



HOME IMPROVEMENT

## Finishing Your Basement? Avoid These 7 Common Blunders to Take Your Space to the Next Level

By Jamie Wiebe | Jan 16, 2019



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The idea of finishing a basement can inspire the greatest of possibilities: Extra space for that pool table you've always wanted! Rooms (galore) for the kids to play! A place to host the ultimate Super Bowl bash that won't leave your living room in shambles!

And then, of course, there's the added resale value. It's a costly project, indeed; in 2017, the average cost to remodel a basement was over \$70,000—but homeowners *also* reported a 70% return on investment, according to Remodeling Magazine's [annual Cost vs. Value report](#).

That's perhaps why finished basements have become one of the most popular remodeling jobs over the past 20 years, according to the National Association of Home Builders, with [nearly a quarter of contractors](#) surveyed reporting requests for such a renovation in 2017.

But if you're going to sink that kind of money into a home renovation, you sure as heck want to do it right. These are the most common finished basement blunders—and they're all easily avoidable.

### 3. Forgetting that the basement is still part of your home

On a related note: "The biggest mistake people make in a basement is not treating it like the rest of the home, and not giving it the same amount of attention as the upstairs," says **Leslie Bowman**, the founder and design director of Chicago interior design studio [The Design Bar](#). "Elevate the space to avoid that traditionally 'scary' ambiance."

To make the basement welcoming, Bowman recommends creating separate spaces—like a crafting nook, a TV corner, and a cozy office to make the floor plan feel "more purposeful," she says.

And you don't have to put up walls to divide the basement: open bookshelves or folding room dividers allow light to flood the space.

### 6. Clinging to the wet bar

When you think of a classic tricked-out basement, chances are you're imagining a sweet wet bar with a built-in Kegerator, plenty of shelving for all the liquor you plan to stock up on, and bar stools galore.

"While very popular, every basement does not need a built-out bar," Bowman says.

Here's how to know if your basement is one of the few: Will you entertain guests at your fancy wet bar *often*, or once in a blue moon? If it's the latter, consider alternate entertaining areas.

Bowman recommends arranging chairs and sofas around a bar cart or cabinet.

"This is a much more comfortable than sitting at a bar on hard stools," she says.