

A FEW SUGGESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN GOING GREEN

Going green has become more than just a trend, especially when it comes to home remodeling or improvements.

Before you begin any improvements, consider these five tips.

- 1. Demand for green housing has been growing—46% of buyers would like a green home, according to an August 2007 report by the National Association of Realtors (NAR) on home buyers' preference.**
- 2. Before purchasing any of these items for your home, check with your local gas and electric company for possible tax credits and rebates. Also check with federal, state, and local government agencies. See the references on the last page.**
- 3. Estimate your potential savings by using one of the many online free energy audit calculators. See the references on the last page.**
- 4. If you need to buy appliances consider ENERGY STAR® rated appliances. You can get more detailed information about the ENERGY STAR® program on their web site as well as a list of products that qualify for rebates.**

Plumbing

Fix defective plumbing or dripping faucets. A single dripping hot water faucet can waste 212 gallons of water a month.



Hot Water Heater

- Insulate your water heater. Wrapping your water heater with a water heater insulation blanket will cost you about \$20 up front and save you about \$102 per year.
- Consider natural gas on-demand or tankless water heaters. Research shows savings can be up to 30% compared with a standard natural gas storage tank water heater.

Washer and Dryer

- If you are considering replacing your washing machine, look at buying a front loading machine instead of a top loading one. Front loading machines use less detergent, less water and do less damage to clothes. An added benefit—clothes come out drier and require less drying time.
- ENERGY STAR® rated clothes washer will save you approximately \$50 per year on your utility bill and approximately 7,000 gallons of water a year.
- If you have to replace the dryer, look for a clothes dryer with a moisture sensor that automatically shuts off the machine when your clothes are dry.

Bathrooms

- Consider installing low-flush toilets. They use less water and are quieter when flushed. Older toilets use as much as 5 gallons per flush (GPF), compared to new models' 1.6 GPF. Dual-flush models save even more.
- Check to see if the toilet tank's flapper is leaking. Pour food coloring into the water in the tank, wait two hours, and then check to see if any color has seeped into the bowl. If it has, your tank's flapper is leaking, either from mineral build-up or worn parts. After you flush the dye away so it doesn't stain, head to the hardware store for a replacement flapper assembly and install. Toilet leaks waste up to a gallon of water per minute. That's more than 43,000 gallons a month.
- Install low flow showerheads. They can save as much as 14,600 gallons of water a year—especially if you limit your showers to 10 minutes. It will also save you \$22 on your annual water bill, and \$150 per year on water heating.
- Consider adding a skylight in your bathroom to increase natural light and decrease your dependence on electricity.
- For finishing touches, find caulk, adhesives and sealants that are specifically made for the bathroom, and are labeled either low-VOCs or no-VOCs (volatile organic compounds).



Dishwasher

Consider replacing the dishwasher with an ENERGY STAR® dishwasher. These require an average of 4 gallons of water per load, compared with the 24 gallons it takes to do them in the sink. Using one will save 5,000 gallons of water, \$40 in utility costs, and 230 hours of your time each year.

Refrigerator

- Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Test them by closing the door over a dollar bill so it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull the bill out easily, the latch may need adjusting, the seal may need replacing, or you might want to consider buying a new energy efficient unit.
- Consider replacing the refrigerator with an ENERGY STAR® unit. Most any refrigerator made before 2000 is an energy waster compared to today's most efficient models.



Oven and Cooktop

- Check the seal on your oven door for cracks or tears. Even a small tear or gap can allow heat to escape.
- Replace old and worn cooktop burners with new ones—they will reflect the heat better and save energy. If you need new ones, buy quality. The best on the market can save as much as 1/3 of the energy used when cooking on top of the stove!

- Consider using gas. A gas stove costs less than half as much to operate as an electric one, provided it is equipped with electronic ignition instead of a pilot light. The electronic pilotless ignitions reduce gas usage by about 30% over a constantly burning pilot light.



- If you don't have one, consider buying a self-cleaning oven. They use less energy for normal cooking because of higher insulation levels.
- Consider a convection oven. Convection ovens distribute heat more evenly than ordinary ovens, so cooking time and cooking temperatures can be reduced, cutting energy use by about a third, on average.

Heating, Cooling and Lighting

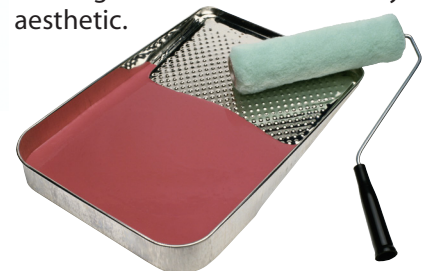
- Replace as many light bulbs as you can with compact fluorescent light bulbs. You'll get more light and use less energy.
- Install a programmable thermostat. You can save as much as 10% on heating and cooling bills a year.
- Install ENERGY STAR® ceiling fan/light combination units. ENERGY STAR® rated ceiling fan/light combination units are about 50% more efficient than conventional units and can save approximately \$10 per year.
- Wrap heating and cooling ducts with duct wrap, or use mastic sealant.
- Insulate ceilings to R-30 standards if your attic has less than R-19.



- Caulk windows, doors and anywhere air leaks in or out. Do not caulk around water heater and furnace exhaust pipes.
- Weatherstrip around windows and doors.
- Replace old windows with new high performance dual pane windows. Select windows with air leak ratings of 0.3 cubic feet per minute or less.
- If your old air conditioner/heating unit is on its way out, replace it with an ENERGY STAR® labeled energy-efficient model.

Around the House

- Install Solar Panels. You can also invest in a small solar electric or photovoltaic (PV) system. This system has solar panels that collect the sun's energy and convert it into useable electricity for your home. Solar panels are advanced enough to follow the sun throughout the day, but in general, they produce less energy when there is less sun.
- For indoor paint jobs, use low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints to create a healthy and attractive home. More and more paint lines are offering selections to meet every aesthetic.



Flooring

- If your carpet or other flooring is old, worn out, and needs replacing, consider wood floors. Home buyers are attracted to wood floors for their beauty and warmth as well as for practical reasons:
 - hardwood is easy to clean and maintain,
 - hardwood can be sanded, refinished and renewed, and
 - hardwood promotes a healthier indoor living environment.
- Check out these facts from a 2006 national survey conducted by the National Wood Flooring Association:
 - 99% of agents agree that homes with hardwood floors are easier to sell,
 - 82% agree that homes with hardwood floors sell faster, and
 - 90% agree that home with hardwood floors sell for more money.
- When looking to install hardwood floors, look for products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This means that utmost care was taken to harvest wood using sustainable methods. Other natural floor coverings include cork, bamboo, some linoleums and concrete are also available.



Landscape

- Plant a tree. Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of the energy a typical household uses for cooling.
- Consider water use when replacing the irrigation system—native plants are well adapted to the amount of water your community usually gets and will cut down on overall watering needs.
- Replace outdoor floodlights with compact-fluorescent versions—they're just as bright and use 1/4 the energy.
- Replace low-wattage halogen landscape bulbs with LED versions. They cut energy use by over 80% and can last for 10 years or more.
- Install motion sensors on any nonessential lights. New versions just screw right into your existing light socket. A typical 100-watt floodlight, if used for six hours per day, can consume up to \$40 of electricity a year.
- Consider solar-powered outdoor lighting for walks, paths and more.

Pool and Spa

- Consider a time clock that will give you day-to-day, automatic control over your filter's and heater's hours of operation.
- Consider replacing your old pump. Pools are commonly equipped with larger pumps than needed. Replacing an oversized pool pump—even one in good working order—with a smaller, energy-efficient pump is an investment that usually pays for itself in just two to four years.
- Go solar as solar pool heating systems are especially effective during the summer months and can back up a regular pool heater in the spring and the fall. A solar pool heating system can be a significant investment, so make sure the savings have a payback time of less than, or equal to, the useful life of the equipment.

GOING GREEN

For more information on going green:

- **Office of Energy Efficiency**
www.energysavers.gov
- **American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy**
The Most Efficient Appliances
www.aceee.org/consumerguide/mostenef.htm
- **ENERGY STAR®**
www.energystar.gov
- **DOE Consumer Guide to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy**
www.eere.energy.gov/consumerinfor/
- **Your local gas and electric company**