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When it comes to increasing the value of your home, modernizing a kitchen can return 80 percent to 130 percent of your investment, according to the National Kitchen and Bath Association. But many homeowners think improving the kitchen has to come with a hefty price tag. Not necessarily.

Cabinets are often the first thing people notice about a kitchen. Cabinets are also one of the easiest and most affordable kitchen features to update. And in most cases, you don't need to replace them. Just take a close look at your existing cabinet doors. Are they beyond repair, or do they still look good, but just a little outdated?

If they're still in good shape, simply sanding and applying a fresh coat of paint can make a huge difference. Take everything out of the cabinets and scrub them with a cleaner. Lightly sand down the wax, veneer, polish or previous paint, then fix any cracks or breaks with putty. Brush on primer paint and add any paint color, pattern or stencil you'd like. New hardware can also add flair to otherwise outdated cabinets. Cabinet

Safety Note: Children and Computers

Firewalls and parental controls prevent children from accessing explicit material on the Internet, but children can do more online than just view Web sites and search for information. Unsupervised, they can post personal contact information and interact with strangers. Though supervision is the best way to avoid these Internet hazards, be sure to remind your children of the following safety tips:

- Keep your identity private. Do not give your full name, mailing address, telephone number, name of your school or any other personal information.
- Never meet with someone you talk to online. If you feel it is appropriate to meet someone in person, discuss it with an adult and never go to the meeting by yourself.
- Never respond to e-mail, chat comments or newsgroup messages that are hostile, inappropriate or in any way make you feel uncomfortable.

Parents should follow these guidelines for keeping their kids safe on the Internet:

- Talk to your children about what

knobs, pulls and hinges come in all shapes and sizes, including antique copper, iron, aged bronze, polished brass, glass, stainless steel and more. But before purchasing any new hardware, carefully measure your existing hardware. Jot down sizes and the spaces between screws, which will eliminate the need to drill new holes in the cabinets.

If replacement is the only option, modular cabinets, available at most home improvement stores, can be an affordable alternative. You can save even more money if you install them yourself.

Source: [National Kitchen and Bath Association](#)

* DID YOU KNOW

The top five biggest renovating mistakes are: avoiding permits, setting an unrealistic budget, hiring the wrong contractor, taking on more than you can handle and overbuilding for your neighborhood.

Source: [HGTV](#)

they can and cannot do online.

- Place your computer in the family room or another open area of your home.
- Be open with kids and teens and encourage them to come to you if they encounter a problem online.
- Learn everything you can about the Internet.

fast fact >> >> >> >>
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The number of places in the United States named after the star of Thanksgiving LenoreSmith.com dinner: three.

Turkey,



Texas, is the most

populous, with 496 residents, followed by Turkey Creek, La. (357) and Turkey, N.C. (267).

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

Happy Thanksgiving!

Good on Paper

There's so much to consider when doing construction or renovating your home, from picking the right contractor and the best materials to managing costs and making design decisions. But don't forget one very important detail: building permits. Whether you need to obtain one depends on your locality and the type of work you'd like to do to your home, but in many cases, you risk fines, penalties or additional construction costs if you don't get one. Selling your house might also be more difficult if a building official determines you remodeled without a permit and demands you bring it up to



code.

How do you know if you need a permit for your project?

Before beginning a project, ask yourself these questions:

- Will my remodeling change the footprint of the house?
- Will I have to move a load-bearing wall?
- Will the roofline be altered?
- Will any new doors or windows be constructed?

If you answer yes to any of these, a building permit will likely be required. Other aesthetic projects, such as installing new floor coverings, replacing sink hardware, changing a countertop or replacing windows, but not altering the structure, don't generally require one. If you're uncertain or need more information, call your local permit office; someone there will help you assess your project and determine if you'll need a permit.

Source: *Wall Street Journal*



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Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home?

Please mention my name.

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