

# Common Mistakes Homeowners Make When Finishing Their Basement

Why most finished basements in Western PA are  
destined to have problems in the future.



# Instant Regret

A survey of Pennsylvania Homeowners indicated that two-thirds of them would NOT refer or rehire the contractor that did the work.

## Why?

As consumers, you have experience with a wide range of products and services; some good, some bad. However, most homeowners don't have any real experience with the pitfalls of home improvement projects, simply because they haven't done them or at least very many of them.

As a result, most consumers "don't know what they don't know" when looking to have work done on their home. It is not lack of knowledge, it is lack of experience (and all the little details) that trips them up!

This inexperience can cause a major gap between your expectations and the reality of how the work will actually be done. Sooner or later, this will come back to bite you and cost you money.

**If you don't check a contractor's reviews and recommendations, you're leaving yourself vulnerable to the unknown.** Contractors will only tell you what you want to hear. Actual customers who have experienced their work firsthand will tell it like it is.



"We couldn't be happier with our basement. It is... a 'game-changer' for our house. Our experience with Total Basement Finishing stood in stark contrast to many sub-par contracting experiences we have had in the last few years."

Dan M. | Google

"Our main service was our basement renovation. They offered quality materials and ease of design that helped transform our old space into an extension of our living space."

Mike L. | Google

# Change in Family Needs

Finishing your basement is the least expensive way to give you more living space.

## Who should do it?

Do you have a family that is outgrowing your cramped home? Do you need a place to get away from it all? Do you now work from home and need a new office? Or maybe a play room for your kids to hangout in. You've decided that you need to do *something* sooner rather than later.

### Who do you want to do your work? You have several options:

- **A handyman** - You won't know if this person is a properly-trained expert.
- **A contractor who does basement work on a part-time basis** - They give you an estimate, not a firm price. They also jump from job to job with no real start or end date.
- **A sales organization who sub-contracts the work** - There will be no actual company employees working on your project.
- **An architect & general contractor** - This is a very expensive alternative.
- **A professional team of basement experts** - Qualified and trained full time experts who specialize specifically in basement finishing.

### Never choose a contractor based solely on price!

The cheapest contractor may change the expected work plan without you knowing it. Cheap labor isn't usually skilled, and skilled labor isn't usually cheap. If you make a great choice the first time around, you won't have to do it again in the future.

## TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND BEFORE YOU START

**#1** Any major water problems should be resolved BEFORE you start the finishing process.

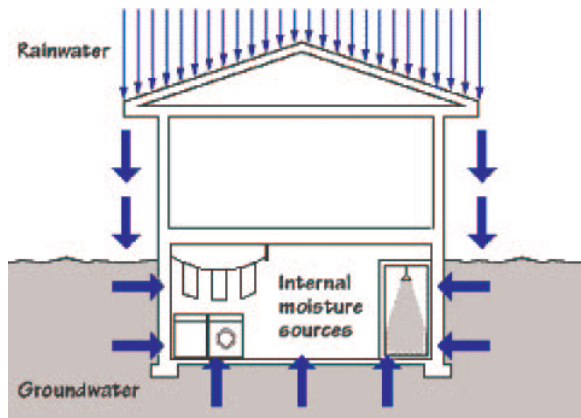
**#2** It is recommended to break the project up into increments. You don't have to finish everything at once

**#3** Real estate agents recommend that you leave 30-50% of your basement unfinished for storage.

# Water Can Totally Destroy Your Basement

**BEWARE!!** There are problems you can see and problems you can't.

- **Groundwater Leaks** - These are obvious. This is water you see that comes through cracks in your wall and floors. These need fixed before any basement finishing.
- **Wicking** - Occurs when water soaks through porous material like concrete and concrete blocks. Capillary action drives water from wet to dry.
- **Vapor Transmission** - Vapor pressure drives water vapor from areas of high humidity to areas of low humidity. The ground around your home is close to 100% humidity all the time, causing water vapor to move through the concrete walls into your basement. Porous, organic materials adjacent to the walls absorb this moisture, building to a level where mold can grow.
- **Internal Sources of Water Vapor** - Daily life puts moisture in the air which gets absorbed by the materials in your basement. Clothes drying, showers, and even people put excess moisture into the air that get absorbed by organic materials.
- **Condensation** - Even if you can't see it, condensation develops when warm, humid summer air enters your basement and is cooled on the basement walls and floor surfaces. The hotter and more humid the air, the more of a problem condensation will be.
- **Plumbing Leaks** - When a plumbing leak happens anywhere in your home, it always ends up in the basement. If you don't see it right away and you have used the wrong materials in your basement, you'll have a real expensive problem.



# What Products Shouldn't I Use in My Basement?

You don't want grandpa's old musty basement. When considering basement finishing, the products that come to mind are traditional organic materials like drywall, wooden 2x4s and fiberboard ceiling panels. However, there is a problem...

## The dangers of organic materials lurking in your basement

- Wood, drywall, most carpeting, fiberboard ceiling panels, paint, laminated flooring, and even fiberglass can be a home for mold to grow. They will absorb and hold moisture causing them to rot. Additionally, bugs feed on wet, organic materials.
- Finishing your space with these materials will lead you to continuously replace products every time your basement gets wet or absorbs moisture in the future.



## Hazards of mold

**Common side effects of household mold, as reported by Medline Plus, include:** coughing, respiratory difficulties, hives, itching, rash, runny nose, sneezing, watering eyes, sinus pressure and wheezing. Mold can also cause musty odors, allergies, infections and asthma.

**Your family's health is important, protect it with the right materials!**

Some molds have toxic effects and can also trigger issues such as memory problems and brain damage, even if you are healthy, according to the Allergy Escape website. This type of mold is common in water-damaged homes that are not repaired properly.



# Why Total Basement Finishing by Energy Swing?

From start to finish, our **employee installation team** maintains professionalism and dedication to customer service. You can be confident that we will leave your property better than we found it!

- We've uncovered **REVOLUTIONARY** high-tech, water-rejecting and humidity-fighting materials that have been specifically designed to fend off all the threats that are found in Western Pennsylvania basements.
- All the materials we use are **inorganic** and won't absorb water or support the growth of mold or mildew.
- Our **Experienced Design Consultant** will work hand-in-hand with you to engineer a basement space that meets your specific needs.
- You'll receive a thorough **assessment** of the physical issues of your basement as it relates to your current long-term needs. You'll get visual **3-D renderings** of the design options customized for your basement.
- You'll get a detailed **design proposal** showing exactly the work to be done with a firm quote, not an estimate that will increase as the work progresses.
- Before any work begins, we assign a factory-trained **Project Manager** to you. They will come out to your home to analyze and finalize your project
- The **Project Manager** will review with you a **scale drawing** of your basement that shows the placement of all the details specific to your project and schedule a tentative start date. They will be available to **communicate** with you on a daily basis.
- A typical project takes only **two to four weeks** from start to finish.
- We **protect** your property during every phase of the work.
- We **haul away** and properly dispose of all old materials and debris.

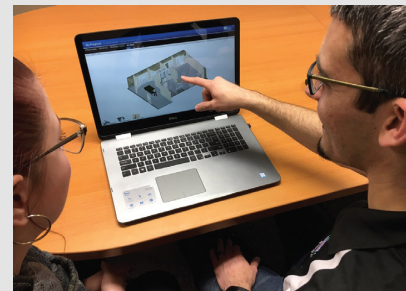
## What's Next?

On the surface, most home improvement projects can appear to be pretty simple. But once you know the facts, they can become overwhelming. **The best thing to do is to talk to a company with a track record of trust and 5-star reviews.**

## Endless possibilities

We can work with you to design a customized basement that solves your space problems with an attractive, durable, energy-efficient system your whole family will love. Transform an ordinary space that you already own from basement to beautiful!

See a 3D Rendering of your design



TBF Install Team John, Lee & Luke



**4X Recipient**  
2008, 2012, 2016, 2020



\*Once you are recognized with this honor, you are not eligible for another 4 years.  
3500 Members, 28 Western PA Counties, 500+ Contracting Companies

# Want to learn more?

Scan these QR codes for additional information on our Total Basement Finishing process and system.



Energy Swing  
TBF Process



TBF McCloy  
Testimonial



TBF Stopansky  
Testimonial



Let us show you how fast and easy it is to create the extra space you've been dreaming about!



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