



# green

HOME GUIDE

Provided By:



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# WHAT IS A 'green' HOME?

Generally speaking, a home can be considered "green" when energy efficiency, water and resource conservation, sustainable or recycled products and indoor air quality considerations are incorporated into the process of building or remodeling it. Green homes must take the home's overall impact on the environment into account, and minimize that environmental impact.

New construction and remodeling the "green" way means using methods and construction materials that have a minimal impact on the environment. Green homes use more materials from natural and recycled sources. A green home is healthier for its inhabitants and less wasteful and polluting of the land, water and air around it. A green home also saves its owner operating costs but, according to the U.S. Green Building Council, the benefits go far beyond financial.

#### **There are positive Environmental results from a green home...**

- + Enhances and protects ecosystems and biodiversity
- + Improves air and water quality
- + Reduces solid waste
- + Conserves natural resources

#### **...in addition to Personal Health & Community benefits.**

- + Improves air, thermal and acoustic environments
- + Enhances occupant comfort and health
- + Minimizes strain on local infrastructure
- + Contributes to overall quality of life

Overall, a win-win-win-win-win-win...

For more ideas on how to make your home green, contact your local RE/MAX agent.



## HAVE YOUR HOME ‘DIAGNOSED’

Consider giving your house an Energy Physical, to see how it fares on the Home Energy Rating System. Once you’ve identified problem areas, fixes can be relatively inexpensive. Whether it’s replacing windows or fixing insulation, most upgrades don’t require a major overhaul. Also, contact your local utility company and inquire about a “blower” test, which will pressurize your house and calculate how much air conditioning or heat is leaking out.

## APPLIANCES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**CLOTHES WASHER** By choosing an ENERGY STAR (energystar.gov) qualified model, consumers can save over \$400 on utility bills over the life of the washer. These models use 50% less energy and 40% less water. A horizontal-axis washer needs less water because the tub, itself, rotates.

**DISHWASHERS** Qualified dishwashers are at least 25% more efficient than new conventional models and will save the average consumer \$100 on utility bills over the dishwasher’s lifetime. Also, compared to washing dishes by hand with running water, using an ENERGY STAR qualified dishwasher will save nearly 5,000 gallons per year.

**REFRIGERATOR** Models manufactured prior to 1993 can cost up to \$125 a year to run, but operating a qualified ENERGY STAR refrigerator can save up to \$55 annually.

**TOILETS, SHOWERS AND FAUCETS** These account for 60% of water usage in the home, according to the EPA. Replacing these items with more efficient models can save up to 11,000 gallons of water per year.

**OTHER PRODUCTS** A number of other items have earned the ENERGY STAR rating, including room air conditioners and compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). Qualified CFLs use 66% less energy than a standard incandescent bulb and last up to ten times longer. Replacing a 100-watt incandescent with a 25-watt CFL can save you an average of \$60 in energy costs over the life of the bulb and provides equivalent light output.



# 5 ESSENTIAL THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- 1. AIM FOR A TIGHT THERMAL ENVELOPE.** The goal is to minimize or eliminate completely, the leakage of conditioned air.
- 2. THINKING SOLAR DOESN'T JUST INVOLVE SOLAR PANELS.** Pay attention to where the sun streams into your house. Controlling the amount of light coming in can drastically affect your heating or cooling bills.
- 3. CONSIDER YOUR HOME'S CIRCULATORY SYSTEM.** Evaluate the heating, ventilating and air-conditioning systems and make sure they are running at peak efficiency.
- 4. FACTOR IN FLUIDS.** If it's time to upgrade your washing machine, consider water-saving and energy-efficient front loaders. Apply that same water-consciousness when replacing faucets, toilets and water heaters. For the yard, think about sprinkler systems that automatically respond to weather conditions.
- 5. POWER-UP.** Always consider ENERGY STAR appliances, compact fluorescent light bulbs and flooring and paints with low-volatility organic compounds. They're less toxic and may leave you breathing easier.



## green RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Many energy-saving updates are fairly inexpensive and pay for themselves in the first year.

ENERGY EFFICIENT REPLACEMENT	ADDITIONAL COST	ANNUAL SAVINGS	ANNUAL ROI
Low-Flow Showerheads	\$180	\$300	166%
Programmable Thermostat	\$115	\$180	156%
Compact Florescent Bulbs	\$60	\$80	133%
Hot Water Heater Blanket	\$25	\$30	120%
Electronics Power Strips*	\$20	\$24	120%

\*Plug your entertainment/computer systems into multi-plug power strips and turn them off overnight.



# BUYING OR SELLING A HOME?

Energy upgrades that save money make a home more appealing and, therefore, more valuable. Upgrades vary and can be implemented on almost any budget. Here are some examples of the features and fixtures you should focus on.

**ENERGY-EFFICIENT FEATURES** Energy-efficient qualities of a green home should include appliances, windows, and water heating systems, which likely will have ENERGY STAR ratings ([energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)). Your home should also include energy-efficient lighting fixtures and bulbs. Compact fluorescent bulbs will last up to 10 times longer and use 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs. They also produce less heat than incandescent bulbs and, therefore, can reduce the costs of cooling your home. Renewable energy sources, such as photovoltaic electricity and water heating systems, further decrease the overall energy consumption within the home and are highly desirable.

**ENERGY-EFFICIENT INSULATION** Spray-on foam insulation fills and seals wall cavities better than the fiberglass used in most residential construction. It costs more initially but as energy costs rise, more homeowners are opting for it. Be sure to check the weather stripping on windows and doors, and replace them if necessary. The pleasing aesthetic of a new front door is a longstanding selling tool, and if it's tighter, so much the better.

**WATER-EFFICIENT FEATURES** Fixtures and appliances such as low-flow showerheads, faucets, and toilets, and ENERGY STAR dishwashers and washing machines all conserve water. Programmed, low-volume irrigation systems, rainwater collection systems, wastewater treatment systems, and hot water recirculation systems also save water. Fixing leaky faucets is an easy do-it-yourself project that makes your home more appealing and creates big savings. A leak that produces one drop per second can waste 2,000 gallons of water per year!

**RESOURCE-EFFICIENT FEATURES** These aspects — from home size, to orientation on the lot, to floor plan layout — relate to the design of the home and development of the lot. The house orientation and design should take advantage of natural daylight to reduce lighting needs, and should use strategies to reduce heat gain in the summer and heat loss in the winter. Renewable materials, including rapidly-renewable wood such as bamboo, and recycled-content materials in carpets, tiles, and concrete formulations also reduce environmental impact.

**INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES** The heating, air conditioning and ventilation system (HVAC) must be appropriately sized for an efficient and properly ventilated home. Fans in the kitchen and bathrooms should cycle fresh air inside, and release stale air. Of course, programmable thermostats are a simple way to improve resource efficiency. Costs and savings depend on the size of the home and your temperature preferences, but these units typically save 10-15% annually — and cost as little as \$40.

**OUTDOOR FEATURES** In a green home, care has been taken to preserve trees and other vegetation native to the area. Landscaping should contain plants that are appropriate for the climate and grouped according to water needs. Driveways and other impervious surfaces should be reduced as much as possible and may be composed of gravel, permeable block pavers or other permeable systems.

Many of these are green house features that can be added or addressed anytime. But even the small steps you take today to make your home more energy efficient will produce big returns — for the environment and your wallet.

Green House Guide Sources: National Association of Home Builders/[nahbgreen.com](http://nahbgreen.com); US Green Building Council/[Green Building Research/usgbc.com](http://GreenBuildingResearch/usgbc.com); US Dept of Energy/[US Environmental Protection Agency/energystar.gov](http://US Environmental Protection Agency/energystar.gov); [Newsweek/newsweek.com](http://Newsweek/newsweek.com); Do It Green Minnesota/[doitgreen.org](http://doitgreen.org); Go-Green.com; [GreenAndSave.com](http://GreenAndSave.com).

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