

# **The Holy Trinity of Modern Day Housing: Environmentally Friendly, Sustainable, and Energy Efficient Houses**

We no longer worry about whether our home is keeping up with the Joneses. These days we are more concerned with our impact on the planet and future generations.

The environmentally friendly home that's sustainable and energy efficient has become the sought after ideal. But finding or creating the "holy trinity" (environmentally friendly, sustainable, and energy efficient) house isn't a simple matter. This guide will help steer you in the right direction. To give you a kick start of inspiration, I've also included a couple of examples of funky and stylish houses that tick the green boxes.

## **Choose Your Location Wisely**

"Location, location, location," is an apt usage of the phrase when it comes to building an environmentally friendly home. A wrong choice can have catastrophic consequences for your dreams of an environmentally friendly and energy efficient home.

For example, think about whether there will be a place for solar panels to get plenty of sunlight. Consider air drainage and wind currents if you're thinking about wind turbines and your gardening options. If you plan to have a plot of organic veggies, select a site that will be suitable for growing foods.

# Install Solar Panels

Don't think that just because you're making your home environmentally friendly you're going to be losing out financially. These days, you can actually save money by going green.

Solar panels are a perfect example. They used to be prohibitively expensive, but it's now cheaper to install solar panels than it is to buy the average car. Solar can provide as much as 85% of your home's energy. It's a no-brainer for those looking to be a little more eco-friendly.

## Focus on the Roof

When it comes to the roof of a green home, most people limit their thoughts to the aforementioned solar panels. But making your roof green goes beyond that. For example, did you know that white roofs are the most energy efficient? This all goes back to the lesson you probably had while in grade school. White is a reflective color, which means the hot sun rays won't impact your home as much. This in turn keeps down air conditioning costs by keeping your home cooler during the summer.

## Insulating Your Home

If you want to get close to net-zero performance, insulation is a key factor. You can keep your bills low by ensuring your home doesn't lose energy in key places. For example, you can use GreenFiber Cocoon to insulate your home. This eco-friendly solution is made almost entirely from recycled newspapers that have been treated with a natural fire retardant to ensure safety. It's also super practical for existing homes, as you can simply blow the material into walls through very small holes.

## Do You Need the Space?

Many of us dream of large and spacious homes, but this is often in direct contrast of the eco ideal. Small homes are far easier to keep energy efficient and they're also far more manageable.

A small overall space doesn't necessarily mean that you'll feel cramped or boxed in. Architects and designers know that people are asking for homes that fit the environmental bill, which means that many seemingly compact homes are actually surprisingly spacious inside.

## Use Eco-Friendly Materials and Products

Building a sustainable and environmentally friendly home isn't always easy, especially when most companies don't place planet earth at the top of the priority list. But luckily the pot of options is growing increasingly larger.

**Paint:** When choosing your new home's paint, always go for a brand that is low in VOCs (volatile organic compounds). These chemicals are incredibly harmful to both you and the environment, but, unfortunately, they are still quite common in your average pot of paint.

**Reclaimed & Recycled Materials:** Many people hold the misconception that recycled or reclaimed products won't look as "nice" as their brand new equivalents. These days, however, the recycled trend has given us funky products that end up being excellent talking points over a dinner party. For example, why not use a doormat made of wasted float rope? Or how about a lamp made out of agricultural waste? You can even buy stools made of a mixture of sand, bacteria, and urine!

**Steel:** Steel is an ideal building material for several

reasons. It's incredibly resilient (It won't rot or twist. It's termite resistant). It has an impressive strength to weight ratio. And it is very versatile.

Steel is also an environmentally friendly choice. Its lightweight nature means little of it is required compared to other material. Steel is also 100% recyclable and will go the distance It's extremely unlikely you'll ever need to replace or do any structural work to houses built with a steel framework.

**Energy Star:** When buying electrical products for your home, always look for the Energy Star. This guarantees that your chosen item is energy efficient, which can make a huge difference to the amount of energy your home uses.

Energy Star products are now common. Most are affordable and perform to perfection. In other words, there's no excuse!

## **Examples of Awesome, Sustainable Homes**

Sustainable homes aren't yet the norm, but they're no longer rare futuristic sights or impractical pipe dreams of the eco-friendly. There are countless examples across the globe of homes that aren't just soft on the environment, but also have the wow-factor and are sustainable to boot.

Waste House in Brighton, UK was Built entirely (well, almost) from discarded waste. This Brighton abode is the seminal example of the sustainable home. It's amazing what 20,000 toothbrushes and 4,000 DVD cases can do!

Energy Neutral Residence 2.0 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, is the perfect weapon to the argument that style and sustainability can go hand in hand. Its insulation is based on a NASA prototype and uses a discarded tree as part of the design. An on-site wind turbine provides the little energy

used.

### **Further reading:**

- *Solar Panels Cheaper than Cars – Business Insider*
- *Roof Colors – Roofline*
- *Stool Made of Sand and Urine – Dezeen*
- *Benefits of Steel Framed Houses – Wide Span Sheds*

### **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*