

● AFTER



RENOVATION RESCUE

When a home redesign comes to an unexpected halt, getting back on track can be tricky. We asked **Deana Murphy**, ASID Allied, founder of LivingDesigns Associates, in Philadelphia, a firm that guides homeowners through the remodeling process, how to give a stalled renovation a jump start.

● **PUT IT ON PAPER.** "Sit down with a pen and notepad and spell out your reasons for the redesign," Murphy says. "Your goal may have been fuzzy the first time around, or perhaps your original purpose has changed. If you're redoing your kitchen, for instance, what's your main objective—more space, a modern design? The more specific you are about your expectations, the better your chances of realizing them."

● **FIX WHAT WENT WRONG.** If your contractor failed to follow through, find someone else. Ask for several references and to see

examples of his work. If you initially underestimated how much the renovation would cost, get new bids that include all costs, from labor (plumbing, carpentry, and electrical work) to building materials. Restart the project only when you have ample funds to finish it, plus an extra 20 percent or more to cover any unexpected expenses.

● **MOTIVATE YOURSELF.** If the thought of turning your house back into a construction zone fills you with dread, Murphy suggests making "a dream wall." On a bulletin board, tack a "before" photo of the room you're renovating. Then ask your contractor to make a computer-aided drawing (called a CAD) or a sketch of what the finished space will look like, incorporating the furnishings, the fabrics, the flooring, the architectural elements, and the color of the walls. Check out the board at least once a day for inspiration. "If you don't focus on the end result," Murphy says, "you'll never get there."