

Fix Up The Basement

By *Brian Madigan*



Let's assume that you have decided to sell your house, but you have never finished the basement.

In the case of a two-storey house, one third of the potential living space is in the basement and for a bungalow it's half. That's a lot of space and if you can convince a buyer to pay for it, then you can substantially improve your selling price.

The problem is that you don't want to spend more money fixing up the basement than you're going to add to the selling price. So, let's keep the renovations to a bare minimum!

Ceiling

There are all kinds of ceilings that are not too expensive and are relatively easy to install. You should check out what's available at your local home improvement centre. Consider your expertise and your budget. But, what if you have little to no expertise and you are really stretching your finances to the limit? Just paint the ceiling. Paint it black! In fact, you will have to spray paint it, if you have no finished surface whatsoever. You can rent a sprayer and you will need the paint and that's all. You simply spray paint the underside of the floorboards, the rafters, the joists and so on. Leave it all exposed, just spray paint it all black. You will be amazed that it seems to disappear and creates a very interesting effect. This same effect is often reproduced in many upscale restaurants and clothing stores.

Now, you will need some lighting. Select track lighting featuring 50-watt high intensity bulbs. A few dimmers would be nice.

Floor

We need a relatively inexpensive approach here as well. Floors can certainly be very expensive but when you have limited talent and no money your options become somewhat restricted. Your upscale choices are wood on top of a subfloor, ceramic tile, laminate, and broadloom. You have to remember that you're moving, you won't be living there forever. So, back to the paint shop! You're simply going to paint the floor. This will remove any discolouration in the concrete. Don't select gunmetal grey or dark red. It will look like a garage or automotive repair shop. Pick white! It will brighten up

the room and make it appear much larger. Remember, it will be a nice contrast to the black which made the ceiling disappear. The easiest way to paint the floor will simply be to use a roller.

Walls

This is going to be the expensive part. You saved a lot of money on the floors and the ceilings, so this is where you are going to have to spend most of the budget. If you have an older home, there may already be some prefabricated wood panelling. The quick solution is just paint it. However, if you have a new home then you will require some defining walls. Bury the support posts in the walls and focus on the perimeter of the basement. Here, drywall is the best choice. If you've never done it before, then hire someone. The only part that needs to be finished will be the corners. It won't be finished where it meets either the floor or ceiling.

Don't finish the roughed-in bathroom. That will get very expensive. And, don't cut up the space into rooms or install doors. These will all add to the cost.

You may have to hire an electrician to hook up the lighting. This would be very wise if you have never done this before.

This inexpensive renovation should more than pay for itself. You have done most of the work yourself except for a drywaller and an electrician. Start to finish, all this could be done in a week's time.

I know that you have seen many basements that look like the Taj Mahal, but buyers simply don't pay for them. I also appreciate that your newly created basement still requires some work to finish it off. Most buyers will be able to imagine the rest.

As for showcasing your new basement, you should furnish it modestly. You will need a TV, a coffee table, a couch and two comfortable chairs. This will create a lived-in look and the buyers' imaginations will do the rest.

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