

Remodeling Goes Green

The next time you add a remodeling project to your to-do list, consider the benefits of going green. It's an easy way to change the world—one room at a time.

Green home remodeling typically involves saving energy, improving indoor air quality, conserving resources (by using sustainable, recycled, or used materials), and reducing waste.

And the benefits are many. Green remodeling can lower home energy consumption by 30 to 50 percent. In addition, using recycled and sustainable materials in the remodeling process helps reduce your use of natural resources. Plus green remodeling creates lower-maintenance, healthier homes.

Worth the Expense

Concerned about the cost of green remodeling? Don't be, says green building expert David Johnston. "Green remodeling makes the home more affordable on a month-to-month basis by reducing energy and water bills," he says. "When we're talking energy or water improvements, don't consider these as costs. Consider them investments that pay back through the life of the house."

Johnston says that if you're remodeling on a budget, the first thing you should do is make your home as energy efficient as possible. "In every remodeling job, we want to be doing energy upgrades or improvements while we're there," he says. At the top of the list is ensuring your home is properly insulated. "No matter what your remodeling project is, blowing insulation into the attic is a very inexpensive, high-yielding investment in the home," Johnston adds.

All about Quality

Concerns about the quality and availability of green building products are unfounded, Johnston stresses. "People say green

products aren't as good as the real thing. That's not true. In actuality, most green products were developed to do something better than the conventional product they're replacing," he says.

And as more large lumber chains and home improvement stores introduce their own green product lines, it's easier than ever to incorporate these items into your home remodeling projects.

Learn More

If you're undertaking a remodeling project, Johnston recommends seeking the help of a certified green builder or remodeler. "If they have certification from someone, that gives a much higher degree of confidence that they know what they're doing," he says. To find a list of certified contractors, visit www.greenadvantage.org. And to learn more about green remodeling, check out the book *Green Remodeling* by David Johnston and Kim Master.

Top Green Remodeling Moves

Not sure what to do to make your home remodeling project more environmentally friendly? These easy steps top green remodeling expert David Johnston's list:

1. Insulate the attic and exterior walls
2. Caulk and weather-strip
3. Use no-VOC paints
4. Conserve water by replacing old toilets with new low-flush models and installing faucet aerators and low-flow showerheads
5. Install compact fluorescent lightbulbs wherever possible