

[7 Home Plan Money Saving Tips + the 4 Basic House Styles](#)

If you plan to build your new house from a house plan, please observe the following tips for saving yourself money.

- 1) If you want to expand the floor plan, try to keep the addition to a dimension dividable evenly by 2-foot increments, standard dimension for many building products. In other words, expand your home by 2', 3', 6', etc., but not by 3'-9" or some other odd dimension.
- 2) Often adding width to a particular room is better than adding depth, particularly when joists or trusses are running front to back. Adding width simply requires dropping in additional joists or trusses, but adding to the depth may force you into using larger members to handle the longer spans. The advice of a professional can be helpful at this point.
- 3) Expanding an existing room is usually more economical than adding an additional room which will potentially require a new door, windows and sometimes hallway space. However, when it is necessary to add a new room, consider the access to it. This can be a tricky aspect in making changes and, in general, a good floor plan will have just enough hallways to allow direct access to all the rooms without forcing you to travel through one room to get to another.
- 4) The expensive components in any home are the bathrooms and kitchens with their concentration of appliances, fixtures, cabinet work and hard surfaces. Therefore, adding an additional bathroom, while sometimes necessary, can be an expensive proposition. Even so, one of the most common upgrades people make is in these very areas - additional funds invested here can make a lasting impression and add considerable resale value to your home.
- 5) Changes to a two-story plan will often require a little more planning, but, as long as both floors are stacked and you pay attention to how the roof lines will be affected, the result can be just as successful.
- 6) A plan may be drawn with the garage doors facing one direction, but you need them to face another. In many cases, when it is a two-car garage (fairly square) on a corner of the plan, it may be a simple matter of just moving the door around to the other side. However, attention must be paid to the structure overhead, so that any beams and headers can be re-engineered if needed.
- 7) Before settling on any changes, a visit to the building department is prudent. You will need to verify that any changes contemplated will not exceed any setbacks or zoning restrictions. Also, ask if redlining your plans (plans that have been marked up with changes directly on the plan rather than redrawn) are acceptable. Some jurisdictions do not allow this.

The four basic floor plan categories are as follows:

1) Conventional Ranch Style

Conventional ranch style is typically a one-story floor plan where all the bedrooms are placed in one wing or side of the home. To have a second floor it would be an attic or bonus split room bedroom ranch home. The master bedroom is normally well separated from the others, normally at opposite ends of the home.

2) 1-1/2 story, Farm Ranch, Cape Cod

These styles are called several different things in different areas, but basically the master suite is on the first floor and all other bedrooms are on the second floor. Some areas still consider this a two-story home, but it is distinct by the location of the master bedroom.

3) Two story

Two-story has most of the bedrooms, including the master bedroom on the second floor.

4) Multi-level

Multi-level is a big mixture of styles. These are mostly custom homes that are designed specifically to deal with things such as highly sloping lots. The most common styles that fall in the multi-level category is: split-levels, split-foyers, high ranches and tri-levels. Most of these are hybrid combinations of ranches and two story plans, conceived by builders as cost-effective variations to the basic styles. These styles are still very popular, but have lost their universal appeal.

What is common in your region, your budget, and your personal preference normally have the most influence the floor plan you choose. The type of foundation and your choice of exterior design also significantly affect each type of plan.

No matter how you obtain your house plans, your completed set of plans should include:

- # Front elevation
- # Side elevation (one for each side)
- # Rear elevation
- # Top view of each floor (floor plan)
- # Detailed layout of kitchen cabinets
- # Foundation plan
- # Electrical layout
- # Plumbing layout
- # Window and door schedule
- # Roof plan
- # Construction details and framing information

Most stock plans will offer a material list to go with the blueprints. This gives you the list of materials and how much you will need. A material list is a great aid in the cost estimations. Often, the stock plans will also include an Outline Specification that you can modify to the products that suit you.

How Many Sets Do You Need?

Use the following as a rough guide:

- # 1 or 2 sets for your bank, mortgage broker, and construction lender
- # 1 or 2 sets for filing with your municipality
- # 1 master set for you
- # 1 master set for your general contractor
- # 3 or more sets for subcontractors and suppliers

About the Author

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