How to Make Green Home Improvements for Your Home

We all seem to gravitate toward green home projects. Over the years I've completed my fair share of [home improvement projects](https://www.thespruce.com/do-this-remodel-yourself-or-hire-a-pro-1822430), doing all the work myself; however, like many aging baby-boomers, I'm getting a little bit too old and, in my particular case, too cranky, to keep it up. So, I now hire contractors to do the work.

An important consideration to me — which has evolved into a huge movement in the United States — is to try to incorporate environmentally friendly products and green ideas into my home improvement projects. I see no sense in adding to the pollution already abundant in the world when there are affordable green solutions to traditional building practices.

I'd like to share with you a few ideas about how you can make green [home improvements,](https://www.thebalance.com/average-crawl-space-encapsulation-cost-4778120)without breaking the bank. Best of all, your green projects will promote healthy living for your family and our planet.

## Tankless Water Heater

Tankless water heaters are either gas or electric and can be installed inside or outside of your home. Electric tankless water heaters cost less, but gas is more cost efficient. Tankless water heaters heat water on demand, so you aren't wasting energy by continually heating 40 to 50 gallons of water when you aren't using it. You will never run out of hot water with a tankless water heater. You can buy tankless water heaters that heat water in just seconds.

## Green Types of Flooring

* **Bamboo Flooring**  
  Lots of people think bamboo floors are made from wood, but bamboo is a grass. It grows quickly, within 3 to 5 years, so it's a renewable resource. Some bamboo is grown and harvested from Hawaii or China. You can install bamboo with the knots vertically or horizontally. Bamboo is resilient and comes in a variety of colors and shades. It's easy to install bamboo.
* **Marmoleum Flooring**  
  Marmoleum is the brand name of a type of linoleum. It's a manufactured product made from natural raw materials such as linseed oil, a binding agent obtained from pine trees (without harming the trees), renewable wood products, ground limestone, and jute, which is a plant fiber. Marmoleum floors are stain resistant, do not absorb water and are biodegradable at the end of its useful life.
* **Eco-Friendly Wood Flooring**  
  Certain types of exotic hardwoods such as Brazilian Cherry or White Tigerwood are grown in South America. These are harvested from well-managed forests with renewable resources. Brazilian Cherry is engineered wood made from 3-ply construction using formaldehyde-free adhesives. It is generally more expensive but resilient and harder than oak.

## Solar Roof Panels

Many utility companies, especially in California, offers rebates and credits to homeowners who install solar panels, and you don't have to be a [first time home buyer](https://www.thebalance.com/tips-for-a-first-time-home-buyer-1798235) to qualify. In addition, excess electricity can also roll-back the solar power owner's electrical meter — in essence, sending electricity back to the utility company — netting homeowners a credit. It's best to install solar when installing a new roof.

## Cool Roofs

The best cool roof is white, but light-colors also reflect infrared rays. These roofs remain much cooler than those covered with traditional roofing materials. They work by reflecting the sun away from the roof and giving off heat rapidly. Cool roof materials can be made from metal, asphalt or tile, and it's almost impossible to tell them apart from traditional materials.

## Reclaimed Wood

Reclaimed or salvaged lumber can be used to build walls, as support beams or in roof construction. Many green companies specialize in obtaining building materials from older homes that are about to be torn down or dismantled. Instead of filling up landfills, previously used lumber is put back into new construction.

## Dual Pane Windows

Dual pane windows offer insulation against the elements and soundproofing qualities. After I installed dual pane windows, I no longer woke up when the sprinklers came on in the morning. Many energy-efficient windows qualify for rebates and credits. They are available in any style and can be made from vinyl, metal or wood.

## Programmable Thermostat

By installing a programmable thermostat, your heating and cooling needs will be controlled automatically, up to 4 times a day. You can set a thermostat to turn on when you wake up and turn off when you leave the house, which lets you fight global warming and save on your utility bills at the same time.

## [Energy Star Ceiling Fans](https://www.thebalance.com/how-to-install-remote-controlled-ceiling-fans-1798303)

ENERGY STAR is a government-backed program that identifies energy-efficient products. Its [ceiling fans](https://www.thebalance.com/how-to-install-remote-controlled-ceiling-fans-1798303) are 50% more efficient than conventional fans and use less energy to operate. Many are equipped with a remote control. The receiver part of the remote is nestled inside the fan body itself, while the control mounts either on the wall or into the wall as a switch.

## Low VOC Paint

Nothing is cheaper and transforms a room faster than giving the walls and ceiling a new coat of paint, especially when [preparing your home for sale](https://www.thebalance.com/how-to-prepare-your-house-for-sale-1799018). The problem is paint contains volatile organic compounds (VOC) that contribute to [air pollution](https://www.thebalance.com/health-effects-of-air-pollution-4772278), smog and respiratory problems. By choosing low VOC paint, you can help to save the planet and end up with a fresh-smelling yet beautiful room.

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