



## Ways to Make Your House Green

Learn how to make your house energy-efficient to increase home value and save money.

No matter what type of home you live in, whether it's a modern one-bedroom condo or an older Victorian charmer, your home can be more energy efficient. In the past decade we've become all too familiar with the terms *green living*, and *eco-friendly*.

When we choose to be eco-friendly and save money at the same time, it's a win-win situation we can take pride in. Greening your home is a feel-good path toward home efficiency that will let you enjoy lower bills now, and make your property more attractive in the future should you decide to sell.

If you are considering any kind of home improvement, here are some simple green tips for an eco-friendly, energy-efficient home:

### Heat loss from windows and doors

Did you know that 30% of energy in your house is lost through windows and doors? Prevent heat loss in the winter and heat gain in the summer by using double- or triple-glazed glass panes, and by purchasing windows with a 'low-e' coating or inert gas fills. Steel and fiberglass doors have cores of foam insulation that give them better energy efficiency than wood.

### Seal of approval

Caulk, seal and weather-strip around windows and doorframes, baseboards, ducting and electrical outlets. Remember to close your fireplace flue when you're not enjoying a fire. Install a door sweep to resist against under-the-door drafts. If you live in an older home with a stone fireplace, check for drafts where the stone or brick meets the wall.

### Air flow

Install fans in your home. They pull unwanted heat and humidity from kitchens and bathrooms, cool the air in summer, and push heat down from the ceiling in winter.

### Let there be light

Maximize the natural light that enters your home by installing windows or doors with glass panels on the south side of your house. This will allow sunlight to enter your home in the winter, as well as prevent direct sunlight in the summer, so you can limit the unnecessary heating and cooling of your home.

Replace all standard light bulbs in your home with compact fluorescent ones. These energy-smart bulbs use 70-75% less energy and last up to ten times longer.

Outdoor lighting wastes energy when left on all night. For energy efficiency and security, install a light fixture activated by motion sensors.

### **Go with the (low) flow**

Using less water around the home is all the rage. Install low-flow showerheads, faucets and toilets to reduce water consumption by up to 50%. Repair leaky faucets as quickly as possible.

### **Fine-tune flooring**

While floorboards are still in, carpets are still popular. They cut down on noise and are cozy in the winter months. You can choose an eco/ethical rug, or one made from natural wool, and there is even a carpet made from recycled plastic bottles available.

### **Handy houseplants**

Plants are nature's air purifiers, and if you have any concerns about emissions from furniture, carpets, or even cleaning supplies, place a spider plant, a dracaena, or a rubber plant in your room. Not only do plants look attractive, but they lift your mood, too.

Whatever your eco home improvements entail, when they help the environment and save you money too, *green* is indeed gold.