

Five Easy Home Improvements To Make Your Home Green And Healthy

In an ongoing effort to “go green” and “save the planet,” people are looking for easy, affordable home improvement projects to make their homes greener, healthier, and sustainable.

Home Insulation

Before starting on any project to ensure energy efficiency, it's wise to get started with an energy audit first. A professional inspection by a company or even one's utility company will give homeowners a starting point to know where they are leaking valuable energy—and dollars. Starting prices for energy audits can free upward to \$300.

Experts agree that approximately 50 percent of the homes in the United States have inadequate insulation, if at all. Why is this important? Simply put, a well-insulated home, whether in a room, an attic area, or a room above a garage, can prevent the transference of heat and help reduce a home's energy needs.

It may help maintain some warmth during the winter and keep a room or section cooler during the summer. That being said, a thorough insulation job for ceilings, attic, and walls should be effective all year round.

Other energy-guzzling culprits are older windows and doors that have cracks in the frames. By simply filling the cracks, one's interior temperature remains stable and is more affordable than replacing windows and having to possibly buy new frames.

Water Saving Improvements

There are various methods a homeowner can use to save on water consumption: tankless water heaters, energy-efficient toilets, water reducing filters throughout the home, and even recycling water from sinks, baths, and showers to water gardens and lawns.

While all the rage in many areas, tankless water heaters do cut water heating bills by up to 30 percent. However, this may not be the best route to go as the sudden surge in power that an energy on demand appliance generates may off-set any savings.

According to the EPA, a family of four saves roughly 20,000 gallons of water on an annual basis by simply replacing standard shower heads and faucet heads to low-flow faucets. Low-flow fixtures guarantee reduced water bills without sacrificing personal hygiene.

Much the same can be said for replacing your standard toilet with energy-saving one; however, there is an ongoing debate as to the effectiveness of said models to flush down waste with the first rush of water. Many times, a second flush is required.

Installing an HVAC System For Air Purification

There is nothing like using air conditioning for both air cooling and keeping the air pure and recycled. There are some expenses involved, such as checking air ducts for leaks that waste roughly 20 percent of the air traveling through them, making your system work harder.

Semi-annual maintenance routines will have to be scheduled; however, manufacturers and utility companies offer rebates on

new installations that help make your purchase of equipment more affordable.

Programmable thermostats can save you up to 5-15 percent a year by simply setting them to a cooler temperature at night and setting a higher temperature during the day. That being said, if you set and reset a thermostat manually, there is no need to buy a digital thermostat that typically runs from \$75 to \$250.

Smarter Flooring

With some people subject to allergy problems and respiratory illnesses, a hard flooring such as linoleum, and not vinyl, may be the way to go. According to environmental experts, vinyl flooring is made from dioxin and phthalates that can be major causes of health issues; however, authentic linoleum is constituted from linseed oil and is a better option to vinyl covering.

Cork, bamboo, and recycled wood are other eco-friendly alternatives that are healthier choices than carpet.

Window Replacements

Besides providing your home with light, warmth and ventilation, windows have a great effect on your home's energy efficiency. By replacing your old windows with energy efficient ones, you can significantly reduce energy consumption and lower your energy bills.

If your budget is tight, applying a reflective window film is a more affordable way to reduce energy costs. The film helps block heat gain by cutting sun glare and allowing rays to bounce off the window. Effectiveness depends on window size, orientation, climate, and insulation.

Home improvement and hardware stores carry DIY kits to help

homeowners make the change without replacing the existing windows.

Conclusion

While not being totally free of expenses, by simply implementing the above-mentioned measures in one's home, you can begin to quickly enjoy savings and a healthy, greener lifestyle. Not only this, but a possible return on investment(ROI) may be generated if you later sell your home.

Further Reading:

- *Home Energy Audits – Energy.gov*
- *How to Remove a Toilet – Renovation Kingdom*
- *Understanding Automatic and Programmable Thermostats – The Natural Handyman*

Recommended Reading:

- *Fight Cavities and Gingivitis Naturally With Homemade DIY Oral Health*
- *Total Nutrition – Make your own Homemade Multivitamin and Mineral Formula*
- *Homemade Vitamin C*
- *5 Easy Home Improvements To Make Your Home Green And Healthy*
- *Natural Cleaning Solutions For Your Home*