

ECO-FRIENDLY HOME IMPROVEMENTS GUIDE THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

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Abstract

Eco-friendly, energy-saving home features aren't just good for the environment—they're also good for your wallet and for making your listing stand out from the competition in Canberra. If you're thinking about selling or renovating your home, trying to lower your energy output, or simply want to save money on your monthly bills, you've come to the right place.

1. Introduction

We are here with this new and the latest PDF that may be very helpful and informative for you. Here, you are going to know your eco-friendly home improvements guide, which is essential for you to understand correctly. If you want to make your home eco-friendly in Canberra, then you should explore this PDF right now.

2. Materials to Avoid in an Eco-Friendly Home

Knowing what to look for in an eco-friendly home in Canberra isn't very complicated: You want energy efficient systems, well-insulated windows and walls, maybe a small indoor herb garden, and other common upgrades. But do you know what to avoid? The chemicals and materials that go into some of the more structural parts of your house (like adhesives, building materials, and paint) could be emitting dangerous toxins that affect you and your family. Here are four materials to make sure you avoid.

VOCs

VOCs, or volatile organic compounds, are organic pollutants that show up in a wide variety of common household and office products: Paint, cleaning materials, permanent markers, and furniture (just to name a few). They affect indoor air quality, and can cause side effects ranging from headaches and nausea to liver or kidney damage. So how can you avoid them? Look for "low-VOC" or "no-VOC" versions of your favorite products; buy the smallest amount you need; and use them only in ventilated areas.

Phthalates

The chemicals known as phthalates show up in everything from perfume and shower curtains to glue and insecticides – so they aren't that easy to avoid. According to the National Library of Medicine, exposure to phthalates comes through "air, water, or food," and though the effects of phthalates aren't confirmed, they are "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen." Steer clear of them in your kitchen by avoiding food packaged (or stored) in plastic or cans, and microwaving leftovers in glass bowls instead of plastic.

Formaldehyde

You're most likely to find formaldehyde in mass-produced building materials and pressed-wood products, like plywood paneling, MDF, and particleboard that are held together with formaldehyde-heavy adhesives. According to the EPA in Canberra, formaldehyde emissions can make your eyes water or nauseate you – and it has also been linked with cancer in lab animals. To reduce your risk, look for pressed wood products that are made with phenol resins instead of urea resins and make sure your home is well-ventilated.



Petroleum

If you want to outfit your home in Canberra with a minimum of environmental impact, then you want to avoid as much petroleum use as possible. And that doesn't just mean getting a hybrid car and switching to alternative energy: Petroleum goes into everything from paraffin wax and Teflon to nail polish and plastic, according to Mother Nature Network. The easiest way to limit your use? Become a more conscious consumer and think twice before you buy anything new.

3. Useful and Eco-Friendly Products for Your Home

Your home can be a great place to start in embracing more eco-friendly items and practicing a more sustainable way of living in Canberra. Though the solution to a healthier climate and planet isn't more products, when you're in need of a new throw pillow or accent chair, eco-friendly and sustainable is the way to go.

Eco-friendly can mean a lot of different things in terms of designing your space. Home decor that falls under this category can be made out of recycled materials, sustainable fabrics, or come from a process that cuts down on waste or utilizes innovative materials. Offsetting the carbon footprint caused by production and giving back to causes that are working to protect the planet and its ecosystems are other ways in which home goods can be better for the environment too.

Below are decorative objects, organizational solutions, and cleaning supplies that'll help you start curating a home that's more eco-focused.

Bloomscape Ecopots Round Pot – 16"

Plant parents who are focused on being eco-friendly know that it's important to be aware of details like location and plastic use when purchasing a new leafy addition. But this terracotta-colored pot from Bloomscape is a gorgeous home for a plant and is comprised of 80% recycled plastic (much of which has been taken out of the ocean).

Coyuchi Air Weight® Organic Towels

The bathroom is a great room for implementing more eco-friendly products, especially when it comes to soft goods. There are plenty of unique sustainable fabrics on the market, including Coyuchi's organic cotton towels and bath sheets, which are GOTS certified, fair trade certified, and free of toxic chemicals.

Full Circle Bottle Service Refillable Glass Spray Bottle

Cleaning can be made a lot greener with a reusable spray bottle such as this. Not to mention, it looks far chicer than any bottle from the cleaning aisle. It's perfect for filling up with your own cleaning solutions and the sleek glass container is protected by a handy silicone cap.

Burrow Arch Nomad Armchair

Midcentury modern design enthusiasts will adore this accent chair as it's a timeless nod to the popular era. Plus, it was made with more eco-friendly practices in mind. Its frame is crafted out of wood that hails from responsibly managed forests and the fabric covering the chair and cushion is upcycled. It's free of harmful chemicals, too, and has a lower carbon footprint.

LSA International Canopy Carafe & Cork Stopper

Recycled glass and cork are the two sustainable materials that have gone into making this sleek carafe. Whether you enjoy infusing your own water or need something for keeping hydrated while spending time outside, this eco-friendly option makes a good addition to your home.

Food52 Five Two Down-to-Earth Compost Bin

Food composting has been completely transformed in homes. Rather than transferring scraps to a large pile outdoors, even small living spaces can partake when they have a compact bin such as Food52's modern option. Just 10 inches across, it doesn't take up too much room and looks lovely perched in any corner of your kitchen.

Full Circle Clean Again Super Absorbent Cleaning Cloths

Avid cleaners and cooks both know how difficult it can be to cut back on paper towel usage. Regular towels don't quite cut it for some activities but paper towels aren't the most earth-friendly choice. The perfect solution is reusable cleaning cloths that absorb everything just as well and can be used over and over again.

The Citizenry Mercado Woven Hamper

Scoot over, plastic laundry hampers—this stylish option completely blows those out of the water and happens to be more earth-friendly, too. Woven out of Mexican palm leaves by a fair-trade cooperative, this is a much more thoughtful and sustainable product for storing worn clothes, towels, or throw blankets.



The Little Market Handwoven Fringe Throw in Almond

Textiles can be large producers of microplastics, but this cozy throw is crafted out of 100% cotton and dyed with natural ingredients, typically found locally. Though it's a pretty eco-friendly choice, it's worth knowing, too, that the artisans behind these comfy blankets are given access to helpful resources, paid fair wages, and are able to work from home-based studios.

Coyuchi Sonoma Organic Pillow Cover

Outfit your pillows with covers that not only appeal to you visually but are made sustainably, too. Made of 100% organic cotton and GOTS certified, these pillows are also produced in a factory that takes eco-friendly a step further by recycling roughly 90% of its wastewater. And Coyuchi axes plastic bags by shipping these covers in a reusable organic cloth bag instead.

Minna Lines Rug Oat

Looking outside of big box stores can often lead to more unique products that are better for the environment and make your home stand out from others. This stylish pick from MINNA—which comes in two color variations—is crafted in a family-led Peruvian cooperative and utilizes a sustainable mix of wool and cotton.

P.F. Candle Co. Golden Coast— 7.2 oz Soy Candle

Poured in a glass jar and made of soy wax, this candle is ideal for bringing warmth to the corner of a living room or a bedside table—both literally and figuratively. P.F. Candle Co. recently became Climate Neutral Certified at the end of 2021, which means they offsets their carbon footprint and are required to create and implement a plan for decreasing emissions, too.

Costa Nova Plano Eco Gres Collection 10" Bowl

Hailing from Portugal, Costa Nova has several eco-friendly practices in place that make its dinnerware, serve ware, and cups less harmful to the planet. It uses local clays all across the board, but its Plano line, in particular, really takes eco-friendly to heart. It's crafted out of Eco Gres clay, which is 90% recycled. The company also treats its leftover wastewater and reuses it for cleaning.

EKOBO Claro Recycled Bamboo Large Storage Jar Set - Sunrise

Multipurpose containers are a must in any home to keep countertops, desks, and other areas tidy. This set of three dishwasher-safe containers is FSC-certified and composed of a creative biodegradable material that's borne from leftover organic bamboo sawdust.

West Elm Emmerson® Reclaimed Wood Coffee Table - Stone Gray

Purchasing items that are recycled, upcycled, or made in a way that doesn't require new resources to be used is a great way to be more eco-friendly. The construction of this reclaimed wood coffee table was made by taking pine wood pieces from a variety of different places. It's also FSC-certified and adaptable for a wide range of home styles.

4. Easy Green Living Ideas to Incorporate in Your Home Routines

Want to be more eco-friendly in Canberra, but not sure where to start? Use these tips to make your household tasks environmentally wise—and save some money, too!

Big goals are great, but small switches add up, especially when it comes to sustainability. It might not be feasible to cut your household waste down to zero or completely avoid single-use plastic. But there are many simple, everyday choices that you can tweak or substitute to make your home and lifestyle greener. Start by trying out a few new habits, then work your way up to larger eco-friendly commitments. Here are 6 easy things you can do today to lessen your environmental impact—and save some cash while you do it. These steps will get you on the road to an eco-friendly home fast.

1. Focus on maintenance.

Proper maintenance ensures things work the way they should and don't prematurely need replacement, which creates more waste and expense. Change filters in appliances regularly to improve their energy efficiency. Take care of your tools, and keep up with routine home maintenance tasks. Every time you invest a few extra minutes in maintenance, you'll save yourself from having to spend extra dollars on new stuff.

2. Repair things when they break.
This might seem obvious, but ignore a fix and you'll have to either spend more on upkeep or on replacement. That can lead to all sorts of non-green costs, such as when you buy a new model and have to throw away all the packaging. Consider ways to repair or refurbish damaged goods instead of immediately trashing them.

3. Check your stash before you shop.

Many of us are guilty of grabbing an item while we're at the store without realizing we already have one (or several) at home. This wastes not only your dollars but also product and packaging. Always

take a quick inventory before you shop—and store like items together so it's easy to see what you have and what you don't.



4. Be conscious of your trash.

Whenever you get rid of something, consider whether the garbage can is the best place for it. In many communities, paper, plastics, glass, and metal can all be recycled, while food scraps and other organic materials can be used for compost. As for other icky stuff we use, such as oil-base paints, municipalities want to help you dispose of these materials responsibly. Local recycling rules are clear about what you can (and cannot) toss into your bin. If you're in doubt, the internet can help you find where to unload hazardous items.

5. Switch to LED bulbs.

Swapping conventional lightbulbs for LEDs is a simple way to make a day-to-day change that really does trim your energy and purchase costs. LEDs use at least 75% less energy and last up to 25 times longer than other types of bulbs. They also come in dimmable options and are available for nearly every use, from outdoor to indoor fixtures.

6. Assess your shopping habits.

A big part of living more sustainably is considering the big picture. That means thinking about more than the product on the shelves and the choice in front of you. As you shop, consider what it takes to make a product and get it to you. What does the manufacturing process look like? Is there a locally made or closer-to-you option? Then think through what the product does once it's in your home. For example, off-gassing, which can harm your indoor air quality, is a common problem with paints, furniture, and other household items. How long the product will last and how much use you will get out of it are also key considerations. Lastly, ask yourself what happens to the product when you're done with it. Can it be transitioned back into the manufacturing stream, or can it return to the earth

in a way that doesn't add any trash? Taking a few moments of pause before you make a purchase can help you shop more consciously and sustainably.

5. Eco-Friendly Home Improvements And How They Make A Difference

To help the environment, you don't need to go completely off-grid. No matter your budget and lifestyle, there are eco-friendly home improvements that can lessen your carbon footprint, reduce your amount of waste and support the well-being of our planet.

What Does It Mean to Be Eco-Friendly?

At its essence, being "eco-friendly" means you are not causing harm to the environment or people—but that can look like many different things. For example, greenhouse gases are almost inevitably emitted during the production and shipping of products. However, a company can work to minimize and even offset those effects (which is called having a "negative carbon footprint") through its policies and practices.

On individual levels, we also inevitably impact the environment. On the flip side, we can also take steps to protect the environment, such as limiting plastic use, reducing demand for non-renewable energy sources, eating less meat and more organic products and so on. When it comes to eco-friendly home improvements, it's even easier: With simple switches and updates, you can help the earth for years.

How to Tell If a Product Is Eco-Friendly

Once you understand the benefits of choosing eco-friendly products in Canberra, it's not a hard sell to start seeking them out. However, it is wise to be cautious about how a product is actually helping the environment. Unfortunately, some companies have seized on the marketing opportunity and advertise their products as sustainable or eco-friendly without that being true—this is a practice known as "greenwashing."

To ensure you are investing in products that are truly eco-friendly, look for items that are certified by credible organizations, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Energy Star program, USDA Organic or Green Seal Certified.

Eco-Friendly Home Improvements

Many sustainable home improvement swaps can be done in a matter of minutes—like switching out your lightbulbs. Other projects call for more skill and an upfront expense, but the benefits that come from eco-friendly home improvements are priceless.

1. Switch to LED Light Bulbs

When you're ready to dip your toes into the waters of sustainable home improvements, switching to energy-efficient lighting is a simple, inexpensive way to start: Next time a lightbulb goes out, just replace it with an LED bulb. Truly, using this option is a no-brainer.

Although LED bulbs are slightly more expensive to purchase than traditional incandescent bulbs, they pay off in terms of longevity and energy savings. You can use LED bulbs throughout the house as well as for holiday lights or landscape lights.



2. Upgrade Your Windows

Heating and cooling your home uses a lot of energy throughout the year—and old windows can be a significant contributor to your energy demands. According to Canberra. Department of Energy, about 25% of home energy is wasted through windows. The good news is that an effective way to cut down on that waste is by upgrading to dual-paned windows that are properly sealed. Although new windows can be costly, there is a good return on investment, and rebates or credits are often available.

3. Install a Tankless Water Heater

With traditional tank water heaters, water is continuously held and heated in the tank until it is needed. However, if you don't need that much water, then you're wasting a significant amount of energy each year just to keep an excess amount of water heated. As an eco-friendly alternative, tankless water heaters work by heating water on-demand as it passes through pipes—which comes with the added benefit of never running out of hot water. (No more cold showers!)

Although tankless water heaters are more expensive to purchase and install than tank water heaters, the energy savings and better lifespan can ultimately help offset the cost.

4. Update Your Plumbing

Since 1994, federal standards have required that plumbing fixtures use less water. That means if your toilet, bathtub, shower or other plumbing fixtures pre-date the early 1990s, you are likely wasting a lot of water (and money) each year. For example, by switching to a WaterSense labeled toilet model, you can reduce toilet water use by 20% to 60% annually. That translates to about \$140 in savings each year, which can easily help pay for the new toilet within a few years.

5. Prioritize Energy-Efficient Appliances

There have been significant advances in the past decades when it comes to energy-efficient appliances—think less heat lost through the oven and more cold retained in the freezer.. If you are in the market for new appliances, prioritize ones that are Energy Star certified. This means the appliance meets Canberra. Department of Energy’s strict criteria for energy efficiency.

Even if you aren’t ready to update your appliances, you can improve your energy efficiency by covering pans while cooking, using smaller appliances rather than bigger ones when possible (such as a toaster oven rather than a full-sized oven) and aiming to run your dishwasher or washing machine only when full.

6. Upgrade to an Eco-Friendly Fireplace

In many homes in Canberra, the fireplace is a nice focal point that adds some ambiance during colder weather. But, that’s a missed opportunity: With an energy-efficient fireplace that helps heat your home with a renewable energy source, you can reduce your heating costs while helping the environment.

The most efficient, eco-friendly fireplace option is a natural gas fireplace. However, if you want to retrofit an existing wood-burning fireplace, a wood stove insert is a good option that can effectively help heat the home.

7. Install Energy Star Ceiling Fans

As heat waves become increasingly normal—even in parts of the world that previously had more moderate temperatures—the popularity of air conditioning units is on the rise. However, that isn’t without an environmental cost: Approximately 20% of Americans’ residential energy use is to power air conditioning units.

Even if an air conditioner is essential in your household, you can start to minimize how much you use it by setting it to a higher temperature and utilizing more fans throughout the house. With 60% more efficiency than conventional ceiling fans, Energy Star-rated ceiling fans can keep you cool while cutting down on greenhouse gas emissions.

8. Consider Switching to Solar

When you think about eco-friendly home improvements, solar panels often come to mind—but that’s for good reason. According to Canberra. Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, solar power can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, preserve water and limit air pollution.

Especially as the cost to install solar panels continues to decrease and the quality of panels improves, this sustainable home improvement is worth considering. Residential solar panels cost an average of \$16,000 to install but can pay for themselves with energy savings within 10 years.

6. Cleaning For The Planet: 10 Eco-Friendly Cleaning Tips

Maintaining household sanitation is necessary to have a healthy home. But, you must do it sustainably because using chemical cleaners and non-recyclable tools impacts the environment adversely.

Australia has a waste management and recycling problem to which you knowingly or unknowingly contribute through poor cleaning habits and practices. Australians generated 7.8 Mt hazardous (including household chemicals), 2.5 Mt plastic and 5.9 Mt of paper waste, per the National Waste Report 2020. Therefore, the need of the hour is to clean, keeping the planet in mind.



When you need to perform an extensive clean at the end of a tenancy, hire professional end of lease cleaners in Canberra who use green products & tools. However, here are ten eco-friendly cleaning tips for regular house cleaning to sanitise your home sustainably.

1. Say Yes To Natural Cleaners

Unless your household areas are extremely soiled or need professional cleaning, routinely sanitise them with organic products. Cleaning vinegar, baking soda, soap nuts, oxalic acid, rock salt and Castile soap, among others, are natural cleaners readily available in homes. These products are non-toxic and safe to use around children and pets.

2. Don't Use Antibacterial Wipes

Antibacterial products eliminate good and bad bacteria equally, which gives rise to strains of multi-resistant organisms (MROs) that you cannot kill, even with harsh disinfectants.

Using antibacterial wipes is also bad for the environment because the wipes aren't biodegradable. Soap and water work excellently to sanitise household surfaces, and you can use a mild solution if you need to disinfect.

3. Invest In Energy-Efficient & Green Cleaning Equipment

Before purchasing any cleaning equipment, check its energy star rating to determine its energy efficiency and consumption. Additionally, choose machines that reduce the usage of chemical cleaners and non-reusable products.

For example, steam cleaners usually only need water to sanitise and disinfect household surfaces. Thus, professional cleaners who offer detailed end of lease cleaning Canberra use such tools to clean effectively and economically.

4. Dispose Of Plastics & Chemicals Responsibly

Never dispose of chemical cleaners in the drain or garden, as they contaminate the soil and water.

Additionally, collect plastic bottles, tools, single-use items and other waste in separate bags. Contact your nearest recycling and waste management centre when you need to dispose of chemicals and plastics responsibly. With their guidance, you can plan a waste collection or drop-off.

5. Limit Use Of Non-Reusable Cleaning Tools

Make an effort to limit the usage of paper towels, disposable wipes, tissues, and non-reusable cleaning tools. Aim to stop purchasing these products, as most paper and plastic waste generated from these products end up in landfills. Replace such tools with washable cleaning cloths, towels and rags made with cotton, microfiber or other eco-friendly materials.

6. Use Bio-Degradable Sponges & Scrubbers

While plastic sponges and scouring pads are durable and long-lasting, they don't degrade for years and create land/water pollution. Therefore, use sponges & scrubbers made with cellulose, coconut husk, and other plant-based materials.

7. Get Indoor Plants

Purify the air in your home with house plants that are easy to maintain and neutralise toxins. The best indoor plants are sage, spider plant, peace lily, pot mum, English ivy and bamboo palm. These plants can make your house look welcoming and fresh all year round. What's more, you don't need an air purifier if you can take care of house plants and keep them thriving.

8. Avoid Cleaners With VOCs

VOCs cause pollution when they end up in water, land and air. Most commercial cleaning products contain volatile organic compounds that pollute your home's indoor air and are bad for humans and animals. Common VOCs in cleaners include 2-butoxyethanol, Benzene, Toluene, Chlorinates, Phthalates, Isothiazolinones etc. Avoid buying cleaner with these chemicals by reading the list of ingredients on the label.

9. Use Oils To Remove Grimy & Sticky Messes

You can use oils to tackle stubborn grime and sticky spots instead of harsh cleaners with harmful chemicals like ammonia, hydrochloric acid, sodium hydroxide etc. Vegetables, lemon, tea tree, olive, coconut, and other natural/essential oils are effective against greasy build-up, food carbons, sticker residues, glue stains etc.

All you need to do is apply oil on a sponge and scrub the dirty surfaces in a circular motion. Oil will loosen the grime and make it easier to wipe off the surface and wash with soap and water.

10. Hire A Green Cleaning Service

Reputed end of lease cleaning companies in Canberra understand their responsibility towards the planet and encourage their cleaners to use green cleaning products and energy-efficient equipment. They limit the use of single-use plastics and disposable cleaning items.

Moreover, they clean with proper techniques and methods to reduce wastage or excessive usage of cleaners. Thus, you can benefit from hiring an eco-friendly cleaning service when you cannot sanitise your home.

Cleaning your house is crucial to keep household members healthy and productive. While buying and using commercial cleaning products is easier, you must consider the environment because their usage impacts the planet adversely.

Therefore, when ending a tenancy, hire a green end of lease cleaning service in Canberra to clean your rental property sustainably. Also, follow the above-mentioned eco-friendly cleaning tips for sanitising your home without endangering the environment.

7. Sustainable Home Advice Program



It's possible to use appliances in your home in a way that won't harm the environment by making smart choices. We can help you take small steps making your home more sustainable. Use energy and water more efficiently. Save money, lower emissions and make your home more comfortable.

About the program

Our Sustainable Home Advice Program will help you understand your energy use and the best ways to make your home more sustainable.

You can get free advice tailored to your home on a range of sustainability measures. You can:

- do a home energy self-assessment
- get energy efficiency tips
- attend one of our workshops
- use our online tools to help you choose the right plants for your garden and use the right amount of water.

There's also lots of resources available.

How it works

Come to us for advice backed by data. Get reliable and simple solutions that you can put into action.

Phone and email advice

Our team can help you reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save money.

They can talk to you about actions for households, such as:

- free or low-cost ways to save energy with heating, cooling, hot water and other appliances
- home improvements to increase energy efficiency, including insulation and window treatments
- different systems for heating and cooling your home, cooking, hot water and other appliances
- ways to make your garden adaptable to the changing climate and save water
- understanding electric vehicles
- energy-efficient home design.

They love sharing smart choices to improve your home's energy efficiency.

Workshops and other events

Learn how to take small steps to improve your home's sustainability and save money at one of our free online workshops. To register, choose something you're interested in from the events list.

Self-assessment for householders

It's easy to use our Home Energy Assessment Webtool. It's aimed at renters, but homeowners will find it valuable too.

You'll get a tailored report with advice on how to reduce energy use and keep your home comfortable.

If you need extra help, contact us for free in-home or over-the-phone energy assessments.

Who can take part

Our Sustainable Home Advice Program is available to ACT residents.

If you're renting, visit our Home Energy Assessments for Renters.

Cost

It's free to use our advice line or attend a workshop.

Why it's important

Being more sustainable can save you money and make your home more comfortable.

The ACT is committed to net zero emissions by 2045. You can help by using less energy from fossil fuels at home.

It's good for the environment and lowers your household costs.

8. Conclusion

Eco-friendly homes and sustainable living are good for the planet—and for you in Canberra. You can follow this guide which also helps you to save your time and effort.

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