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What I Learned the Hard Way About DIY Home Projects (So You Don't Have To)

Our Friends · Monday, April 28th, 2025

There's something really tempting about the idea of doing it yourself – DIY. You scroll through social media, see someone completely transform their laundry room over a weekend, and think, “Yeah, I could totally do that.”

That's exactly how my last attempt at [DIY home projects](#) started. Spoiler: it didn't go the way I imagined.

Turns out, I'm far from alone. A recent survey by West Shore Home asked 1,000 homeowners about their DIY experiences, and let's just say—I felt seen.

The Budget That Blew Up

My original plan was simple: update the guest bathroom without hiring anyone. I figured with some paint, new fixtures, and maybe a peel-and-stick backsplash, I'd come in under \$500.

Fast-forward two weeks, and I'd already passed that mark—without even getting to the flooring.

According to the survey, 48% of homeowners said their project cost more than expected, and I totally get why. I didn't budget for tools. I didn't plan for the fact that I'd mess up the faucet install (twice). And like 35% of the survey respondents, I ended up hiring someone to fix my “fix.”

Time Is Not on Your Side

If you're a working parent or just someone with a life outside of house projects, this one might hit home: DIY takes time. And it's never the amount you *think* it'll take.

West Shore Home's survey found that over 78% of people said their project took longer than planned. I aimed for a weekend. It turned into a month of after-dinner touch-ups and late-night cleanup. I was exhausted. And yeah, my kid asked at one point if we were “still under construction.”

The Stress Is Real

No one tells you how stressful this stuff can be. You second-guess every decision. Is that the right grout? Will this paint dry darker? Should I have just left the old sink alone?

The survey showed that 40% of DIYers felt anxious during their project, and honestly, that tracks. I found myself lying awake wondering if I'd accidentally glued something backward or ruined the subfloor.

It wasn't the end of the world, but it definitely wasn't relaxing.

Social Media Set Me Up

I love a good makeover reel as much as anyone, but I've learned to take them with a grain of salt. The West Shore Home survey said 46% of people felt social media made DIY look easier than it actually is—and that stat should probably be higher.

You don't see the mistakes, the budget creeping up, or the meltdown in aisle 9 when you realize you bought the wrong tile *again*. You just see the perfect final shot and a caption that says "weekend glow-up."

What I'd Do Differently Next Time

I'm not here to say you should never attempt DIY home projects. Some people absolutely crush it. But I've learned to be a little more honest with myself about what I can take on—and when it's better to call in a pro.

Here's what I'd change:

- Build in extra budget for mistakes and tools.
- Double the time estimate (then add a little more).
- Ask for help sooner rather than later.
- Stop trusting every influencer who says, "This was so easy!"

The survey from West Shore Home was a reminder that I'm not the only one who's run into trouble. And that made me feel a little less defeated.

DIY home projects aren't a bad idea—but they're also not a shortcut. They're work. So if you're diving in, just know what you're really getting into.

Photo at top: [Blue Bird via Pexels](#)

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