Remodel Scope & Budget Builder

Start with the scope, then pick your must-haves and nice-to-haves. Use the buckets to build a realistic budget range before you call contractors.

1) Name the remodel you are really doing

Scope drives cost more than style does. Moving plumbing and structure is like relocating a tree instead of trimming it - both change the yard, but one takes equipment and risk.

Remodel type	What it usually includes
Cosmetic refresh	Paint, flooring, fixtures, maybe counters. Same layout.
Functional upgrade	New cabinets, better storage, lighting plan, some drywall work.
Layout change	Moving walls, changing doorways, moving plumbing or gas, new windows.
Space gain	Finishing a basement, a bump-out, or a full addition.

Quick mindset: If you move plumbing, gas, or structure, expect bigger swings in budget and timeline.

2) Pick your must-haves and nice-to-haves

Write two short lists and keep them tight. This speeds up pricing and keeps decisions cleaner.

Must-haves (non-negotiables)	Nice-to-haves (if it fits the range)
• ______________________	• ______________________
• ______________________	• ______________________
• ______________________	• ______________________
• ______________________	• ______________________

Idea spark checklists (pick the ones that fit)

Kitchen: Layout changes; cabinet type; counter material; lighting; ventilation hood; appliance sizes.

Bathroom: Tub vs shower; waterproofing approach; heated floor; vanity storage; ventilation.

Basement: Bathroom rough-in; egress window; insulation plan; sound control; storage.

Addition: Foundation type; roofing tie-in; HVAC plan; window counts; exterior finishes.

Before you call anyone: Take photos of the space and write down what is staying. Pricing goes faster when contractors know what will not change.

3) Use three buckets, build a range, and add a smart cushion

The goal is clarity, not perfection. Build a low-to-high range so you can make decisions early and avoid surprise totals.

Budget bucket	What goes in it	Why it matters
Fixed work	Demo, framing, drywall, rough plumbing, rough electrical, HVAC changes	These costs show up even with basic finishes
Finish selections	Cabinets, counters, flooring, tile, fixtures, appliances, paint, trim	Taste and materials can move the number fast
Unknowns	Repairs, code updates, hidden damage, small redesigns	This is where plans usually drift

Quick example: cost figured in percentage of overall allowance (40% / 45% / 15%)

If your total remodel budget is $80,000:

- Fixed: $32,000
- Finishes: $36,000
- Unknowns: $12,000

Simple math

- Write down your best guess for each bucket (even if it is rough).
- Create a low and high range for each bucket.
- Add them up into a total low and total high.
- Add a contingency cushion.

A reasonable cushion often lands in the 10 to 20 percent range, depending on the home and scope. Use the higher end if your home is older, if you are moving plumbing, or if you suspect past DIY work behind the walls.

Want a second set of expert eyes?

Send us your must-haves + nice-to-haves and a few photos, and we'll help you clarify scope, budget range, and priorities.

Schedule a free 15-minute Discovery Call (scan the code below).

SCAN ME

A Free Guide by Prosper Craft Homes - Your Remodel Specialist