

KITCHENS: RETROFIT REFRESH

NOT QUITE READY FOR A TOTAL KITCHEN OVERHAUL?
WE SHOW YOU HOW TO MAKE YOUR KITCHEN
LOOK BRAND NEW WITH A FEW SELECT SWAP-OUTS

Words **LAURA BARRY**

It's probably no surprise to discover that kitchens are one of the most expensive rooms in your home to renovate. In fact, the 2020 Houzz & Home Study found that, on average, Australians spend up to \$15,000 on a kitchen renovation. Yet there are ways to give your kitchen the fresh new look it needs without a hefty price tag. By keeping a kitchen's floorplan and appliance configuration intact and swapping out tired taps, scratchy sinks and loose handles for brand new fixtures, you'll not only breathe new life into a tired cooking space, but there's no need to call in the demolition crew! Here's our guide to becoming a retrofit wizard.

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE) RYAN LINNEGAR/MARCH TWICE INTERIORS (OPPOSITE) JOHN DOWNS
* (OPPOSITE) ESTIMATE ONLY. FIGURES BASED ON A THREE-METRE SPLASHBACK

REVIVE YOUR SPLASHBACK

Are you a bit over the handmade tiles your home's previous owner installed back in 1995? Replacing a kitchen splashback can be a quick and easy project to take on, but you do need to hire a professional tradesperson. "Tiling over a splashback will revamp it, but it can be expensive depending on the tiles you choose, and you'll need some perseverance if you are applying them on top of existing tiles," says Sarah Comerford, founder and design director of Home by Belle. >

+ PRICE GUIDE *

\$500-\$1500 for mid-range penny round mosaic tile sheets.
\$210 for white gloss subway tiles.

+ STYLE NOTES

Marble, mirrors, stone and subway tiles have proven to be mainstays in the splashback scene, so if you plan to retrofit this area, ensure you invest in a timeless style or tile.



SEXY SINK SWAP

“Retrofitting sinks keeps things practical and user-friendly while allowing you to update style or include functionality, such as a double bowl to suit a busy family’s needs, or a harder material in gold or brushed metal to bring some extra vibrance,” says Daniela Santilli, bathroom & kitchen merchandising leader of Reece. Swapping in a sink is easy but Daniela advises using a licensed plumber so the job is done right and warranties remain valid.



+ PRICE GUIDE *
\$200–\$1300, depending on the fabrication you choose.

+ STYLE NOTES
According to Daniela of Reece, coloured sinks have become popular and are mostly chosen to match the colour of the tapware (matte black is our current favourite). Butler sinks, as seen in this Karen Walker Design kitchen, have emerged as a classic investment.



SWITCH HANDLES

“Introducing new door handles is a simple update and easy way to retrofit,” says Sarah of Home by Belle. Three stunning options are pictured above, above right, and right. “I consider door handles the jewellery of the kitchen; they are small accessories that create a big impact and are an essential finishing touch to any kitchen.” And if you’re handy with a drill, it’s something you can do yourself. Before you commit to the placement, put them on your cupboards or drawers with Blu Tack.

REVIEW LIGHTING

Replacing lighting (opposite) is an easy update, but you need to hire an electrician to ensure the job is done safely. “The cost and difficulty of replacing your lighting depends on the existing fittings and ceiling height,” says Jess Paladino, lighting designer at Beacon Design Studio. “You’ll need a professional to patch existing fittings, alter placement or install new light fittings that aren’t DIY compatible; the kitchen is a task-oriented area, so ensure the space is well-lit.” >

+ PRICE GUIDE *
About \$100–\$450 for each pendant light, \$12–\$25 for each downlight, \$20–\$135 for adapters, cables and replacing fittings.

+ STYLE NOTES
“If you’re after feature or mood lighting, try strip lighting under cabinets or pendants over an island bench,” says Jess of Beacon Design Studio. “If your kitchen has lots of texture and focal points, a closed or glass pendant is best to avoid creating visual clutter.”



+ PRICE GUIDE *
\$40–\$200, depending on the finish. Prices rarely exceed double digits per handle.

+ STYLE NOTES
“My top three picks for handle trends right now are textured brass handles, circular handles in Tasmanian Oak and rose gold,” says Sarah of Home by Belle.



PHOTOGRAPHY (OPPOSITE) ARMELLE HABIB/BUILD MONTIQUE CONSTRUCTION (THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) MALCOM MENZIES, BRIGID ARNOTT, MALCOLM MENZIES
* ESTIMATE ONLY. SINK AND LIGHTING PRICES EXCLUDE INSTALLATION COSTS.



“RETROFITTING TAPS CAN BE TRICKY, SO UNLESS YOU’RE UNDERTAKING MAJOR PLUMBING OR RENOVATION WORKS, THE TAPWARE WILL NEED TO BE REPLACED LIKE FOR LIKE”

~ JOHN HOOGENDOORN, CREATIVE DESIGN MANAGER, PHOENIX TAPWARE

TINKER WITH TAPWARE

Updating an old tap to something that has a little glitz and glamour (see above left, above right, left & opposite for inspiration) will add instant pizzazz to your kitchen. “Retrofitting can be a very budget-friendly way to update, simply by replacing what’s currently there,” says John Hoogendoorn, creative design manager at Phoenix Tapware. “However, costs can increase if you choose to move from traditional hot and cold taps to mixers, as the in-wall plumbing will need to be replaced.” One very modern swap out would be to swap in a gooseneck kitchen sink mixer with pull-outs, that according to Daniela of Reece, continues to be a crowd favourite. “The ability to wash around the sink and spray vegetables with ease is a key factor, and sensor taps are the latest in kitchen technology – perfect for when you have your hands full!” she says.

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE FROM TOP LEFT) THE PALM CO./CADENCE & CO. CATH MUSCAT X 2 (OPPOSITE) STEPHANIE BUCHAN PRICES EXCLUDE INSTALLATION COSTS.



+ PRICE GUIDE
From \$115 for an Olivéri ‘80’ single mixer tap to \$2500 for a KWC ‘Ono’ single mixer tap, both available from winningappliances.com.au.

+ STYLE NOTES
John of Phoenix Tapware says that while chrome tapware will never date, there are new trends worth trying. “We’re seeing a real interest in distinctive angles with gentle and soft forms,” he says. “In terms of finishes, a lot of brushed gold and matte black remains ever popular.”