

# 52 Ways TO SAVE



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# 52 WAYS TO SAVE

As you may know, building a new house can get expensive if you are unaware of ways to keep your costs down. First-time home buyers, along with high-end luxury buyers, all want to know how they can get the most home for their money.

The Wisconsin Log Homes team takes great pride in educating our clients about the many options they have available to them when designing and building their dream home, and that's why we came up with our report, 52 Ways to Save Money. Not all 52 ways may apply to you, but we'd like all of our customers to be educated and understand the options they have in keeping their homes' price within their set budget.

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**1. SELECT A REPUTABLE COMPANY.** A respectable company will help you design a home within your budget, and suggest money-saving design ideas and construction techniques that can save you money.

**2. WATCH THE BUDGET.** Determine how much you can spend and stick to that figure. Be honest about the bottom line. Tell your Home Consultant how much you can afford before plans are drawn and agree on important design issues.

**3. ASK FOR FEEDBACK.** Ask about the pros and cons of different elements of your design and how each will affect your budget.

**4. EDUCATE YOURSELF.** The more you know about the building process, the easier it is to control the bottom line.

**5. COMPARE APPLES TO APPLES.** Get everything in writing and be sure it is the same quality and quantity of materials when making a comparison. Saving \$4,000 on a home package may look good on the bottom line, but not when you find its missing \$6,000 worth of materials.

**6. BUILD ONLY WHAT YOU NEED.** Analyze your family needs and living patterns and how they translate into physical space. Sometimes restraint is essential if your dream is to become an affordable reality, but be sure your scaled-down plan meets your basic needs.

**7. SHOP FOR AN AFFORDABLE SITE.** Developed land is easier to build on and more expensive. Try to keep the ratio of land to house 1 to 4 or more.

**8. A SMALL SITE SAVES ON LAND AND LANDSCAPING COSTS.** You can also save on future landscaping costs if naturally occurring trees and bushes are left in place.

**9. COOPERATE WITH YOUR SITE.** It will cost less to fit your home design to your site than to try to find a site to fit your home design.

**10. WALKOUT BASEMENTS CAN ADD EXTRA LIVING SPACE AT VERY LITTLE COST.** A lot with a slight grade may allow for a walkout basement. Plan for a 9-foot ceiling so that pipes, wires and air ducts can be hidden when the space is finished.

**11. BUILDING UP INSTEAD OF OUT SAVES MONEY.** Because a smaller roof and foundation are needed, materials and labor costs will be reduced.

**12. CHOOSE A SIMPLE HOUSE PLAN.** A straight-sided, rectangular house will be more economical to build than one with complex shapes and many corners.

**13. ANY TIME YOU ANGLE A WING OFF THE MAIN DESIGN, YOU ARE DRIVING UP THE OVERALL CONSTRUCTION COST BY THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS.**

**14. AN OPEN-PLAN LAYOUT CUTS THE COST OF INTERIOR WALLS AND PUTS USABLE SQUARE FOOTAGE INTO LARGER ROOMS INSTEAD OF HALLWAYS.**

**15. AN OPEN-PLAN LAYOUT NO MORE THAN 28 FEET WIDE IS MORE ECONOMICAL THAN LONGER SPANS, WHICH WILL REQUIRE MORE EXPENSIVE LUMBER OR EVEN STEEL TO SUPPORT THEM.**

**16. USE STANDARD DIMENSIONS.** There is less waste if even number dimensions are used because lumber comes in even sizes. Build a 44 x 28-foot house instead of a 43 x 27-foot home.

**17. A PROW-SHAPED WINDOW WALL WILL ADD THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS TO THE COST OF A HOME BECAUSE OF COMPLEX CUTTING, FRAMING AND FITTING.** A flat face window wall will reduce labor costs.

**18. A PORCH WITH A FLAT CEILING WILL COST LESS THAN ONE WHICH HAS OPEN BEAMS.** Built-in down lights can also be used instead of expensive wall fixtures or chandeliers.

**19. A HIGHER THAN AVERAGE 8-FOOT CEILING IS THE MOST ECONOMICAL APPROACH TO COST EFFECTIVE CEILINGS.**

**20. 9 AND 10-FOOT CEILINGS WILL COST MORE TO BUILD BUT WILL INCREASE THE ROOM'S VOLUME WITHOUT ROBBING FLOOR SPACE FROM ABOVE.**

**21. A CATHEDRAL CEILING WILL ADD VOLUME, MAKING A ROOM FEEL SPACIOUS. IT WILL ALSO ROB FLOOR SPACE FROM THE SECOND LEVEL.**

**22. A LOW-TRUSS CATHEDRAL CEILING IS MORE ECONOMICAL TO BUILD THAN A SOARING 20-FOOT HIGH CATHEDRAL CEILING.**

**23. A CATHEDRAL CEILING IN THE GREAT ROOM THAT DROPS TO A FLAT CEILING IN THE LOFT AND OTHER SECOND LEVEL ROOMS WILL SAVE HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS.**

**24. DORMERS THAT CUT INTO THE MIDDLE OF A ROOF ARE MORE EXPENSIVE TO BUILD THAN DORMERS THAT RUN STRAIGHT UP FROM THE FIRST FLOOR WALL.**

**25. WHEN A DORMER'S ONLY PURPOSE IS TO LET IN ADDITIONAL LIGHT, YOU CAN SAVE 75 PERCENT OF THE CONSTRUCTION COST BY INSTALLING A SKYLIGHT RATHER THAN BUILDING THE DORMER.**

**26. A DORMER IS AN ECONOMICAL WAY TO ADD CEILING HEIGHT TO A SLOPED ROOF THAT CRAMPS USABLE FLOOR SPACE.**

**27. A FULL MASONRY FIREPLACE CAN EASILY INCREASE YOUR BOTTOM LINE CONSTRUCTION COST BY AS MUCH AS \$10,000.**

**28. SEE WHAT'S AVAILABLE IN FACTORY BUILT FIREPLACES. A ZERO CLEARANCE UNIT MAY BE THE BEST BALANCE BETWEEN THE COST AND AMBIANCE OF A FIREPLACE.**

**29. MAN-MADE STONE IS LIGHTWEIGHT AND FASTER TO INSTALL THAN NATURAL STONE. IT CAN BE APPLIED TO WOOD FRAMED STRUCTURES AS WELL AS CONCRETE BLOCK, AND DOES NOT REQUIRE A FROST WALL OR FOOTINGS, INCREASING THE SAVINGS EVEN MORE. IF PROFESSIONALLY INSTALLED, NO ONE CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE.**

**30. TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF ALL YOUR SPACE.** A finished basement or a wood deck expands usable living space for much of the year.

**31. DESIGN ROOMS FOR DUAL USE.** A guest room can double as a home office. A children's play room can also be a sewing and laundry room.

**32. SPECIFY GENEROUS AMOUNTS OF INSULATION ALL AROUND THE HOME'S EXTERIOR TO REDUCE HEATING AND COOLING NEEDS.**

**33. SPECIFY PRE-HUNG INSULATED STEEL EXTERIOR DOORS WITH ADJUSTABLE OAK THRESHOLD AND FACTORY APPLIED EXTENSION JAMBS TO INCREASE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND REDUCE INSTALLATION COST.** Selecting a standard style and size will further enhance your savings.

**34. SPECIFY LOW-E INSULATED GLASS PRE-HUNG WINDOWS WITH FACTORY APPLIED EXTENSION JAMBS FOR LONG-TERM ENERGY SAVINGS AND INSTANT LABOR SAVINGS.**

**35. SELECT STANDARD SIZE WINDOWS; THERE IS A HUGE RANGE OF SIZES AND SHAPES TO CHOOSE FROM.** Hang standard size windows together for a more interesting look without paying more.

**36. INSTEAD OF PAYING MORE FOR A CUSTOM COLOR CLAD WINDOW, IT IS MORE ECONOMICAL TO SELECT A STANDARD CLAD COLOR AND STAIN THE LOG WINDOW AND DOOR TRIM IN AN ACCENT COLOR.**

**37. LIMIT CUSTOM ITEMS.** Select well-designed fixtures and hardware from stock lines. A \$150 toilet can be just as suitable as one costing \$1,500.

**38. LIMIT THE USE OF INTERIOR LOG TO YOUR GREAT ROOM, AND USE LOG CEILING BEAMS FOR ACCENTS IN OTHER ROOMS.**

**39. ARRANGE PLUMBING CLOSE TOGETHER BY CLUSTERING KITCHEN, LAUNDRY AND BATHS EITHER BACK-TO-BACK OR STACKED ABOVE THE OTHER TO AVOID COMPLEX AND EXPENSIVE PIPING.**

**40. FOR FUTURE BATHROOM PLUMBING NEEDS IN THE BASEMENT, IT IS MORE COST EFFECTIVE THOROUGH IN DRAINS AND SUPPLY LINES DURING CONSTRUCTION THAN LATER.**

**41. YOU WILL BE BETTER OFF USING SIMPLE, INEXPENSIVE LIGHTING FIXTURES-AND LOTS OF THEM -RATHER THAN A FEW EXPENSIVE ONES.**

**42. WHEN DECIDING ON LIGHTING FIXTURES, REMEMBER TO CHOOSE THE LIGHTING EFFECT -NOT THE FIXTURE.**

**43. DON'T SKIMP ON WIRING.** Rewiring later for unexpected power loads can cost a great deal more than installing more lines than needed when building.

**44. DESIGN YOUR HOUSE TO SAVE MONEY LATER BY PLANNING WINDOW PLACEMENT TO PROPERLY HARNESS THE SUN IN THE COLD WINTER MONTHS AND DIVERT IT IN THE WARMER MONTHS.**

**45. PLAN FOR OFF-SEASON CONSTRUCTION.** Many home builders are out of work during the winter, and may offer reduced rates for the opportunity to work. Be sure you get a percolating test and excavation done before the ground freezes.

**46. BE YOUR OWN GENERAL CONTRACTOR.** Estimates say you can save 15 to 20 percent of the final cost if you act as your own general contractor. But you must have the time and expertise to oversee the project, which means being at the site daily to check the progress and quality of work done.

**47. SAVE MONEY BY DOING SOME OF THE FINISHING WORK YOURSELF IF YOU HAVE THE TIME, TALENT AND DESIRE.** Be sure to know what you are doing before you tackle the project.

**48. SHOP FOR THE BEST LOAN RATE.** A difference of just one percent can literally save you thousands of dollars a year.

**49. SELECT PRODUCTS AND MAKE DESIGN DECISIONS EARLY.** Know what you want before starting, and don't change your mind. Making changes after it's done is a big waste of money.

**50. SPECIFY THE EXACT ITEMS AND MODELS YOU WANT TO USE WHEN GETTING BIDS FROM CONTRACTORS.** You have to shop for everything sooner or later. By making your decisions early you will be prepared to compare apples to apples.

**51. STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR BUILDER.** Go to your job site and get progress reports. Be ready to make decisions as the need arises. And remember, it's much less expensive to do something right the first time than to tear it out and do it over.

**52. ONCE THE HOUSE IS FRAMED, SCHEDULE A WALK-THROUGH TO VERIFY LOCATIONS OF ALL OUTLETS, SWITCHES AND FIXTURES.** It's easy to change the location of a light or switch before it is installed.

### **WHERE NOT TO SKIMP**

Make the building shell foundation, framing, insulation, doors, windows and roof as high quality as possible. Choosing cheap, single-glazed windows while paying hundreds of dollars for faucets is false economy. A home owner will pay for a poor shell through the years with excessively high heating bills and constant, expensive repairs.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Most of the things you can do to keep your cost down will fall into the following three categories:

- 1. TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY ELIMINATING AN ITEM.**
- 2. REPLACING AN EXPENSIVE ITEM WITH SOMETHING LESS EXPENSIVE.**
- 3. DOING IT YOURSELF.**

Making trade-offs and compromises can be very difficult. That's why it's important to make these changes with items you don't feel that strongly about or with items you can easily upgrade later on.

### **THINK OF TOMORROW**

Consider your income potential and plan to expand or add custom touches later. Keep the bottom line down for now, and add the oak flooring, garage, landscaping, screen porch, deck or air conditioning when you can more easily afford it.

The most important tip could be to build with an eye toward tomorrow. It may help get you the home of your dreams today.



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