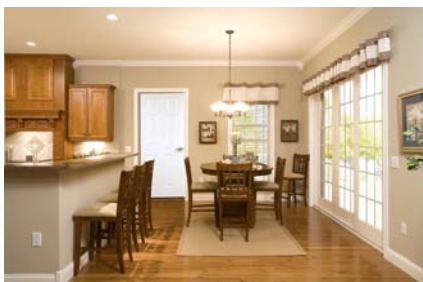


Staying Within Budget on Your New Home



You've made the decision that you want to build the home of your dreams. You know the size of the house you want, you know where you want to build and you've talked to a lender about a home construction loan. Now it's time to get a handle of all the costs that will be involved. Determining a budget should be completed at the beginning of the process, even if it's an estimate.

Once you review your budget, it's important to use the following process to stay on track:

- Identify your priorities. If you want a certain countertop, put that on your "must have" list.
- If an item on your "must have" list is more expensive than you thought it would be, you might want to eliminate it or trade that second fireplace in to get the countertops you want.
- Complete a cost/benefit analysis. Will the feature add to your family life or overall appearance of your home? Are these features worth the cost?

Also keep in mind that land, lot improvements (such as clearing trees and rocks), permits, septic, power, water, landscaping, and/or driveway factor into your budget. Remember when your home is completed, you might be moving into a bigger home than you currently have, requiring you to buy more furniture, appliances, curtains, decorative pieces, and so on, so factor these costs into your budget.