

Renovation phase checklist

Work it in phase order, not room order — trades want to do first-fix work across every room in one visit, before any walls close up. Tick the cheap early tasks first: they are two-minute jobs with weeks-long consequences if skipped.

Phase 0 — Before any work starts

- ☐ Write down the full scope, room by room — what's changing and what isn't
- ☐ Set an itemised budget with a contingency line (see the free budget template)
- ☐ Get three written, itemised quotes per major trade
- ☐ Sign a written contract with payment schedule and scope
- ☐ Confirm which works need permits or building control sign-off
- ☐ Submit and confirm approval of every required permit
- ☐ Order all long-lead items now (windows, bespoke cabinetry, certain tiles, appliances)
- ☐ Take "before" photos of every room from multiple angles
- ☐ Arrange a skip/dumpster and waste disposal
- ☐ Set up site protection (floor coverings, dust sheeting, a dust barrier)
- ☐ Notify neighbours and check any party-wall obligations
- ☐ Plan where you'll cook, wash, and sleep if rooms go offline

Phase 1 — Strip-out and structure

- ☐ Disconnect services to the work area (water, power circuits, gas)
- ☐ Remove fittings, fixtures, and anything being kept or reused (label and store it)
- ☐ Demolish to the extent of the scope — walls, floors, old kitchens/bathrooms
- ☐ Carry out structural work (beams, lintels, openings) per engineer's spec
- ☐ Address anything uncovered: rot, damp, dodgy wiring, asbestos (stop and get the right people for the last one)
- ☐ Make the structure weathertight — roof, windows, external doors
- ☐ Photograph everything now exposed — you won't see inside these walls again

Phase 2 — First fix (services across all rooms)

- ☐ Electrical first fix — cabling, back boxes, consumer unit changes
- ☐ Plumbing first fix — hot/cold runs, waste pipes, drainage
- ☐ Heating — pipework, underfloor heating loops, radiator positions
- ☐ Ventilation and extraction ducting (kitchen, bathrooms)
- ☐ Data, TV, and any smart-home cabling (always forgotten — decide now)
- ☐ Insulation in walls, floors, and ceilings
- ☐ Soundproofing where wanted (party walls, bedrooms, media rooms)
- ☐ Photograph all pipe and cable runs against a tape measure before boarding
- ☐ First-fix inspection / sign-off if required

Phase 3 — Plaster and surfaces

- ☐ Board out walls and ceilings (plasterboard / drywall)
- ☐ Plaster or skim to a finish
- ☐ Lay screed or level subfloors
- ☐ Allow proper drying time before finishes (rushing this cracks paint and lifts flooring)
- ☐ Fit and tank/waterproof wet areas before tiling
- ☐ First coat of mist/primer on fresh plaster

Phase 4 — Second fix and finishes (room by room)

EVERY ROOM

- ☐ Second-fix electrical — sockets, switches, light fittings
- ☐ Second-fix plumbing — taps, radiators, towel rails
- ☐ Hang and finish internal doors, architraves, and skirting
- ☐ Flooring
- ☐ Painting and decorating (ceilings, walls, woodwork — in that order)
- ☐ Final clean

KITCHEN

- ☐ Fit cabinets and worktops (template the worktop after cabinets are set)
- ☐ Connect sink, taps, and any water filter
- ☐ Install and connect appliances (check clearances and ventilation)
- ☐ Tile or fit the splashback
- ☐ Test extraction and all appliances
- ☐ Seal all wet joints (sink, worktop-to-wall)

BATHROOM

- ☐ Tile walls and floor (confirm waterproofing is signed off first)
- ☐ Fit sanitaryware — bath, shower, basin, WC
- ☐ Fit shower screen, taps, and accessories
- ☐ Install extraction fan and test it
- ☐ Seal every wet joint with the right sealant
- ☐ Test for leaks before sign-off

BEDROOMS AND LIVING SPACES

- ☐ Built-in wardrobes or storage
- ☐ Window treatments — measure after walls are finished
- ☐ Final paint touch-ups after furniture access
- ☐ Curtain poles, blinds, shelving brackets (use those first-fix photos)

Phase 5 — Snagging and handover

- ☐ Walk every room and list every defect with a photo (the snag list)
- ☐ Agree fix dates for each snag with the contractor
- ☐ Re-inspect and mark each item fixed or outstanding

- ☐ Test everything: every socket, tap, light, appliance, and drain
- ☐ Collect warranties, guarantees, and certificates (electrical, gas, building control)
- ☐ Record paint colours, product codes, and supplier details
- ☐ File "as-built" notes and your first-fix photos somewhere permanent
- ☐ Release retained/final payment only against a cleared snag list

A printed list is the right tool for the wall. It is the wrong tool on the scaffold, at the merchant, or six months later when the insurer asks what was behind the wall — that is what Home Stories is for. Free on the App Store.

Full guide: <https://home-stories.12f.dk/blog/renovation-checklist-printable/>