

Homesteading DIY from the City to the Country

By Amy Roberts



I can still remember the first thing I designed: a brick pathway up to our 1950's ranch house back in 1994 in Pasadena, CA. I think I drew it on a piece of paper with colored pencils. My parents paid someone to make it a reality and that was it for me. I knew I could create anything.

I didn't really like school but I sure went to a lot of it. I have my Bachelor's in Business and I'm a registered nurse. My husband is a former professional baseball player and he pursued me when I was finishing up nursing school. We were married within a year and off having our first baby and then another and another.

We live in California and out here it is expensive to live. We couldn't afford an updated home. So we started in a super small condo and remodeled our way up to our current fourth house: my dream home.

It's a gorgeous southern-style home with a gabled roof and large front porch. There aren't many built like this out here. I drove by this home several times a week and prayed it would go on the market. Well, not only did it go on the market but it was in our price range. We had an offer in the day it became available.

Most of the land has never been touched so we are starting our homestead from scratch. I can still remember going into the power tool store and telling the owner what I wanted. He looked at me and said, "I don't think you need that much power." He was wrong. That day I bought my favorite tool: our brush mower. It is a beast. I've taken down 8 ft trees and created paths through dense forest.

We had lived with HOA's for seven years so when we moved out here to our five acres, I could finally express myself. In these past eight months, I've built a fence by hand, a goat shed, a chicken run, demoed our kitchen and started on the landscaping. And I've made sure to put every step of the way on Instagram, so my followers can learn from my mistakes and successes. It's honest and raw with a little bit of humor mixed in.

Currently, we are in the middle of remodeling the kitchen and I'm the designer and contractor. I am doing as much of it by myself as I possibly can. Growing up in the city, there wasn't a lot of opportunity for DIY. Most people worked hard in their careers and paid other people to work on their home. So I don't have an extensive handyman background. In fact, everything I've learned has been from books, tutorial videos or asking friends.

DIY can be challenging, but it's my passion. And I love sharing that with my kids. They help me all the time. They watch me get stumped, but they also watch me never give up. I don't do it because it's easy, I do it because I love it.

I don't think I will ever finish building or remodeling, even when this home is done. There is something about making something with your own two hands. I can't stop chasing that feeling.

Anyone can pick up a power tool and figure out how to use it. There's so much knowledge out there. The only thing missing most the time is the confidence.

I encourage anyone to give DIY a try. If it's your first time, try something simple and small. You can find great step-by-step plans online. You may be surprised by what you can do. I always love to see what my followers are working on. It's the best feeling to see others inspired and empowered.