

## Better Homes and Gardens Home Designer Software Tricks

### Intro

The Basement Ideas book and CD products each contain a lot of information devoted to the subject of designing a living space in your basement. Here are some more “pearls of wisdom” that you need whether you plan on doing the work yourself or just in the role of a planner.

I have been using the professional version of the BHG Software for many years now. It has some features that are not available in the base version sold on the Basement Ideas website. As these features are very useful I have created workarounds that will make material calculations easier and allow others to better understand your plan.

### Knowing The Different Wall Types

In the plan files posted on BasementIdeas.com, in Basement Explorer and the other group of 30 Basement Plans you'll notice differences in how the walls are drawn. See Figure 1.

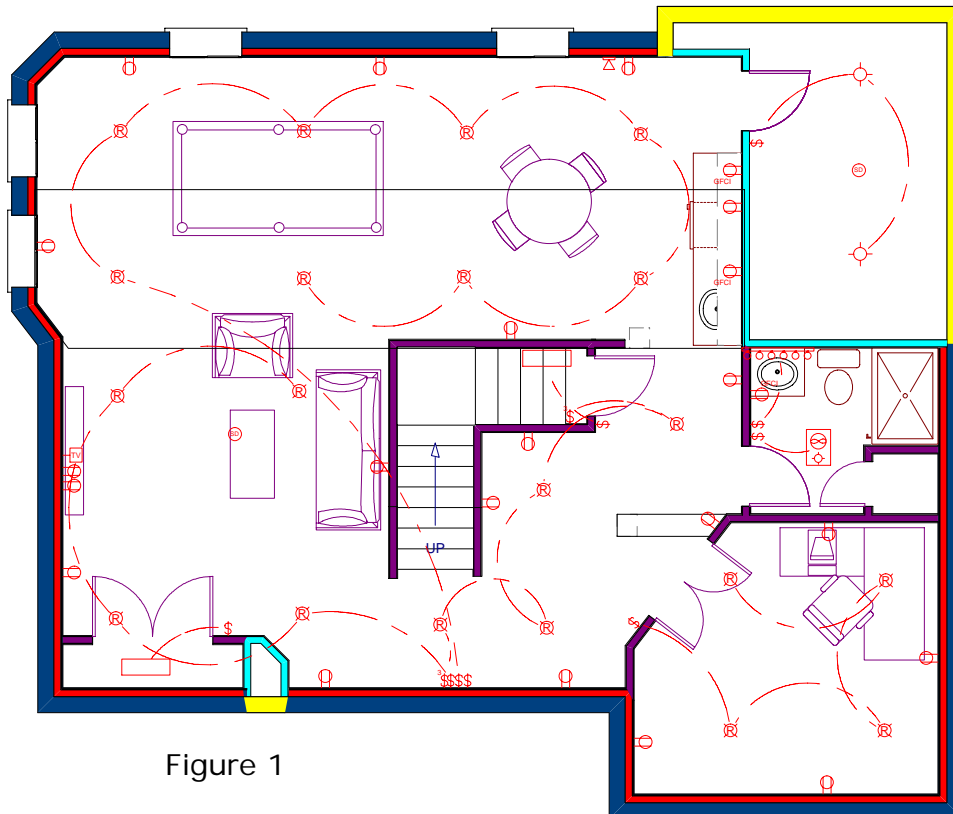


Figure 1

The red and blue walls represent exterior walls that are framed and insulated.

The turquoise walls are interior walls with drywall on the main room side only. The studs are exposed on the backside bordering an unfinished space.

Purple walls are interior walls that have drywall on both sides.

Yellow walls are concrete or block walls. No finishing work to be done.

In the BHG software these various wall types are referred to as "layers." These particular "layers" or types were created by me in my professional version. This is one of the features I have - and you don't.

I created these layers to indicate to my prospective clients my intentions as to how we would finish the basement. What walls would go where - and how so. It is also very helpful to the subcontractors who actually do the work.

Further, when I calculate materials for my projects the software will tell me the total running length of each wall type. For example in Figure 2, you'll note from the plan above there are 113 linear feet of Exterior Drywall 1 side, 74 linear feet of drywall with 2 sides and so on. I use this information as a basis to figure out how much to order for the many products I will be using.

General						
GN1	1	96 high wall	Exterior Drywall 1 side	113	0	ft
GN2	1	96 high wall	Concrete wall - Plain	28	0	ft
GN3	1	96 high wall	Interior-Drywall 2 sides	74	0	ft
GN4	1	96 high wall	Interior-Drywall 1 side	30	0	ft
GN5	1		heated ceiling area	1066.00	0.00	sq ft
GN6	1		heated floor area	1066.00	0.00	sq ft
GN7	1		heated wall area	1097.00	0.00	sq ft
GN8	1		heated glass area	26.00	0.00	sq ft
General						
GN9	1	96 high wall	Exterior Drywall 1 side	906	0	ft
GN10	1	96 high wall	Concrete wall - Plain	1010	0	ft
GN11	1	96 high wall	Interior-Drywall 2 sides	1114	0	ft
GN12	1	96 high wall	Interior-Drywall 1 side	1219	0	ft
GN13	1		heated ceiling area	1322.71	0.00	sq ft
GN14	1		heated floor area	1426.86	0.00	sq ft
GN15	1		heated wall area	1531.00	0.00	sq ft
GN16	1		heated glass area	1635.14	0.00	sq ft

Figure 2

With that being said, here is the workaround you will use in your designs. If you follow this guide exactly, you will know very thoroughly just how much to purchase providing the measurements you took are correct.

In BHG Home Designer Versions 6 and 7 use the following wall types to create interior and exterior walls.

Exterior:  
Siding 6"

This wall layer (comes with your version of BHG) will be used to replace the red and blue walls that I created.

8" Concrete stem wall

This wall layer will be used where I have the yellow walls.

Interior:

Interior 4

This will equate to my purple walls

Framing 3½

This will equate to my turquoise colored walls.

### Getting Started

If you have a laptop computer it works well to install the software on it. This way you can be in the basement while designing. It'll help eliminate any errors from omission. You wouldn't want to come up with this great design only to find out that a post was missed and be forced to reconfigure everything.

Start your design with the outside perimeter walls. As soon as you have these walls completed save your drawing. Save it again after every few changes. This is a good habit to get into. If the computer loses power, locks up or some other catastrophe happens you'll not have to restart from scratch. And trust me on this one, I speak from experience.

If you have two or more different floor plans in mind, draw all the components that will remain the same for all the layouts first. This would include the perimeter walls, stairs and furnace room. Re-save the work at this point. Continue working and when the next time comes to save your drawing use a slightly different name. For example, add the number "2" to the existing save name for the 2nd version. When you complete this drawing go back to the first saved drawing and complete it without having to start from the beginning.



### Basement Design Kit#1

Contains the Basement Ideas book, Home Designer software and Basement Explorer. An excellent deal. Save \$10.00 over buying each item separately.

**\$85.00** each