quality, durable, chrome fixtures. Comfort height toilet.	High-end quality fixtures and finishes. Detailed molding, trim work and tile work. Can include high-end amenities such as steam showers, or radiant floor heating.
Tip	Splurge on nice accessories (fixtures or hardware) to spruce up the basic level materials.	It's wise to spend the investment in the bath area: more durable finishes will last 20-30 years.	You may be able to save money by checking out granite or stone yards for left over remnant pieces from someone's kitchen project.

Information Source: *Bathroom Workbook: How Much Does a Bathroom Remodel Cost?* By Mitchel Parker, [Houzz.com](http://houzz.com) Editorial Staff. July 14, 2016.

Trimming the Budget: Refinishing

Now that you have an idea of what you want, and you might even have some initial cost estimates for your bath remodel, you might be asking yourself “How can I cut this budget?”

Don't worry – that's a common feeling.

Likely you've heard the sage advice of “always get 3 (or more) bids.” That's true. It's excellent and important advice. You'll find that if you take time with this process, and are open, curious and willing to ask questions, you will learn a lot about remodeling, home ownership and even maintenance from your prospective contractors. Good contractors are knowledgeable – and are proud of what they do. And more often than not, they're willing to share what they know with genuinely interested customers.

“Tile refinishing allows a homeowner to change the color, and even texture, of good condition tiles in their bath, and restore the tile's original luster to like new.”

There's a lot of ways to cut your budget for your bath-remodeling project. But one option for budget reduction that you might not hear about very often is **tile refinishing**.

What is Tile Refinishing?

One common set of terms you will hear people use interchangeably are “refinishing” or “reglazing” in relation to tiles.

There really is no such thing as “reglazing” — it’s a misnomer. As This Old House once shared in a Q&A session, unless you’re planning to “crank up the heat in your bathroom to 2,300 degrees for several hours,” you really don’t “reglaze” bathroom tiles.

The real term is a process called “refinishing,” but can also be called “resurfacing” or “surface restoration.”

Refinishing is an affordable and faster alternative to remodeling – especially when you are happy with your existing bathroom configuration and your tiles are in good shape.

In short, refinishing is a multi-step process of applying layered coats of primer and pigmented acrylic urethane. Once that’s done, we buff the surface area until it shines like a freshly glazed tile.

“Refinishing can shorten your timeline, change the color and luster of good condition tiles at a fraction of the cost of complete remodeling.”

Orlando Salazar, author of Renovating Hotel Bathrooms

What can you refinish?

- Surface tiles
- Bathroom fixtures
- Porcelain, fiberglass and cast iron items like tubs, sinks, etc.

While refinishing may seem like it can work miracles – and in the right situations we can – it is not a miracle worker. The raw materials – tiles, baths, etc. – themselves need to be in good shape.

When done professionally, refinished surfaces will have the same luster as they did when they were originally installed and are often under warranty. Refinishing isn’t appropriate

in all situations. But a reputable professional will give you an honest assessment of your situation by looking at the condition and quality of your tiles and grout, noting any cracks and chips – and if they can be repaired well enough for refinishing.

On the next page, you'll find a checklist for your use. Take a moment to examine your bath. It may give you a general guide in determining if contacting a local refinishing expert may be well worth your time.

Checklist: Is Your Bath “Refinishable?”

Yes	No	<i>Description</i>
		<p>Are the tubs, toilet or sinks in “good shape” whereas other parts of the rooms are in serious need of help? For example, sometimes refinishing (rather than totally gutting and remodeling) the bath is just “enough” giving a glorious shine and luster to the tub or tiles – thus allowing funds to be directed towards furnishings or soft goods purchases.</p>
		<p>Are the baths “ok” – structurally still good – but definitely have seen better days? It’s sometimes enough to get your rooms just enough of the “sprucing up” needed to get by until the next major renovation. One way to trim your budget without substantially diminishing the look of “luxury” or visual appeal is to refinish the tiles you currently have.</p>
		<p>Are the tiles, themselves, in good shape? If your tiles are structurally in good shape, with few or no cracks or chips, refinishing can give you a lot of affordable options. You can change the colors – or even create textures such as a stone or wood look – of your tiles, as well as bring back the luster of new tile.</p>

Refinishing projects can be as little as a few hundred dollars for a typical home bath, depending on the condition of your tiles or fixtures. A good professional will be able to give you an in-home estimate and explain his assessment.

What's Next? How to Find the Right Contractor

So you've decided: you really do want to move forward with a bathroom remodel.

Congratulations! This is an exciting time for any homeowner. There's nothing like putting your (somewhat) permanent stamp on a home that really makes it yours.

But before you head off to the granite-marble yard, or the cabinet showroom, take some time to investigate the professionals who are going to be executing on your vision. Yes, we agree, there's nothing like picking out new counter tops, or agonizing over which finishes to use on your cabinets. But, the contractors you choose to bring into your home are a critical factor in the success of your remodel. Some may even say that choosing the wrong contractor might "sink" (pun intended) your project entirely.

Word of mouth and referrals are still one of the best ways to get a good contractor. But what if you don't know anyone? Take the time to not only interview your possible contractors, but also to follow up on their references. Did the contractor follow up? Did they show up on time (or at all)? Did they call if they were going to be late? Did they pay attention to the details – measurements, sizing, color matching, etc. -- that would save the previous customers both time and money?

"...choosing the wrong bathroom renovation expert can 'sink' your project entirely."

When you meet with the contractor, what feeling do you have? Don't be afraid to follow your gut. "When you pick a remodeler, it's like a marriage," says Ken Perrin, president, Artistic Renovations, Cleveland, Ohio. "You're living with that person for a while. So be sure to hire someone you can get along with. They might be great craftspeople but if you don't like them, you won't want them in your home."

We've developed a checklist for you to help you with your selection.

Checklist: Checklist for Selecting Your Contractor

Yes	No	Description
		Who are they? Are they local? Does the firm have a long-standing contact and web presence? Using local contractors can be critical to your project: they often know local building officials by name (or even on speed dial!), and those built in relationships can mean the difference in terms of getting things done quickly and efficiently.
		How long have they been in business? Remodeling isn't a trade that's picked up in a day. Choosing a contractor who has stood the test of time is a sure step in the right direction.
		Is the contractor insured? This is a non-starter. Your contractor HAS to have a certificate of insurance specifically addressed to you and your project. What kinds of insurance do they carry?
		What certifications or licenses do they have? Particularly, <u>is the contractor EPA certified?</u> You want a contractor who is aware of (and abides by) the laws specific to construction, alterations and paint removal.
		What is their reputation? Everyone is going to have wonderful testimonials on their websites. But ask around. Do you know people who have used the firm? What do they say? Pay attention to those who "have a reputation that precedes them" (both good and bad.) You want someone who has a strong reputation.
What's included in the job? Look for:		
		Non-slip finishes should be included in the scope of work as a safety measure.
		Is the previous paint being removed? (The answer should be yes.)
		Ensure the tub and tile is etched to remove shine and promote the new surface bonds properly.
		Make sure you are getting high performing, top quality epoxy primers and Aliphatic acrylic enamels.
		Attention to the details: make sure your contractor is committed to scraping all the grout lines, repairing chips, loose tiles and cracks and holes, finished by completely re-grouting all of the bath and tile areas to perfection.
		Clean up after the job is done.



About Bathtub Doctor

For more than 30 years, Bathtub Doctor has been providing homeowners in the greater New York City, Nassau and Suffolk counties area a fast, quality and yet still affordable solution to their bathroom woes.

Founded on a belief in customer value and simply doing the right thing, Orlando Salazar has built his family-run business, the old fashioned way: one customer success story at a time. “In August 1986, I took the plunge and began building a family business. I set out to make a unique bathroom repair service better and a real money saver for consumers. The strategy was to provide faster and much better service than Long Islander's were getting at the time, plus a longer lasting job.”

The Bathtub Doctor team of trained professionals have served serving thousands of not just residential home owners, but also apartments owners, general contractors, architects, real estate management companies, government facilities, hotels, hospitals, and even restaurants – all with one purpose: to give them the renovated bathrooms they want, at a price they can afford, and on a timeline they can live with.

Let us help you get the baths you want as well. Call us today.

Bathtub Doctor

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