

HomeStars

2021 *Reno Report*



Prepared By Shir Magen

Executive Summary

Welcome to the third annual HomeStars Reno Report!

Conceived in 2019, our Reno Reports are designed to gauge Canadian homeowner attitudes and behaviours towards renovations, motivations, trends, popular jobs, spending and more. This year, we surveyed Canadian homeowners who had completed home renovations since the beginning of COVID-19 and the findings were contrary to previously released reports.

It was widely [reported](#)¹ that the pandemic lockdowns influenced the types of renovation projects that homeowners took on in 2021 -- expanding or adapting homes for better work, education and enjoyment spaces; however, our survey found that only 32% of surveyed homeowners were motivated to renovate due to COVID-19. Most homeowners, 68%, said that COVID-19 was not the major reason for renovating. The strongest motivation to renovate was to improve the overall aesthetics in their homes.

Our [COVID-19 edition Reno Report 2020](#)² noted that outdoor renovations led, while this year we've noticed a distinct shift to indoor renovations. And the top job changed as well this year. Instead of bathrooms which took the number one spot in 2020, we are seeing a return to 2019's most popular job, interior painting. This was followed by installation of new appliances, unsurprising with the increased use at home. Now in the second year of the pandemic, we are seeing a change back to pre-COVID attitudes toward our homes and how we use and invest in them.

Canadian homeowners have continued to spend on renovations and a healthy 81% had the cash on hand to do home improvement projects. According to [Statistics Canada's latest data on residential renovations](#)³, spending on renovations from February 2021 to June 2021 jumped 66%, likely due to the fact that Canadians were spending more time at home and less money travelling than in the past. Our survey found that Canadian homeowners are likely to maintain the same level of spending in the next 12 months, despite a worldwide pandemic and supply chain disruption that caused material shortages and [price surges](#)⁴ earlier in the year.



Only 35% of respondents this year said they postponed some renovation plans due to cost of materials.

We also had some interesting provincial findings. Regionally, homeowners in Ontario spent the most on renovations during COVID-19, with those in Atlantic Canada closely at its heels. During COVID-19, Albertans spent the least on renovations, whereas back in 2019 they were most likely to have done larger projects over \$50,000. In terms of future spending, Ontarians are again projected to spend the most on renovations in the next 12 months.

On the subject of trust, our Reno Report found that the majority of Canadian homeowners (69%) hired a professional to do renovations since the beginning of COVID-19. Earlier this year, we surveyed our homeowner base and found over [98% of Canadian homeowners read reviews⁵](#) before making a purchasing decision. This time spent on research likely contributed to the strong consumer confidence we have seen, with 65% of homeowners who hired a professional confident they had been charged a fair price.

Canadian homeowners are likely to maintain the same level of spending in the next 12 months

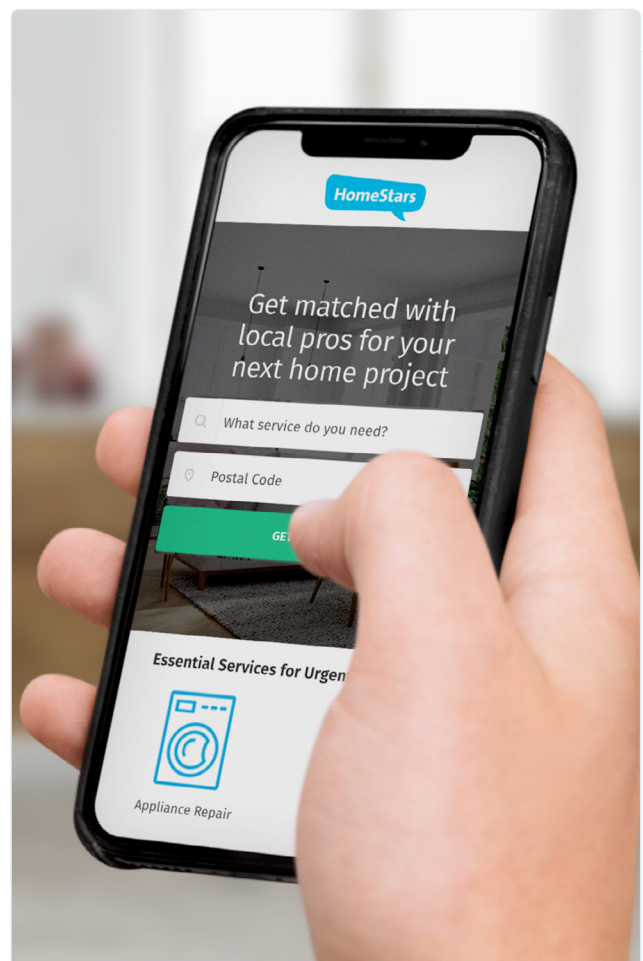
Hiring throughout the pandemic means, more than ever, that homeowners need to have trustworthy and reputable professionals working in their homes. While off-line resources like word of mouth are still a popular way to hire, researching home service pros on HomeStars empowers homeowners to make informed hiring decisions. Using reviews, ratings and verification, homeowners can ensure a better renovation experience.

Read on for more fascinating details on how much was spent, top projects, regional differences, fantasy renovations, and looking ahead to the next 12 months. Enjoy!

From our home to yours,



Shir Magen
CEO of HomeStars



Key Findings

- ✓ Of the Canadian homeowners we surveyed who completed renovations during COVID-19, 94% took on indoor renovations while 66% of respondents did outdoor renovations during the pandemic.
- ✓ Only 32% said COVID-19 influenced their decision to renovate, while 68% said they renovated for other reasons.
- ✓ Most respondents say their biggest motivation to renovate, at 58%, was to “refresh” the look and feel/improve the aesthetic.
- ✓ Tied for second place with 35% of respondents each was fixing the small jobs/wear and tear as a result of staying at home more and renovating to improve their outdoor space.
- ✓ 81% of respondents had the cash on hand to fund their renovations during COVID-19.
- ✓ When we asked respondents what their fantasy reno would be if cost or space were not an issue, most (40%) chose an outdoor cabana with full chef’s kitchen.
- ✓ 35% postponed renovation plans due to the high cost of materials.

Looking Ahead

- ✓ Among those who already renovated during COVID-19, 77% plan to do interior renovations and 51% of respondents plan to do exterior renovations in the next 12 months.
- ✓ Canadian homeowners who plan to renovate in the next 12 months expect to spend, on average, the same amount of money as those who renovated since the beginning of the pandemic. This applies to both indoor and outdoor renovations.

Top Jobs during COVID-19

During the second wave of COVID-19 last fall, our 2020 Reno Report showed that the majority (80%) of Canadian respondents were still planning to take on home projects despite the pandemic. The Canadian homeowners we surveyed then, while initially cautious when it came to having service professionals in their homes, were still spending on home improvement -- primarily outdoor projects and repairs around the home, with only one fifth of those surveyed doing larger projects.

Now into the pandemic's fourth wave our 2021 Reno Report found that, once again, we've gone back inside with interior painting taking the top spot with 39% of respondents indicating they've made this home improvement since COVID-19. This is mostly unchanged from pre-COVID where a third of respondents were planning on painting in the year ahead. As a relatively straightforward way to transform your living space, it's understandable why this job continues to be popular among homeowners. This is a great example of "refreshing" the look/feel of a space, in line with 58% of respondents who were motivated to renovate by improving the aesthetic of their homes.

Among the respondents there was a noticeable divide among the age bases surveyed, with the younger respondents (23-34) most likely to have done interior painting at 53%, compared to the oldest age group (those 55+) who were least likely at 35%.

The second most popular job was 23% of respondents having new appliances installed. This trend in appliance purchasing spiked last fall with record demand leading to [shortages across the country](#).⁶

Coming in a close third was one of the larger jobs, bathroom renovations, at 21%.

Bathroom renovations have continued to explode in popularity since the start of the pandemic with service requests on HomeStars showing a 113% increase from January 1 to July 31, 2019 compared to the same time in 2021. Bathrooms are a relatively quick and easy renovation because they are often smaller square footage and come with a high intrinsic value as a place to relax and enjoy, not to mention great for resale value.

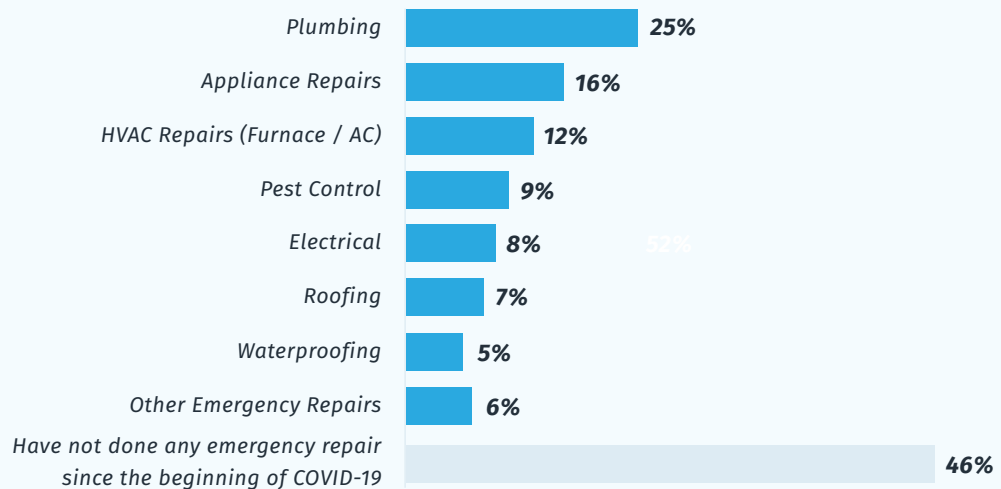


Emergency Repairs

Not surprisingly, over half of respondents (54%) had to do at least 1 emergency repair since COVID-19 with plumbing being the most popular response, followed by appliance repair. While emergency repairs are standard for homeowners, the number is likely higher due to the amount of time we were spending at home and daily wear and tear during the pandemic. We've also had more time to research, hire and supervise those smaller repairs that were previously difficult to schedule around a work day.

Emergency Repairs Since COVID-19

(Amongst those surveyed)



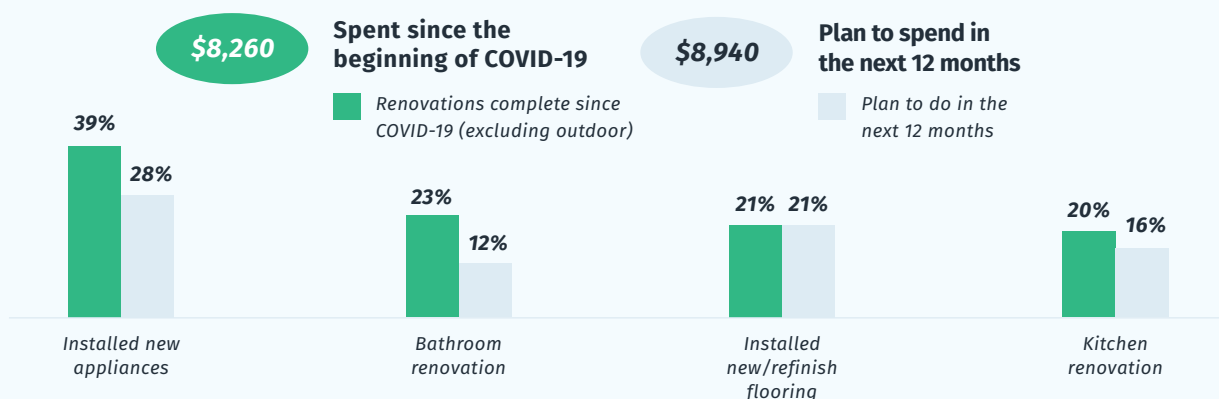
\$\$\$: How much did Canadians spend and where did they get the funds?

We know what jobs Canadian homeowners are taking on, but what did these improvements cost them? Across Canada, the average spend for all renovations since COVID-19 (both indoor and outdoor) was \$10,860.

Despite common belief, indoor renovations still led outdoor renovations, even during the pandemic and the average amount spent on completed indoor renovations since the beginning of COVID-19 was \$8,260.

Indoor Renovation Average Spend

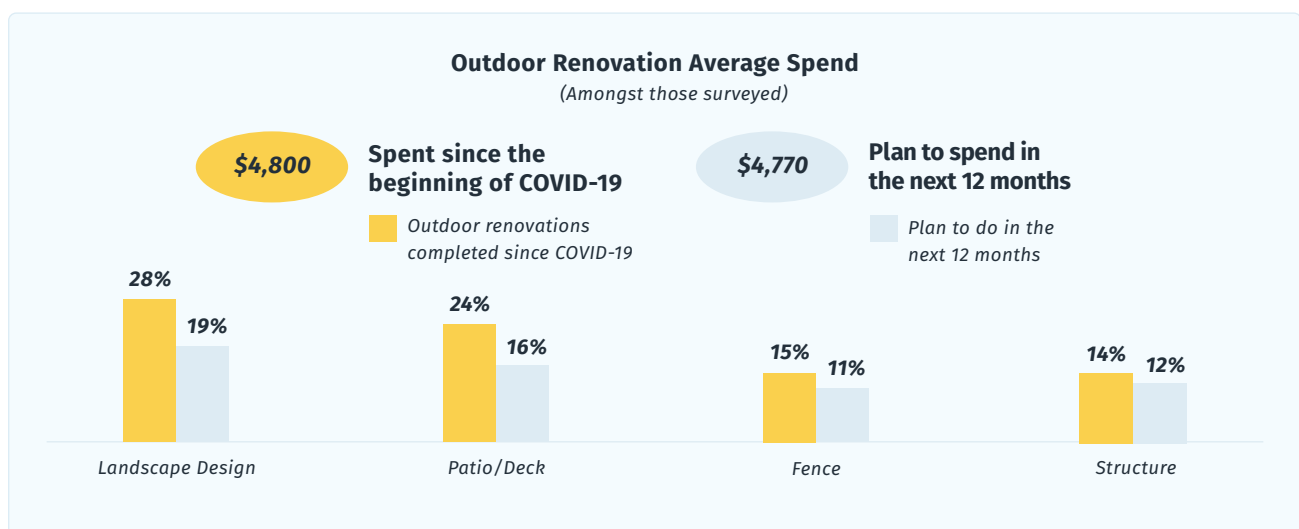
(Amongst those surveyed)



When it came to outdoor spaces, the average amount spent on yard and landscaping renovations since the beginning of COVID-19 was close to half the amount of interior jobs at \$4,800.

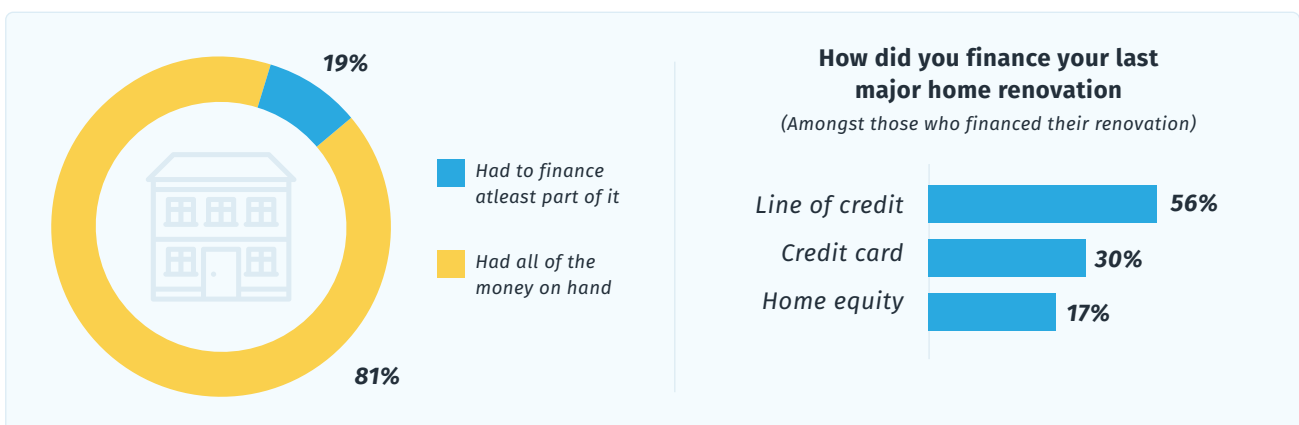
In regards to future renovations (in the next 12 months), Canadian homeowners were holding firm on their budgets with a slight increase of planned total renovation spending of \$11,030 with an average of \$8,940 on indoor renovations and \$4,770 on outdoor spaces.

Over a third of survey respondents (35%) chose to postpone their renovation plans due to the increased cost of materials, which was widely reported. According to Statistics Canada, prices for lumber and other wood products increased by 27.9% from the first to second quarter of 2021. This price surge was due to a combination of ongoing supply chain constraints, high demand and low interest rates. [Prices have decreased substantially²](#) since then and this will likely fuel the fire for future renovations, with prices coming into line with pre-COVID levels.



Interestingly, the majority of surveyed homeowners, 4-in-5 (81%) had cash on hand to fund their home improvement projects, as compared to 2019 where 77% of respondents had the cash on hand. This was likely due to the fact that many Canadians were not travelling as much since the beginning of COVID-19 and therefore used their vacation budgets.

Of the 19% of homeowners who financed their home improvements, more than half (56%) used a line of credit. The second and third most popular option was using a credit card at 30% and a home equity loan at 17%.



Country Renovations

A Look at Regional Trends

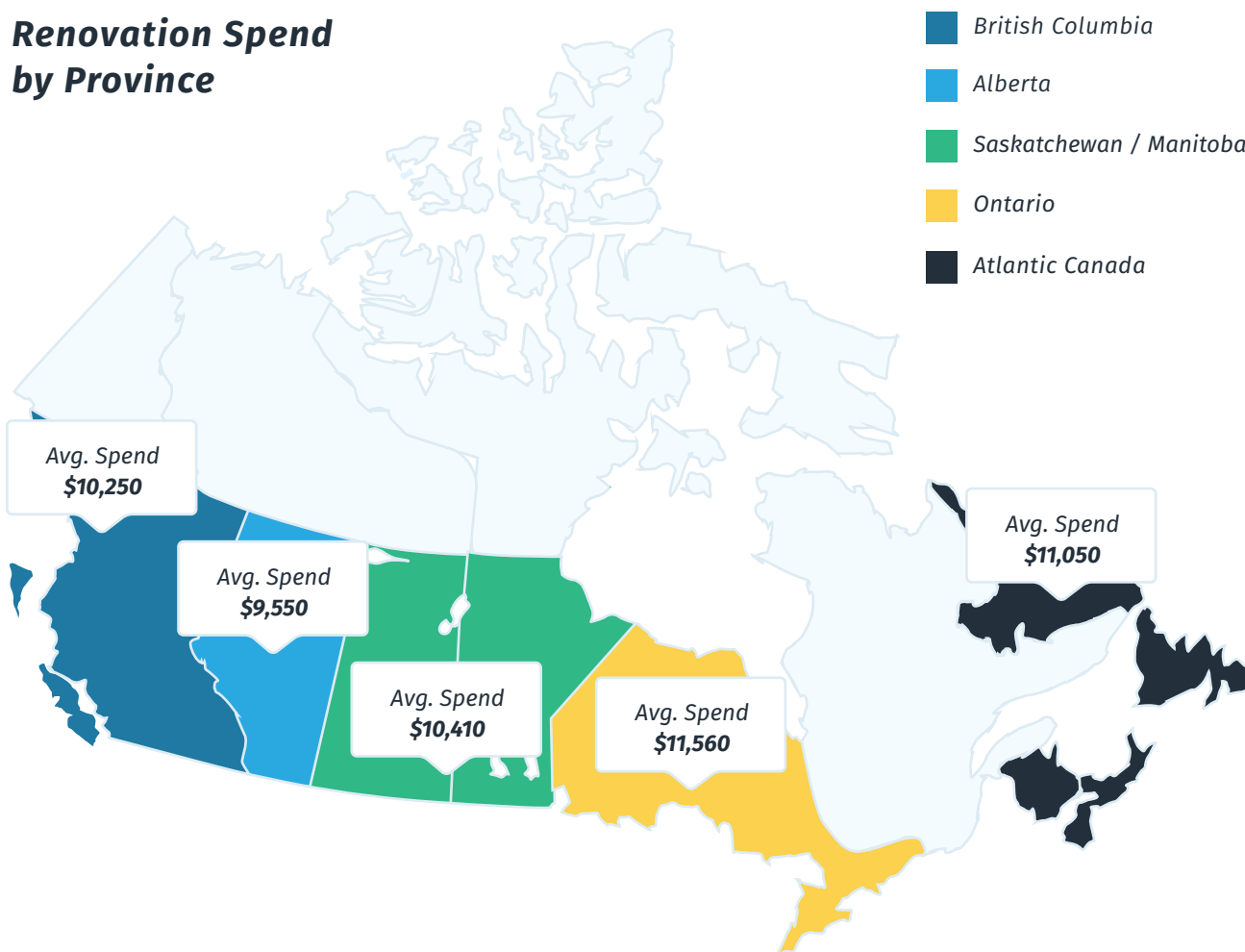
The most popular home renovation was painting the interior, for all regions, and the most popular outdoor renovation was landscape design, followed by patios and decks.

Nationally, the average spend on total renovations since the beginning of COVID-19 (indoor and outdoor) was \$10,860. Ontario spent the most on renovations at \$11,560. Alberta, on the other hand, spent the least at \$9,550 which was noteworthy considering in [2019 Albertans were the highest renovation spenders with the highest percentage of renovations over \\$50,000⁸](#).

Having an income property was most popular among homeowners in British Columbia where one fifth (21%) of respondents owned an income property. Despite inflated home prices the desire to invest in real estate has not slowed.

Check out the infographic below to see how the provinces compared when it came to renovation spend during COVID-19, planned spend (next 12 months), most popular renos after interior painting, as well as fantasy renovations.

Renovation Spend by Province





Ontario

- Spent an average of \$11,560 on all renovations (indoor and outdoor)
- Planning to spend \$11,490
- Top fantasy reno: Outdoor cabana with full chef's kitchen (45%)
- Second most popular indoor job: bathroom renovation



Alberta

- Spent an average of \$9,550 on all renovations (indoor and outdoor)
- Planning to spend \$10,750
- Top fantasy reno: Fitness centre (41%)
- Second most popular indoor job: basement renovation



British Columbia

- Spent an average of \$10,250 on all renovations (indoor and outdoor)
- Planning to spend \$10,690
- Top fantasy reno: Outdoor cabana with full chef's kitchen (40%)
- Second most popular indoor job: installed new appliances



Saskatchewan/Manitoba

- Spent an average of \$10,410 on all renovations (indoor and outdoor)
- Planning to spend \$10,890
- Top fantasy reno: Resort-style outdoor pool with waterslide (45%)
- Second most popular indoor job: bathroom renovation



Atlantic Canada

- Spent an average of \$11,050 on all renovations (indoor and outdoor)
- Planning to spend \$9,980
- Top fantasy reno: Indoor pool/sauna (37%)
- Second most popular indoor job: installed new appliances

Going Green

Sustainability and Renovations

Sustainability has been growing in interest and importance among Canadians consumers in a wide range of industries and home improvement is no exception. For renovating homeowners, the overwhelming majority (80%) indicated that sustainability is important to them when choosing building materials for renovations and making renovation decisions.

Of the homeowners who have renovated since the beginning of COVID-19, 56% used green products in their renovations. The most popular being energy efficient appliances at 29%, followed by low VOC paint at 27%. An energy efficient furnace rounded out the third spot at 14%.

What does it cost to go green?

According to [Energyrates.ca](https://www.energystar.ca)⁹, prices can range from \$50 for an energy-efficient air purifier to over \$1,000 for an energy-efficient refrigerator. They stress that buying energy-efficient appliances, like Energy Star-certified products, doesn't mean you will pay more. Now factor in the long-term reduction in your energy bills and you and you've got a winning combination for your home and the environment!

Buildings, including our homes, are responsible for 18% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions so the government launched a new program this spring to help make Canadian homes more energy-efficient. The [Canada Greener Homes Grants](#)¹⁰ program, worth \$2.6 billion over the next seven years, allows homeowners to get up to \$5,000 for energy-efficient retrofits to their primary homes, as well as another \$600 to help with home energy evaluations.

Get Smart: Incorporating technology into our homes

Smart homes are no longer something you just see in the movies, as Canadians have really embraced the trend of using technology to improve and simplify life at home. Whether it's to preserve energy, boost your home's security or have the conveniences of a digital assistant just a few words away.

Of the homeowners surveyed, over two thirds (68%), have at least one smart home technology device. The most popular devices were a smart home thermostat at 37%, internet-based home assistant (i.e. Google, Alexa etc.) at 32% and motion/alarm sensors at 26%.

To get a sense of what you might pay for these smart home products, visit [here](#).

Living the Good Life

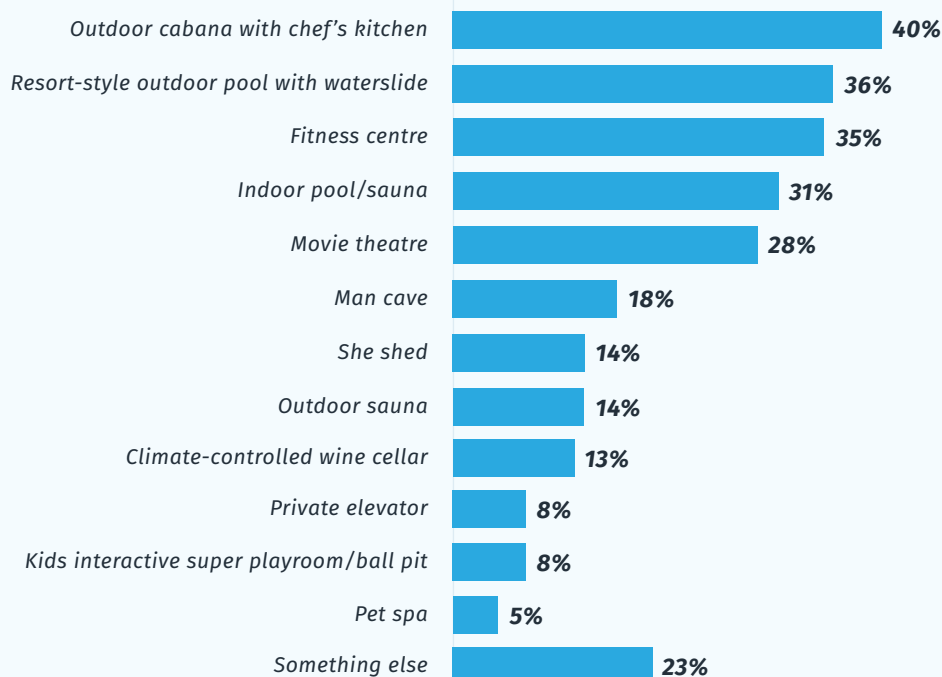
Top Fantasy Renovations

We might not all live like celebrities, but we can dream! When asked what their fantasy renovation would be (if money and space was not an issue), the number one choice by Canadian homeowners was an outdoor cabana with a full chef's kitchen. It's safe to say there are many foodies among us! Second place was a resort-style outdoor pool with waterslide, followed closely by a fitness centre.

Ironically, the difference between fantasy and real life was vast when it came to fitness space. When homeowners were asked to share their strongest motivation for renovating since COVID-19, creating a home fitness space actually ranked very low at just 4%.

Top Fantasy Renovations in Canada

(Amongst those surveyed)



Of those who chose 'Something else' submissions included a wood panelled library, a multi-car garage to house car collection, bowling alley, games room, greenhouse and an indoor golf simulator.

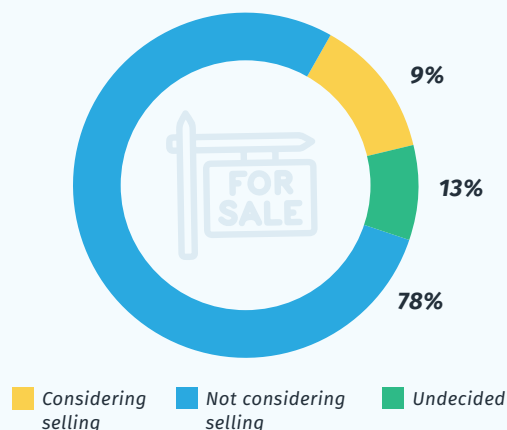
Should we stay or should we go?

Among the homeowners, all of whom had done renovations since the beginning of COVID-19, only 18% said they'd bought or sold a property. Of those, 84% of homeowners who bought a home during COVID-19 either renovated or plan to renovate the home they purchased.

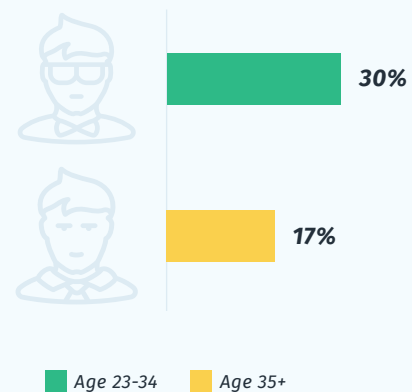
Interestingly, only 9% of respondents are considering selling their primary home in the next 12 months. Ironically, this was the exact same percentage of those surveyed in the 2019 HomeStars Reno Report who planned to move in the next 12 months. The real estate market in the fall of 2019 was flattening at the time, so this could perhaps provide a [glimpse of the market to come](#)¹¹ this fall of 2021.

Among surveyed homeowners who bought a primary home during COVID-19, the youngest age group (23-34 years old) led the charge by far at 30%. Among the older age groups, 35-54 year olds and 55+, only 10% and 7% purchased a primary residence.

Homeowners considering selling their primary home
(in the next 12 months)

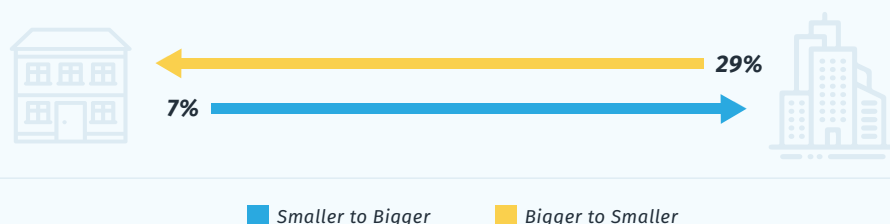


Age of Homeowners who bought a home during COVID-19
(Amongst those surveyed)



There is a notable trend of moving from more densely populated areas such as urban centres to suburbs, smaller towns or rural areas. This was widely reported during the past 18 months as working from home became our new reality. Of those who purchased a home, 29% moved from bigger to smaller population centers while only 7% moved from smaller to bigger population centers.

Moved from smaller to bigger population centres
(of those who purchased a home)



Hiring for Home Improvements: Reviews and Trust

When it comes to hiring home service professionals, the vast majority of Canadians are also doing their due diligence. A recent survey by HomeStars of their homeowner base revealed that [98% of Canadian homeowners read reviews](#) ¹² before making a purchasing decision.

In regards to who was physically doing home improvements since COVID-19, over two-thirds (69%) of Canadian homeowners hired professionals for their projects. The projects they hired professionals for were primarily indoor (45%) - jobs inside or connected to the home like bathrooms and roofs or gutters. This was followed by emergency repairs (32%). Interestingly, Canadians were least likely to hire a professional for outdoor work at 21%. COVID-19 has transformed the way we use our outdoor space; in many cases it has become a true extension of our living space. A trusted professional will ensure all work is done safely and correctly. Whatever the means of finding a pro, homeowners are encouraged to always look at reputable places (like HomeStars.com) to verify the professional's reputation, credentials, level of service and prior work.

Cost is a major driver in decision-making on home projects. According to the survey, 44% of homeowners tend to put off starting home projects when they don't know how much they will cost. But the outlook was positive for those who hired a professional, with almost two-thirds (65%) feeling either somewhat or very confident they were charged a fair price for the job.



How HomeStars is different

You may already know that HomeStars is the place to connect with, verify and compare home service professionals and to help empower Canadian homeowners to hire confidently. Homeowners can also use HomeStars to research cost information to assist with planning any kind of home project.

On HomeStars you can research and read more than 700,000 vetted reviews. Reviews influence how we purchase goods and services, yet we learned through the findings of this homeowner survey that only 9% of respondents were aware of websites that vetted reviews by humans and not by machines. Our Integrity Team checks and verifies every single submitted review before it is published. Because the reviews are vetted by humans using strict criteria, roughly 20% of reviews are never published.

Our Star Score also ranks companies out of five based on a number of factors; including overall rating, review recency, reputation and responsiveness. As an additional safeguard, our verification system means that home service professionals undergo criminal and credit checks as well as licensing reviews.

Editor's Note

For purposes of the survey, indoor renovations refers to renovations that are connected to the physical structure of the home itself, including additions, eaves and roofs. Outdoor renovations refer to landscaping, fences, decks and any other outdoor improvements.

Methodology

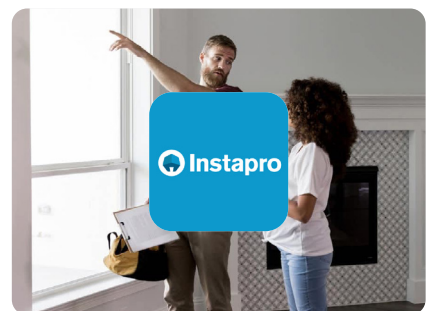
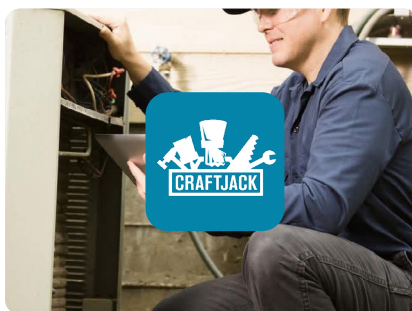
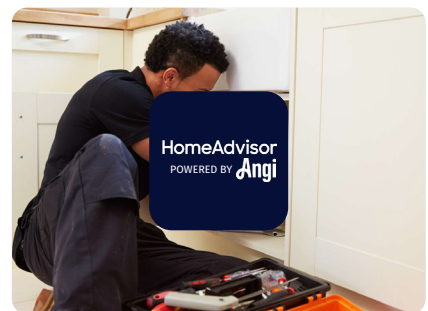
These are the findings of a survey conducted by HomeStars from July 19 to 24, 2021 with a sample of 1,103 online Canadian homeowners in English Canada aged 23 years old or older who completed at least one home maintenance, repair or major home improvement project for their home since the beginning of COVID-19. All respondents are members of the Angus Reid Forum. The survey was conducted in English. All prices in Canadian dollars.

About the Angus Reid Forum

The Angus Reid Forum is Canada's most well-known and trusted online public opinion community consisting of engaged residents across the country who answer surveys on topical issues that matter to all Canadians.

About HomeStars

HomeStars is Canada's largest online marketplace connecting homeowners with trusted home service professionals. In 2020, 9 million homeowners visited HomeStars looking for a pro for their next home improvement project. HomeStars was created in 2006 to help homeowners make better hiring decisions. HomeStars is based in Toronto, Ontario, and is an operating business of Angi, Inc. (NASDAQ: ANGI). To learn more, visit @HomeStars on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.



Sources

¹ **How the Pandemic has Inspired Canadians to Rethink “HOME” - RBC:**

<https://discover.rbcroyalbank.com/how-the-pandemic-has-inspired-canadians-to-rethink-home/>

² **Reno Report 2020 - HomeStars:**

<https://go.homestars.com/reno-report-2020>

³ **Add/Remove data - Government of Canada, Statistics Canada:**

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=3410017501>

⁴ **Spiking construction material costs impacting builders - Ontario Construction News:**

<https://ontarioconstructionnews.com/spiking-construction-material-costs-impacting-builders-delaying-projects-across-ontario-2/>

⁵ **HomeStars 2021 Review Behaviour Survey: A Deeper Look at the Data - HomeStars Pro Center:**

<https://homestars.com/pro-centre/2021-review-behaviour-survey-deeper/>

⁶ **‘Whoever has stock right now is king:’ Surging appliance sales cause shortages - CTV News:**

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/business/whoever-has-stock-right-now-is-king-surging-appliance-sales-cause-shortages-1.5134488>

⁷ **‘Unprecedented collapse’ in lumber prices - Financial Post:**

<https://financialpost.com/commodities/lumber-prices-collapse-forces-sawmill-production-curb/wcm/b85241f6-791a-4072-98ae-6d369bc7cd90/amp/>

⁸ **Reno Report 2019 - HomeStars:**

<https://homestars.com/reno-report-2019/>

⁹ **Compare Electricity and Natural Gas Rates - Energy Rates:**

<http://energyrates.ca/>

¹⁰ **Canada Greener Homes Grants: News, Videos & Articles - Global News:**

<https://globalnews.ca/tag/Canada-Greener-Homes-Grants>

¹¹ **Posthaste: Looks like Canada’s hot, hot housing market has peaked - Financial Post:**

<https://financialpost.com/executive/executive-summary/posthaste-looks-like-canadas-hot-hot-housing-market-has-peaked-earlier-than-expected>

¹² **HomeStars 2021 Review Behaviour Survey - A Deeper Look at the Data:**

<https://homestars.com/pro-centre/2021-review-behaviour-survey-deeper/>

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