



## Design My Basement: The Full Report

Assistance is available at various levels to aid you in creating a perfect basement design. Here's the full skinny on the matter.

### On your own:

The best way I know to go about creating a basement design is to use a computer software program. I whole-heartily recommend using one of the products created by Chief Architect. I have been using their programs for years. At BasementIdeas.com I sell Chief Architect Home Designer Essentials. This is a powerful tool. With your purchase of this product (from me) you'll have instant access to all the other tools I've created to help you be the best designer you can be.

Upon purchase of the software, and even before it arrives, I would immediately watch:

"Create a Beautiful Basement"  
and the  
"Home Designer Tutorial."



Here's an example of what you can do with the Chief Architect Software. This design was created using Chief Architect.

Apologies for the dry voice over on the tutorial, and it's a bit out of date as it was created from a now older version. The software still works the same way. You use the same basic techniques.

Following that I would then check out the Articles section in the Media Center and read the following:

"Working with Chief Architect Home Design Products" and  
"Chief Architect Home Designer Software Tricks."

The latter article will tell you about the various "wall layers" that come with the program and put you on the path towards figuring out many of the materials you'll need. Helpful if you plan on doing the work yourself.

Articles:

"The Estimate Worksheet"

"Materials Calculation" and our "Order Guide" will round out much of what you need to



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know in determining those amounts.

Please attend one of the basement design webinars or watch one of the videos when posted. At the webinars I'll be doing a quick run through of Home Designer's features and how to use it to create your space.

If you have lots of ideas to try out in terms of your design and can't settle on which you'd like best, using computer software is great. I suggest you begin by creating your design and saving along the way—to the point your alternative idea would come in to play.

Then at the point where the designs will differ, resave the file under a different name. Finish that design and save it. Go back to your first file, open it and finish that design.

The beauty of the software is that it will allow you to get a REALLY good feel of what your space will be like prior to you even lifting a hammer—especially if you take the time to do a good design.

Here's a couple of ways to get started with the software. Once you've decided on your wish list the first thing you'll need to do is to create a drawing of the existing footprint of your basement space.

This is something you could get started on before your package arrives and give you an extra jump on your project.

In the basement with a tape measure, or if you're a geek like me you might own a laser ruler - either is perfectly acceptable - make an outline on a blank sheet of paper all the perimeter walls and their corresponding lengths. I generally start in one corner and work in a clockwise fashion. Your measurements do not need to be super accurate. The nearest inch will do just fine.

Note: This is NOT rocket science. Don't think of your basement design in terms of the accuracy and tolerances of a blueprint. Think of your design creation as a guideline which you will follow closely.



Two alternate plans for the same basement.

The next step is to indicate on your paper the location of the stairs in terms of (a.) how much space is in front of the stairs to the nearest perimeter wall (b.) The distance measured from one side of the stairs to an outside perimeter wall and (c.) the length of the stairs. If your steps are split and double back on themselves with a landing, have a right angle included or some other variation, you should indicate this on your drawing as well.

### Side Note

My article: "How to Get Your Items Down Into Your Basement" will potentially wake you up to things you may not have thought of and now need to consider.

Include a directional arrow that shows which way is up.

Indicate a general width of any main trunk line(s) and how far the outside edge is from a perimeter wall as well as the approximate finished width of the soffit that will be made.

Locate all posts with two dimensions. One measurement will be to the perimeter wall in front or back. The other dimension will be to the nearest side wall.

Locate and draw in any support beams and show where they are located in terms of an adjacent wall.

Locate and provide a measurement to an adjacent perimeter wall for any sewer cleanout and water meters.

Decide on the general dimensions for the space occupied by your furnace(s) and water heater(s). Indicate the front of the furnace on your plan. This may become important in determining the entrance(s) to the furnace room/storage space(s).

The distance from the approximate center of any window to the nearest perpendicular wall needs to be known. Measure your windows too, and note the type.

Home Designer has lots of window choices and you should be able to easily match what you have.

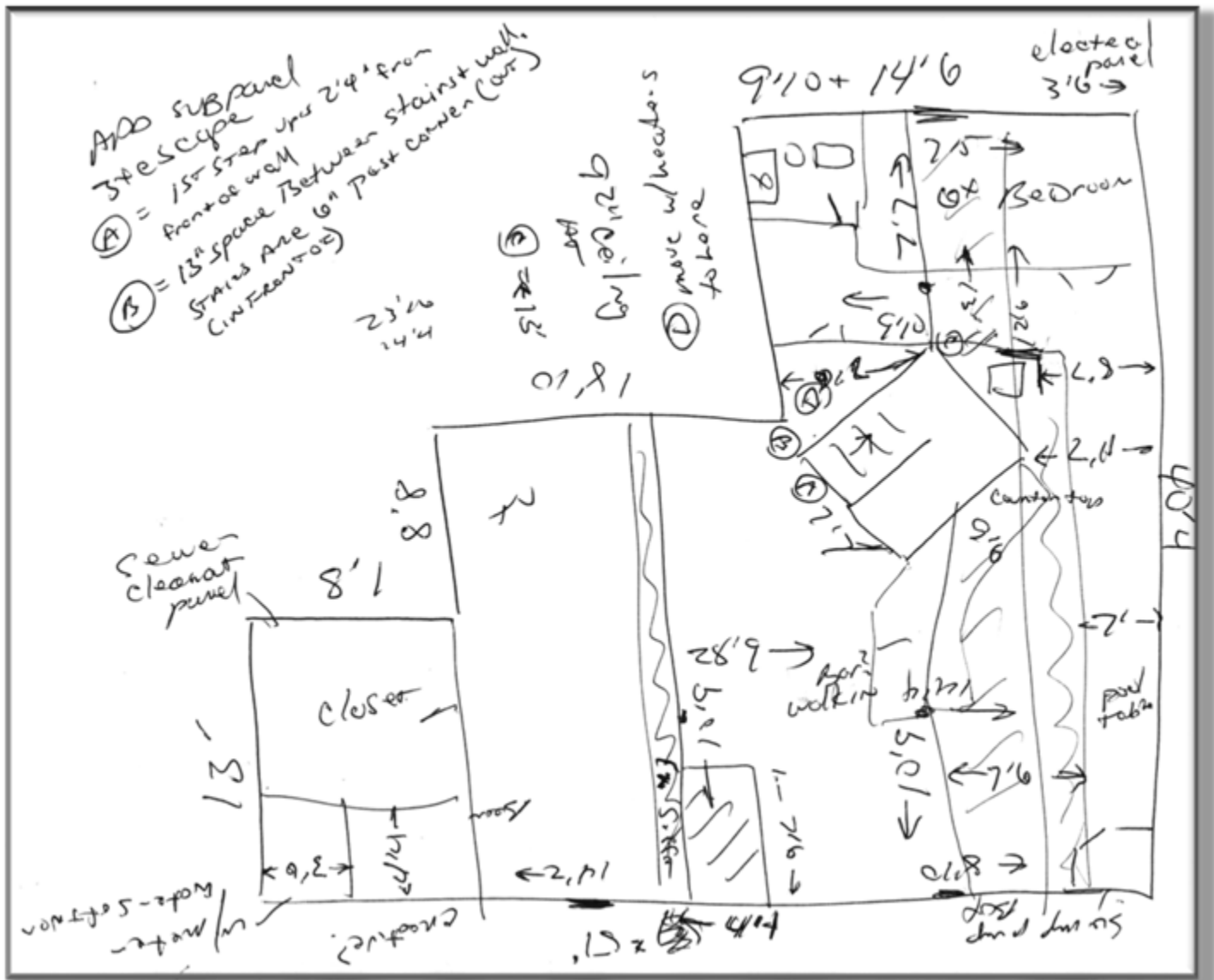


A view out the window. You can create your own designs as beautiful as this with Chief Architect's Home Designer products.

Measure and write down the ceiling height to the underneath side of your joists.

When you use a Chief Architect product, if you write this number down in "inches" vs. "feet and inches" you won't have to convert it. The ceiling height for a room is adjusted in a dialogue box called "Room Specification."

Now, all this info does NOT have to be pristine. This can be a ROUGH drawing. I've included one of mine below so you can see just how rough mine actually are.



This is a scan of the actual hand drawing I created from a visit to a prospective client. As mentioned, these are crude.



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You DO however need to be able to read your writing and understand the relationships of how your various components and mechanicals are positioned. Think of this process as one of making a bird's eye view map.

Here's a tip: Notice in the drawing from the previous page the circled letters. Then out towards the page boundaries you'll see I have written some additional notes. Use this technique to provide more information that otherwise might be lost on a freehand drawing.

If you already have an active membership you can see the completed design. It's actually in two places. This basement is the subject of Designer Skills Quiz 9 and is plan number 321 in the Project Planner Database. All made from this original "chicken scratch" drawing. You can just as easily do this yourself too.

I've provided a cleaner—more "readable" diagram of what's needed so you can think with what's being asked of you on the next page.

This is my preferred method of creating a basement design. I like to take the information back with me to my office and create the design from there. I tend to think better that way.

If you're doing this yourself, you can use my above method or alternatively, take your PC laptop to the basement and create your own plan on the fly, measuring and then drawing one wall at a time.

The ultimate goal is to have a design you love AND works well with the footprint of your home.

Here's a few other things to consider that I have plenty of advice on:

One of the subjects you'll learn about is how best to locate a bathroom. I try to keep the entrances somewhat private and there's a number of ways to do this.

Several of the Designer Skills quizzes, and the bathroom chapter in the Basement Ideas PDF download in the Articles section of the Media Center will give you guidance.

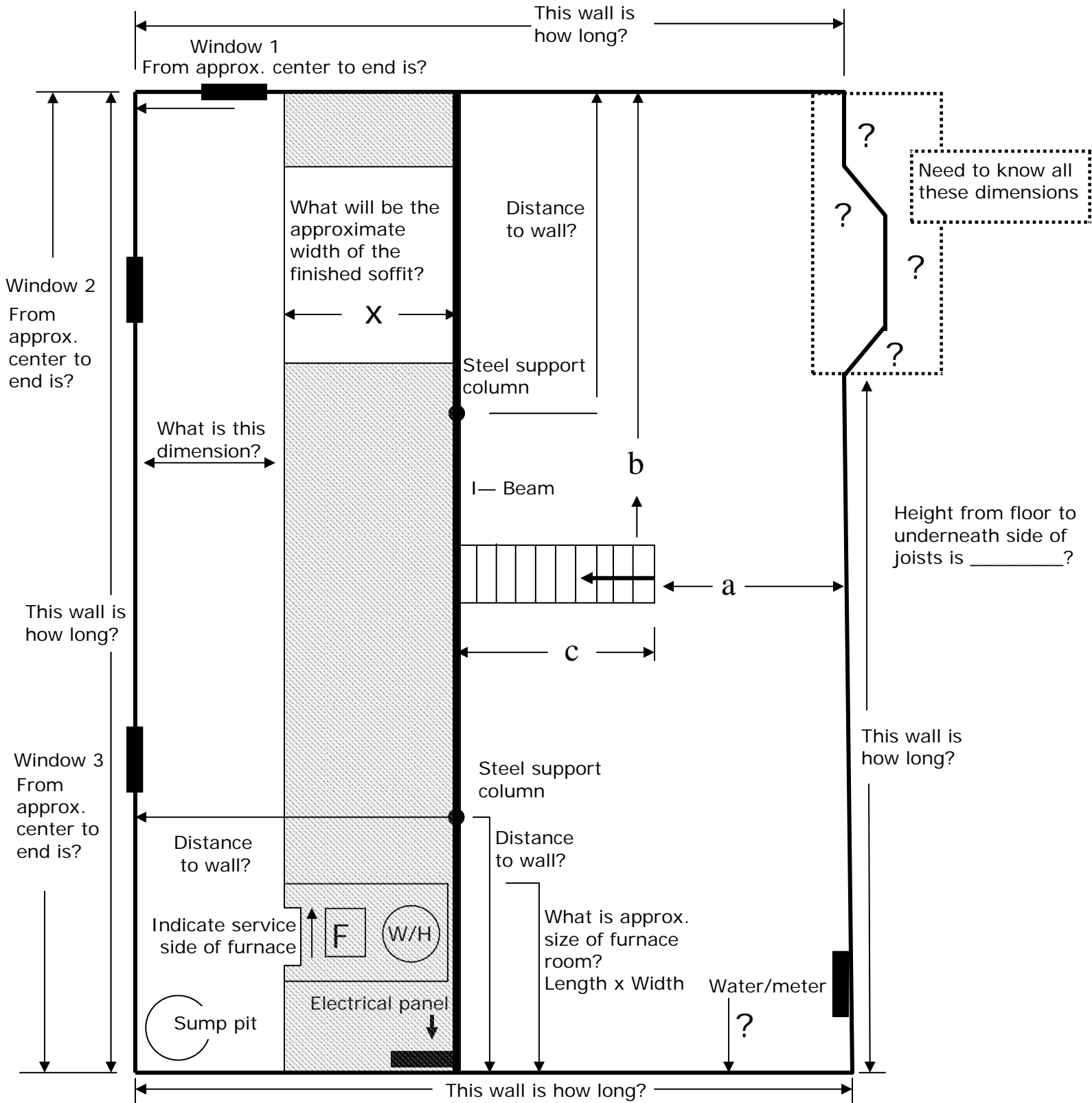


You'll see for yourself what can be done and get ideas on how to apply this to your space.



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This is typical of the info needed to create an accurate map of the existing basement when creating a computer generated floor plan. The key thing to remember is to think in terms of locating all the various components using the outside perimeter walls as reference points.





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If you're thinking of a workout room, you'll need to bear in mind not only the actual space itself, but also how the equipment will be arranged as well as you on the equipment. Headroom could be a potential issue.

Most people I speak with believe the bar needs to be near a water source and look at the bar location with this in mind. Actually, that's secondary.

A bar can go wherever you want. The better question to ask is: how much space do I want to devote to a bar? And what method will I use to achieve an ideal balance between available floor space, my desires, and cost?



Look for answers in the Create a Beautiful Basement video, the Designer Skill quizzes and the Basement Ideas PDF download. The Photo Gallery will help here as well.

Separate rooms for bedrooms and home offices under consideration require careful planning too. An intelligent question to ask is: Is this room necessary? Can I get by with just an "area" instead? What are the ramifications either way?

Again, look to the Create a Beautiful Basement video and the Basement Ideas PDF for answers.

Access to all my info is included as a perk when you order the Home Designer software from us. Nowhere else can you purchase this software and get these benefits.

Using the Home Designer product will potentially lessen the overall construction time and expense of your project. You'll see potential spatial problems before they arise and not do some things twice. Including a general layout of your intended furniture in your plan will show you how it will work, or not, in the new space.

Here's a story to share. An engineer client of mine was very sure about a particular layout plan he had in mind that I knew wasn't going to work the way he wanted due to a lack of available space. It wasn't until I drew the plan out for him that he saw this was true. Trying to articulate an idea to someone who mentally couldn't see your mind's eye image is very difficult. Why not just show it to them on the computer?



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That's a no brainer. You'll settle any disagreements with your spouse much better this way.

Should you be hiring a contractor for the construction portion or even a phase of the project, having a completed design which you can hand out will greatly increase your odds of having success at accurate quotes from contractors. Everyone will be on the same page with numbers of can lights, outlets, switches and the other components.

Minimally, you should be purchasing the Chief Architect software and trying this for yourself.

Trust me when I say this is a GREAT investment.

The software is easy to use and very user friendly. The Chief Architect folks have plenty of instructional online videos you can watch. Even if your intended construction date is down the road a ways, you should begin the planning and get started with it now. At **ONLY** \$59.00 you can't go wrong.

**Click here to purchase the  
Home Designer Essentials Software  
and receive access to all our content  
Software is PC compatible only**



### **Web with consult:**

If during your design process you get stuck and would like some input from me, I'm happy to help. Feel free to give me a ring, fill out one of my online forms or send me an email if you have a question you'd like help with. There'll be no charge for things of this nature.

If however, the process requires more of my time and input, and my undivided attention for more than a few minutes, I'd like to be recompensed for my time and knowledge. The rates are: \$75.00/hr billed in 10 minute increments with a minimum charge of \$20.00. An online meeting hosted via gotomeeting.com would be arranged and I'll get you through whatever design issue you have. If I can't satisfactorily solve your problem, then there'll be no charge.





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### Design my space: Long Distance

Not computer savvy, or don't have the time or desire to design the space yourself? I can help!

Anyone, anywhere, can subscribe to this service, even if you're from outside the US.

Disclaimer:

So it's clear to everyone, I am NOT an architect. I will only create spaces with partition walls. Any kind of structural work you may be thinking of is outside my qualifications and purview. If you have structural things in mind, you'll need to hire a qualified architect/structural engineer. Further, any kind of waterproofing issues, electrical loads, plumbing and heating concerns will need to be addressed with local qualified persons. I will ONLY be designing a partitioned wall space.

That being said, in order for me to create a design for you I will need a fair amount of information supplied by you as I will not be physically present at your location.

Here's what I'll need:

#### 1. Your basement wish list

Tell me what it is you'd like in your basement. What do you want to get out of the space?

#### 2. Photos of your basement

Please send me various photos of your basement so I can see all the obstacles, how the stairs are laid out, where the furnace(s) and water heater(s) are located, water meters, sump and ejector pumps, posts, ductwork, etc. I also need to see how/where your windows are located so I can add these to your drawing.

Think of the photos as being my eyes and take everything I need to see. No need for close-ups. I'm looking for spatial relationships and general locations. Err on the side of too many photos vs. too few photos which can potentially delay the process.

#### 3. I'll need a drawing from you of your basement as it is now

Make sure you include ALL the information as asked for from the graphic on Page 6. This can be crude as mine are. Just make sure I can read your writing and understand the concept. If I have questions, I will ask them.



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**Once I satisfactorily have all your info**, I can start on the design for you. Please give me a week to complete your design. If you need it sooner—just let me know.

When the design is complete I'll set up an online meeting with you and walk you through what I've done. I'll show you the 2D design, how I did, what I did and why I did what I did. I'll also walk you through the design in 3D which is where you'll get the "real" feel of the space.

At this point, if you like I can then email you the design. If you don't already own some version of the Home Designer software, there's a free 3D viewer you can download that I will direct you to. Download that viewer to your computer, install it and you'll be able to look at the 2D drawing, print 2D drawings as well as view and print 3D drawings. Be aware the free viewer only works on a PC.

If there are changes to be made, I'll make those for you ASAP and then email you the updated design. One round of changes is included in the price.

The rate for this design work is \$300.00 for up to 1300 sq. ft. of finished floor space. Unfinished storage areas and furnace rooms are not included in the total. If I find that what you require in terms of design or size is much greater or more involved, I'll let you know before proceeding and the amount.

**Click to order this service  
and receive access to all our content**



### **Design my space: In Person**

If you live within a 4 hour driving radius of my office, in Aurora, IL (see the map online) I'm happy to come out and create a space for you. The only information you'll need to supply me with is your general wish list. What you'd like to do, and what you want to get out of the space.

I'll come out, measure up your space, and create a design for you. Please give me a week to create your design. If you need it sooner—just let me know.

When the design is complete I'll set up an online meeting with you and walk you through what I've done. I'll show you the 2D design, how I did, what I did and why I did what I did. I'll also walk you through the design in 3D which is where you'll get the "real" feel of the space.



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If there are changes to be made, I'll make those for you ASAP and then email you the updated design. One round of changes is included in the price.

The rate for this design work is \$500.00 for distance radii of up to 2 hours from Aurora, IL. 2 – 3 hour radii the fee is \$600.00 and 3 - 4 hour radii is \$700.00.

And if you are outside a 4 hour radii and really, really want me to create your space in person, give me a ring/email and we can hopefully achieve an agreement.

One final note on this service: If you live within a 50 mile radius of my office and are interested in a quote on the construction from me - ask. I can provide that. If we then sign a contract and perform the construction, the fee you paid for the design will be credited toward the completion of your basement.

**Click to order this service  
and receive access to all our content**



The bottom line is I want you to have a FABULOUS basement. Please avail yourself of what I have to offer. I care and I'm here to help in whatever capacity I can. I hope that's come through in this document.

Basement design and seeing the project come to fruition are my favorite parts of the job. I've had many successes with great basements. You can too.

There's much to know and you should get started right away. Thanks for your support and here's to a FABULOUS basement!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. J. Clark".