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## **TO UPGRADE OR NOT TO UPGRADE: THAT IS THE QUESTION**

### ***Tips on Selecting Upgrades that Make Sense***

*North Olmsted, Ohio* – You've found the perfect neighborhood, selected a home plan of your dreams and chosen a reputable builder. So, you think all the stress and decision-making in building a new home is over? Think again! There are so many ways to customize a home today and hundreds of upgrade options from which to choose. You want only the best, but you also want to ensure you can afford the choices you're making. Here are some tips for choosing features and upgrades for your home that make sense and won't break the bank.

According to Angie Stevens, Design Coordinator with Kopf Builders of Greater Cleveland, Ohio and an American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) member, there are several advantages to upgrading during the building process including customization, financial incentives, resale benefits and convenience.

### **Make the House Your Home**

One of the best reasons to include upgrades in your building plan is to incorporate your own style into the home. Whether you want a country look or a contemporary flair, the options you select will help convey that style throughout the house.

Another key reason for upgrading is adding more function and higher-end products. The standard refrigerator offered by the builder (often referred to as 'builder grade') may not give you the side-by-side style you prefer with crushed ice and cold water at your fingertips. And, you probably will not get the great spa like showering system with multiple body sprays and a large showerhead without spending more for an upgrade.

### **Save Money**

One major benefit of upgrading during the building process is rolling the cost of the upgrades into your mortgage loan. Although you may pay slightly more in taxes initially, upgrades can be paid off with your monthly house payment at a lower interest rate than if you took out a home equity loan in the future. In addition, most builders will include upgrades in your home warranty program.

### **Resale, Resale, Resale**

What you choose now can play a big role in determining the resale value of your home in the future. Name brand appliances and popular custom upgrades will appeal to potential buyers. Concentrate on rooms like the kitchen and master bath which buyers 'zero in on' when purchasing a home.

"For resale appeal, don't make choices that will date the interior of the home too quickly," said Stevens. "Spaces like the bedrooms, family room and basement should be versatile and neutral enough to accommodate a wide range of people and lifestyles."

### **Convenience**

If you decide to wait and upgrade after you move in, you'll have to deal with the disruption to your household. It is usually easier and more convenient to have the builder upgrade items during the construction process. Imagine the mess and hassle of living in the home, while a contractor rebuilds or reconstructs part of your bathroom or kitchen.

## **Upgrades That Make Sense**

Although there are countless areas of your home that can be upgraded, Stevens advises her customers to put money into the most-used areas of the home.

Some of the items to consider include faucets, flooring, appliances, countertops, cabinets and lighting.

### *Faucets*

“Given the choice between making a strictly cosmetic improvement, or upgrading to a better quality faucet, the faucet would probably be the wiser choice, particularly if you want to minimize replacement or repair costs over the long term” said Stevens.

In the kitchen, consider high-arc pullout spout model, like the Camerist™ faucet from Moen. This faucet has a classic look, a variety of finishes such as Chrome and Stainless Steel and a unique “pause” button that allows users to stop the water flow without turning off the water.

In the bathroom, style is the name of the game. Choose a bathroom faucet, such as the Vestige™ faucet from Moen that offers elaborate traditional styling in a host of finishes – including consumer-preferred Brushed Nickel – to complement your bath accessories.

### *Flooring*

Upgrading to a better grade will prolong the carpet’s life. With higher density carpets, dirt doesn’t break down the fibers as easily, meaning the carpet will be less likely to show traffic areas. Upgrading can also provide more options such as a Berber or textured carpet.

It also makes sense to upgrade the sheet or hardwood flooring in high traffic areas of the home like the kitchen or utility room. Choosing vinyl with a polyurethane coating will provide more of a “wear layer” with longer-lasting beauty. Flooring upgrades increase the value of the home while guaranteeing durability.

### *Appliances*

According to Stevens, most people today are asking their builders to upgrade to glass-top ranges, quieter dishwashers and built-in microwaves with a ventilation feature installed over their range. Some new home buyers are also opting for double ovens or new convection ovens that can cook food faster.

### *Countertops*

Granite countertops are one of the most common upgrades in the kitchen. But, if the budget won't allow, Stevens suggests adding a beveled edge to the builder-grade laminate countertops. This provides an upscale look, but won't break the budget.

### *Cabinets*

Cabinet upgrades give home buyers the option of solid wood doors rather than veneer and also allow for stylish features such as raised panel doors or a Shaker style. Also, cabinets like the Diamond line from MasterBrand provide plenty of functional features inside the cabinet including pullout shelves, lid organizers, cutlery dividers, spice racks and wine glass holders.

### *Lighting & Technology*

Stevens encourages clients to wire for lighting if they are even considering adding a fixture to a room in the future. It is always easier to wire during the building process and then cap it off rather than add a fixture after the house is built. Some upgrades to consider include ceiling fans, recessed or track lighting and under-cabinet lighting. Also, wire for technology with Internet accessibility throughout the house as well as cable, fax and surround sound capabilities.

For more information about Moen products visit [moen.com](http://moen.com) or call 1-800-BUY MOEN (1-800-289-6636).

**EDITORS NOTE:** Timeless designs that reflect good taste. Faucets and fixtures that are livable and enduring. These are just some of the reasons why Moen Incorporated is the #1 brand of faucet in North America. In addition to stylish and affordable faucets, Moen also offers residential and commercial sinks and a full range of tub and showering packages. Moen brands include ShowHouse™ by Moen, Creative Specialties International® and the Cleveland Faucet Group®. ShowHouse offers high-end, luxury faucets and accessories to consumers with discriminating tastes. Creative Specialties International® offers complete suites of decorative bath accessories including innovative bath safety products that are fashionable – not institutional. The Cleveland Faucet Group manufactures affordable, durable sinks and faucets for the multi-family housing market.

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