

1. **What is our schedule?** A schedule is more than just a start and end date. Having a schedule that outlines tasks and timing will give you a big-picture view of sequencing and deadlines for things such as windows and stucco. It will also give you a benchmark so that you know if things are slipping by a day or two.
2. **Who will be here every day?** Depending on the size and structure of the company you hire, the answer could vary widely. Many remodelers use a lead construction system, where a staff member (sometimes called a superintendent) is responsible for day-to-day work on site, and often swings a hammer as well. Ask your contractor direct questions about who will supervise employees and subcontractors on site and who to call on a daily basis with any questions.
3. **How will you protect my property?** This is a conversation best had before demolition, not after you come home and find dust all over the house. There are a number of dust-containment measures that can be taken, and talking about it ahead of time will provide you with a clear idea of how the construction area will be cordoned off from the rest of your home and how you'll be able to move through your house.

There's also the issue of stuff — **all the books, furniture, drapes, delicate vases and paintings on the wall.** It's helpful to remove them all from **the construction zone**. This includes anything hung on walls or sitting on shelves in adjacent rooms, since they can shake loose from persistent hammering. If you leave them as-is, it will cost to have them moved and moved again to keep them out of the way, and you risk damage in the process. It's better to move it all at once and know it's safe and sound.

4. **How will you communicate with me?** With every mode of electronic communication at your fingertips, you may have some ideas about how you would like to receive information about your project. Your contractor likely has specific ways he or she likes to communicate, too — daily emails, cloud-based schedules or maybe just phone calls. Make sure you understand how you will be contacted and receive information. If the contractor's format doesn't give you what you think you'll need, agree on a method and format so that you're not in remodeling limbo on a daily basis. **Weekly meetings at a specific time are an effective way to make sure you see your contractor in person to get your questions answered.**
5. **What part of my project concerns you?** There's always something unknown about a project, or an area that is most likely to trigger an immediate change order. Odds are, your contractor already knows what that is. Talking about it upfront and running some worst-case-scenario numbers or doing some early, selective demolition to get more information could be the best way to get a handle on what may be ahead.
6. **What will happen if there is a change order?** Change orders can be easily handled in your construction contract. A common way to document change orders is in writing, where the change in scope of work and the price are noted and signed by the client and contractor. Some contracts also note the change in

schedule, if applicable. Make sure you have a plan in place to document the unexpected and expected changes that happen along the way.

7. **How will you let me know I need to make a decision?** There are many ways to organize a list of decisions — from spreadsheets, to lists, to notes on a calendar. But all of these methods focus on the same outcome: giving you clear direction about what and when you need to make a decision on something. Asking for a list and deadlines will help you keep organized and ensure you are able to shop for materials and make decisions in time to meet your contractor's schedule.
8. **How do I reach you after hours?** Knowing how to reach your contractor on an emergency basis is just as important as your contractor being able to reach you. Exchange all your numbers — work, cell and landline — so that contacting each other won't be a crisis in itself.
9. **When do I need to be available to meet?** Even if you set up a regular weekly meeting, there may still be necessary additional meetings. We usually schedule a walk-through on the day the siding is removed and so that everyone can review any unforeseen damage and/or additional repairs needed. Another key day is when the finish or paint goes on to ensure you are happy with the color and/or texture.
10. **What kind of documentation will I receive when the project is done?** Contracts frequently call out end-of-project paperwork — lien releases, marked-up plans with as-builts on plumbing and other utilities, copies of inspection reports, etc. But there may be additional items you will find valuable: a full set of mechanical photos before insulation is installed, the operating manuals for installed equipment (and a personal lesson in their operation if you don't know the basics), a list of subcontractors and contact info, care for things such as windows and doors. Confirming that you will receive these things before you get started will help ensure that you finish the project with all the information you need.