



Make The *Right Move* With Terry

A Professional Organizer on What to Consider Before You Remodel

Remodeling is an opportunity to create a space that reflects your personal style - but just as important, it's an opportunity to incorporate better functionality for your everyday living.

For the most successful remodel, you'll want to consider how you live now and how you'd like to live ideally. After all, remodeling is a chance to set new, more organized habits. Why not create a home that will make implementing your new habits easier? Here are four questions to consider before you remodel.

1. How Do You Use Your Spaces?

Consider the routines of your household members. How do you currently use your spaces? What isn't working?

You may want to consider hiring a professional organizer to help you think through your needs, recommend appropriate storage and come up with creative ideas to maximize your space before you finalize your remodeling plans.

2. How Many People Will Be Using Storage Spaces?

Your remodel plan should allow for enough storage for everyone in your household. Otherwise you may end up with excess items that don't fit in designated storage spaces, resulting in a cluttered-feeling home. Some upfront planning can prevent this problem.

Pantry

Before you commit to the size and layout for your pantry or other food storage area, consider your grocery shopping patterns. How large is your household and how often do you shop? Do you tend to purchase bulk items or smaller amounts? If you are an avid baker, will you have sufficient space for your ingredients and baking tools?

Dump zone

You'll have more success sticking with house rules to manage messiness if your home's flow makes sense for your lifestyle. When you and your family members enter the home, where do the items you are carrying go? Backpacks, purses and mail need a designated location so they don't end up on the entry table or kitchen counter - or worse yet, the entry floor.

The mudroom should be built close to where you enter the house but, for aesthetic reasons, preferably not visible from the front main entrance. A mudroom with garage and side door access would be ideal.

3. Will Your Family Situation Change in the Near Future?

It's wise to consider potential family changes as you come up with a remodeling plan, particularly if you anticipate these changes in the near future.



Children.

If you intend to have children, keep in mind that kids and their belongings take up a lot of room as they grow older. An adult-size closet will be useful for storing and organizing the various stages of childhood, from babies' play mats and diapers to toddler's toys, children's dress-up chests and teens' sports equipment. Large closets that corral these items can help maintain an uncluttered feel in the rest of the room.

Empty Nest.

Perhaps your remodel comes towards the end of your child-raising years, and a reduced household size is on the horizon. If so, think about how you might repurpose your children's rooms. If you want an office that doubles as a bedroom when your child visits, it may make sense to incorporate a built-in wall unit with drawers that could serve as a dresser for short visits and as longer-term storage for a few items. If you'd like your child to feel some ownership over the space, you could paint the walls the child's preferred colour and use a few of his or her belongings as room décor.

Aging parents.

If you plan to move your aging parents into your home, consider including features such as a ground-level bathroom with a walk-in tub. This kind of accommodation can be helpful for someone with limited mobility since it reduced the chance of a slip and fall.

4. Do Your Spaces Have a Useful Purpose?

If you plan to stay in your home for the long term, don't be afraid to design it to support your lifestyle. After all, you've paid (or are paying) for every square foot of your house, and therefore any unused or inefficient space is wasted real estate.

For full article go to: <https://bit.ly/2DhCtGa>

Home Sales Remain Steady in December, Capping off a Strong Year for Real Estate Across the Region

The London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS® (LSTAR) announced 439 homes* were sold in December, up 2.1% over December 2017 and right on par with the 10-year average. The number of home resales for the year was 9,799, down 13.3% compared for 2017, which set a record year for residential real estate. December also saw average home sales price make steady gains in LSTAR's jurisdiction. In London, the average sales price was \$375,782, up 13.4% from last December, while it was \$304,079 in St. Thomas, an increase of 0.7% from December 2017. "Overall, it was a very solid year for home resales in London and St. Thomas," said the 2018 LSTAR President. "The activity in 2018 performed well above the 10-year average, despite the record low inventory levels seen in the marketplace the entire year. As we kick off 2019, I believe home sales will continue to be strong and be a driving force to the local economy."

January 3, 2019 - London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS®.



Breakdown of December Residential Sales

Year-to-date	December 2018	December 2017
Sales Activity	9,799	-13.3
Dollar Volume	\$3,612,937,456	-3.0
New Listings	12,993	-9.6
Active Listings	1,449	-9.7
Sales to New Listings Ratio	75.4	78.6
Months of Inventory	1.8	1.7
Average Price	\$368,705	11.9

Type	December 2018	December 2017
London CMA (includes St. Thomas & Surrounding Area)	439	2.1
City of London	298	-2.9
London North	83	2.5
London East	102	1.0
London South	113	-9.6
St. Thomas	34	25.9
Strathroy	5	-68.8
Middlesex County	32	3.2
Elgin County	33	26.9

Economic Impacts of MLS® System Home Sales and Purchases in Canada and the Provinces, Altus Group Consulting, 2013.

Winter Home Maintenance To-Do List

Indoor Winter House Cleaning & Organizing

Kitchen Cabinets: While you're stuck indoors in winter weather, take the opportunity to give your kitchen cabinets a good cleaning to remove any grease and grime. To make the job easy, spray on a little orange oil cleaner to cut the grease, then wipe the cabinets clean with a wet sponge that's been microwaved about 40 seconds. Be sure to wear gloves so you don't burn your hands! The combination of citrus oil and hot water will make short work of grease on cabinets.

Stovetop and Oven: Citrus-based cleaner also works great for cleaning your stove. Start by removing the burners and pans, then give the stovetop a good cleaning using the same hot sponge method. Be sure to remove and clean the knobs and the surface behind them as well. For stubborn stains, sprinkle a little baking soda and scrub. While you're at it, be sure to clean your oven with a commercial oven cleaner, following the instructions. For a greener option, sprinkle the bottom of the oven with baking soda, spritz with water, let it sit overnight, then scrub it clean.

Range hood and Filter: Allowing grease to build up on range hoods and over the stove microwave fans can reduce their efficiency and shorten the life of the fan. In addition to cleaning the outer and inner surfaces of a range hood or microwave with a citrus cleaner, it's important to remove and clean the range hood greaser filter regularly by washing it in the sink in hot, soapy water or running the filter in the

dishwasher. If you can access the exhaust fan on the range hood, turn the circuit breaker off the clean the fan blades as well.

Closet: Take advantage of a rainy or snowy day to clean and organize your closets.

Remove everything from the closet and give the floors and woodwork a good cleaning. Then, before putting anything back, take a look and see if you're getting the best use out of the space. Some new DIY wire track shelving along with hanging bars, drawers, bins and baskets can increase your storage dramatically.

Bathroom Drains: Nothing ruins a good shower like a slow running drain! To clean tub and sink drains, remove the drain assembly and insert a drain stick in the drain pipe to pull out any hair or other clogs. Follow this by pouring a little bleach down the drain, allow it to sit for 10-15 minutes, then flush it with water to kill any mold or mildew lurking in the pipe.

Home Inventory: Winter is a great time to compile a home inventory of all your prized possessions for insurance purposes, or update to inventory you have with any new purchases from the past year. Be sure to document it with photos, videos, and receipts. Make extra copies and store them in a safe place away from your home, such as a safe deposit box or with a friend or relative.

<https://www.todayshomeowner.com/winter-home-maintenance-to-do-list/2/>



Easy Cajun Jambalaya

Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 bell peppers, chopped
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lb boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1" pieces
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 6 oz. andouille sausage, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp. tomato sauce
- 2 c. low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 (15-oz.) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 c. long grain rice
- 2 tsp. Old Bay seasoning
- 1 lb. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced



Directions:

1. In a large pot over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion and bell peppers and season with salt and pepper. Cook until soft, about 5 minutes, then stir in chicken and season with salt, pepper and oregano. Cook until the chicken is golden, about 5 minutes, then stir in andouille sausage, garlic, and tomato paste and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute more.
2. Add chicken broth, crushed tomatoes, rice, and Old Bay. Reduce heat to medium low, cover with a tight fitting lid, and cook until the rice is tender and the liquid is almost absorbed, about 20 minutes.
3. Add the shrimp and cook until pink, 3 to 5 minutes.
4. Stir in green onions just before serving.

<https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a53820/easy-homemade-cajun-jambalaya-recipe/>