

Increase Your Home's Value through Energy Efficient Upgrades

Increasing energy efficiency in the home is becoming more important for several reasons. It is, of course, a great way to reduce your monthly utility bills, but it's also important because the world's sources of energy are not infinite, and more people are recognizing this and looking at ways to make their homes more energy-efficient. Lastly, remodeling your home with energy efficiency in mind increases its value due to the resulting lower monthly utility costs.

Insulation

Good insulation is perhaps the most effective way of improving the energy efficiency of your home. However, some insulators are better than others. Fiberglass, once the most commonly-used insulator, is no longer as popular as it once was. Most fiberglass insulators are made using formaldehyde, and can release gas which decreases your air quality. Cellulose is a more efficient option; however some cellulose insulators may be treated with formaldehyde, so it pays to check before you buy. Superior cellulose insulators are treated with ammonium sulfate or borates, both of which are non-toxic. Cotton insulation has been increasing in popularity, due to its efficacy and the fact that it is environmentally-friendly. Cotton insulation is treated with boron, and is fire-retardant, pest-repellant, and completely non-toxic.

Windows and Doors

The average home loses up to 30% of its heat (or air-conditioning) energy through windows. Well-sealed windows and exterior doors are just as important as insulation for

preventing energy loss. However, many frame materials require maintenance and choosing framing material that provides greater energy efficiency is often a trade-off in which more frequent maintenance is required. Wood frames are the most efficient in terms of energy loss and cause less condensation than other materials, however they will require painting or staining to keep them looking attractive. Aluminum frames, on the other hand, need very little maintenance but they are at the bottom of the list in terms of energy efficiency. Aluminum-clad windows are much more efficient. These are wood frames with an aluminum exterior, and combine the efficiency of wood with the low maintenance requirements of traditional aluminum frames.

Cooling

Many of the measures you take to prevent heat loss in your home will also help keep it cooler during warm weather. In addition, consider installing ceiling fans in your home. These are a more energy-efficient way of cooling than air-conditioners.

Efficient Lighting

When it comes to installing energy-efficient lighting, there are two main options – light dimmers and motion sensors. Light dimmers are switches which allow you to control the intensity of lighting in a room. Motion sensors turn lights on and off automatically by sensing when people enter and leave a room. These are particularly effective in rooms which are used irregularly, and in outdoor areas.

Outdoors

In the outdoors, trees and large shrubs are a less obvious way of making your home more energy efficient. With the additional advantage of adding appeal to your yard,

Careful planting of trees can add windbreaks which shield your house from wind, helping to prevent heat loss. Trees can also provide shade during the summer months, and help keep your home cool.

Using an Energy-Efficient Mortgage to Finance Remodeling

Major remodeling jobs that are planned with energy efficiency in mind can be expensive. This kind of remodeling will save you money in the long term, but the start-up costs are high. One way of financing such remodeling is with an Energy-efficient Mortgage. To qualify for an EEM, the money you save on your monthly utility bills must be greater than the monthly repayment of the EEM, and your total savings must also be more than your total costs (including maintenance). When you are granted an EEM, you have 90-180 days to carry out the remodeling work. Additionally, you cannot be granted an EEM if you apply after remodeling has started, or if you apply after any other financing has been granted.

For more information or if you would like to refer a friend who may require our service or any of recommended providers, please [contact us](#). We would be more than happy to send them our newsletter and share our energy savings tips.