

LIVING THROUGH CONSTRUCTION

A Practical Checklist for Homeowners — A Companion Handout

An addition can take weeks or months. A little setup before the crew arrives makes daily life a lot more livable.

BEFORE WORK STARTS

Set Up Temporary Spaces

- If the kitchen will be affected, set up a temporary “kitchenette” elsewhere — microwave, mini-fridge, electric kettle, a few essential dishes
- Identify a dust-free room to retreat to, especially if anyone in the household has asthma or allergies
- Plan a temporary path in/out of the house that avoids the work zone

Protect What You Can't Move

- Cover furniture, electronics, and vents in rooms near the work area with plastic sheeting
- Remove wall art, mirrors, and breakables from walls that will see vibration
- Ask your contractor about dust containment (zip walls, negative air pressure) for large interior work

Sort Out Logistics in Advance

- Agree on work hours and access with your contractor — including whether they need a key or code
- Designate parking for the crew, and let neighbors know if street parking will be affected
- Ask where the dumpster/materials will sit and confirm it won't block a neighbor's driveway or sidewalk

DAY TO DAY

Noise & Schedule

- Ask for a rough weekly schedule so you can plan around the loudest days (demo, framing) — especially for remote work calls
- Confirm what happens on weekends and whether crews will be present

Pets

- Open doors, unfamiliar people, and loud tools are a real escape and stress risk — plan a safe room or crate space away from the work zone
- Consider a pet sitter or doggy daycare for the loudest days (demo, delivery days)
- Make sure gates/fences stay secure if crews are in and out of a yard

Kids

- Set clear, consistent rules about staying out of the work zone — even when it looks quiet
- Watch for nails, debris, and tools left out at the end of the day; do a quick walk-through before kids are back in the area
- If younger kids are sensitive to noise or disruption, plan some out-of-house time on the loudest days

Daily Communication

- Ask for a single point of contact (often the project manager, not every sub) for questions
- A quick end-of-day check-in — even a text — helps you catch small issues before they become big ones

MANAGING THE MESS

- Dust travels further than you'd expect — check air filters/HVAC returns more often during framing and drywall phases
- Keep a small “construction kit” by the door: shoe covers, a broom, and a shop vac for daily cleanup
- Expect some paint touch-ups and minor repairs elsewhere in the house even with careful crews — ask how these will be handled

PROTECTING YOUR SANITY

- Build in an escape valve — even a weekly dinner out or a day away from the house helps
- Take “before” photos of every affected room, in case anything comes up later about pre-existing condition
- Remember: the loudest, messiest phase (demo + framing) is usually front-loaded — it gets calmer as the project progresses

A NOTE FROM SUSAN

Every household handles this differently — ask tonight's panelists what actually worked for them day to day. For more Cheverly resources, visit TheCheverlyGoodlife.com.